

Delights of Posillipo, Terrors of Vesuvius:
Music, Spectacle, and Identity in Early Modern Naples

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DEDICATION

To Zak

The fool who taught me to live *in mezzo*

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This project results from a long-term fascination with the diverse peoples of early modern Italy that has benefitted from a personal synthesis of performance, research, and lived experience. In the past two years, this work has profoundly affected my development as a researcher and performer of music and culture. This being said, none of it would have been possible without the guidance and resources of multiple individuals and institutions. I would first like to thank my advisor Dr. Rachel Golden, whose endless supply of patience and encouragement never ceases to amaze. She has consistently inspired me to engage musicological questions with creative zeal and innovative approaches. To Drs. Leslie Gay and Dorothy Habel, I give additional thanks—Dr. Gay’s advice on ethnomusicological questions and Dr. Habel’s unmatched expertise of all things early modern Italian have both been indispensable to this project. I am honored to call these professors friends as well as colleagues. A special thanks goes out to the Marco Institute of the University of Tennessee and the Newberry Library of Chicago, who on several occasions provided financial aid for research trips to the Newberry. Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends, who never tired of listening.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines musico-dramatic activities centered at the Spanish viceregal court of Naples during the years 1608-1630 and positions them as reflective of shifting socio-political practices occurring in the cultural milieu of the city in the seventeenth century. I argue that three spectacles written by the writer and courtier Giambattista Basile expose emergent Neapolitan identities within the colonial society of Spanish-occupied Naples. Utilizing Mary Louise Pratt's (1991) concept of the contact zone, I read these works as instances of autoethnography, a medium involving a conscious blending of forms and idioms, necessitating both negotiation and collaboration between cultures of the occupant and occupied. Within the contact zone of Naples, mythology, history, and lived experience coalesced into a shared phenomenology of the city, creating an integrative soundscape where Neapolitans of multiple social spheres interacted through spectacle. In his writings, Basile sought to extend the rhythms of this contact zone, performing his Neapolitan identity in ways that both glorified the existing structures of power and offered liminal sites where voices of alterity might resonate. Similarly, in each of these spectacles, Neapolitans of multiple social spheres raised their voices and asserted their place on the contested stage of the viceregal theatre. Early modern Neapolitans were thus not merely colonially oppressed peoples subject to a foreign ruler, but were rather active agents in defining and expanding their own field of play. In the seventeenth century, music, spectacle, and identity proved essential to being Neapolitan, providing a means to negotiate the place of Naples *in mezzo*.

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CHAPTER ONE

Re-Membering Naples: An Introduction

In a 2011 episode of the Travel Channel hit series *No Reservations*, host Anthony Bourdain featured the southern Italian city of Naples.¹ Characteristic of Bourdain's "no frills" tourism style, the show's opening scene sweeps the urban landscape, panning through crowded streets filled with trash and high rise apartments perched precariously atop crumbling baroque architectures, ending with an aerial shot of the Bay of Naples nestled beneath the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. Completing this *mise en scène* is Bourdain's dramatic monologue summing up "what it's all about": "*Contrasenso*—that means 'against sense.' And very little about Naples makes sense. Generally, everything here that you want to do—the answer is 'maybe,' 'we hope so,' or 'I don't know.' It's exactly what's so great about this town. It doesn't really work."²

Though Bourdain writes his summation in the twenty-first century, his words bear striking resemblances to early modern accounts of Naples in the seventeenth century. Specifically, all point to a defining feature: a semblance of order emerging from multiple impressions of sheer chaos. "Naples is the whole world...there is a noise everywhere as if it were the buzzing of bees:" these words were penned by the city's municipal secretary Giulio Cesare Capaccio (c.1550-1634) in his 1634 guide to Naples, *Il forastiero* (The Foreigner).³ Visiting from Spain, the writer Miguel Cervantes (1547-1616) remarked that Naples was "the richest, most vice-ridden city in the entire world."⁴ Such accounts attest to a shared mythology between

¹ *No Reservations*, "Naples," episode 118, August 28, 2014 (originally aired July 11, 2011).

² Anthony Bourdain, "Tony Bourdain's Guide to Naples," Travel Channel, <http://www.travelchannel.com/interests/host-central/articles/tony-bourdains-guide-to-naples> (accessed September 16, 2014).

³ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, quoted in Tommaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water: A History of Southern Italy* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005), 159.

⁴ Miguel Cervantes, quoted in *Ibid.*, 167.

locals and foreigners that viewed Naples along axes of fame and infamy, fear and wonder, adoration and disgust. As Bourdain observed of Naples in the twenty-first century, likewise in the seventeenth, “it just doesn’t make sense.”

From roughly 1500-1713, the kingdom of Naples was a European colony in the global Spanish Empire.⁵ During this time the city enjoyed unprecedented expansion and growth, as Spanish policies allowed for an unrestrained process of urbanization.⁶ In this cultural environment, the arts flourished, and rich traditions of art, architecture, literature, and music grew around the three most powerful institutions of the city: the Spanish viceregal court, the Catholic Church, and the local nobility of the *seggi* [literally the “seats,” referring to the representation of Neapolitan citizens in the Spanish court; five belonged to the most prominent noble Neapolitan families and one to the middle class *popolo*].⁷ However, in such a place as Naples, where socio-political power continually fluctuated between and among these entities, these same artistic traditions also functioned as tools capable of supporting, subverting, or subsuming the status quo.

Music served an essential role in this exchange of power. As a part of social ritual, music was intended to communicate across class boundaries, providing voice to those possessing the means to control it. Occupying a liminal space both inside and outside of temporal bounds, music in Spanish Naples was held in simultaneous reverence and suspicion. However, within such a space, there also lay the potential to cipher voices of protest, expressions of self, and

⁵ In the seventeenth century, the city of Naples served as the thoroughfare and capital to the larger kingdom, which encompassed the lower half of the Italian peninsula. John Marino, “Myths of Modernity and the Myth of the City: When the Historiography of Pre-Modern Italy Goes South,” in *New Approaches to Naples*, edited by M. Calaresu and H. Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 13.

⁶ Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 2.

⁷ John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 14.

formulations of collective social identities. In the culturally diverse social scene of early modern Naples, such a multiplicity of sounding voices should be expected.

Stating a Problem: Why Naples?

This thesis positions early modern Neapolitan music as vital to a more complete rendering of musical life in the Italian renaissance and baroque. The subject has remained relatively (and broadly) neglected by North American musicologists, as will be discussed. Scholarship about Naples, and about southern Italy in general, has been plagued by the “southern problem,” a question that laid deep intellectual roots during the unification of Italy in the late nineteenth century.⁸ Southern Italy, viewed through the nationalistic lens of Italian scholars, was traditionally considered by historians in North America to be culturally inferior.⁹ Northern Italy, by comparison, seemed to embody and support a capitalist historical narrative that valued individual artistic achievement and personal autonomy. In addition, these writers tended to ignore southern Italy because it defied scholarly definition of a cultural center.¹⁰ Influential schools of art in Naples were not thought to have shaped future pan-European artistic developments, a notion maintained in scholarship on the city’s musical life.¹¹ Northern Italian composers like Gabrieli, Monteverdi, and Luzzaschi became (and continue to be) regarded as more innovative than their southern contemporaries. The musical canonization of the north

⁸ See Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris, eds., *The New History of the Italian South* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997); Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills, eds., *New Approaches to Naples (c. 1500-1800): The Power of Place* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

⁹ Jonathan Morris, “Challenging *Meridianilismo*—Constructing a New History for Southern Italy,” in *The New History of the Italian South*, edited by Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 12.

¹⁰ Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliot, “Introduction,” in *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713: New Approaches*, edited by Cordelia Warr and Janis Elliot (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

reinforced a teleological narrative of Italian music based on anachronistic nineteenth-century conceptions of value, originality, and authenticity.¹² As a consequence, scholars both excluded and misinterpreted Naples within the mainstream narrative of western musical history.

Fortunately, in the past two decades, a zealous group of North American and European scholars have issued a number of anthologies with new approaches to Naples that work to alleviate these gaps in the literature. Adapting Neapolitan history to new trends in historicism, these interdisciplinary studies consider artistic works as intrinsically tied to the social practices and conditions of the culture that produced them.¹³ However, music scholarship has participated little in this endeavor. Studies on Neapolitan music continue to use positivist models that discuss Naples in terms of a pre-imposed difference. The sounds of the Italian south have frequently been described as exotic, rustic, even African, reinforcing misconceptions about southern Italian music that are deeply embedded in nationalist and colonialist constructions of southern Italian identities, as I discuss further below. Musicological discourse continues to misrepresent or blatantly ignore the cultural histories of a dynamic collection of early modern peoples in Italy, those centered in the cosmopolitan city of Naples.

Spectacle and the Arts of the Contact Zone

In this thesis, I examine musico-dramatic activities centered at the Spanish viceregal court during the years 1608-1630 and position them as reflective of shifting socio-political

¹² For a comprehensive account of southern historiography and the politics of *meridianilismo*, see Nelson Moe, *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); also see John Marino, "Myths of Modernity and the Myth of the City: When the Historiography of Pre-Modern Italy Goes South," in *New Approaches to Naples*, edited by Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

¹³ See Calaresu and Hills, *New Approaches to Naples* and Warr and Elliot, *Art and Architecture in Naples*. See also John Marino and Carlo Vecce, eds., *The Disciplines of the Arts and Sciences*, California Italian Studies 3, no. 1 (2012).

practices occurring in the cultural milieu of Naples during this period. Specifically, I am interested in three documented spectacles: *La Venere addolorata* of 1613, *Festa a ballo, Delizie di Posilipo Boscarecce e Maritime* of 1620, and *Mascarata, Monte Parnaso* of 1630.¹⁴ Unlike contemporaneous northern Italian opera, these works do not easily conform to genre guidelines that had become well established by this period. Rather, they freely incorporate elements from *intermedi*, pastorals, early opera, and masques.¹⁵ According to John Marino, these extravagant baroque rituals involved a confluence of viceroyalty, nobility, clergy, and *popolo* that established solidarity between these diverse groups and maintained fabricated images of stability and prosperity in Spanish Naples.¹⁶ Similarly, I interpret these events as sites of negotiation between local and foreign powers, as well as performative expressions of emergent Neapolitan identities.

Central to these productions was the Neapolitan court intellectual Giambattista Basile (c.1575-1632), a writer, philologist, and editor active in Naples in the early seventeenth century. Scholars identify Basile as author of *Venere addolorata* and *Monte Parnaso*.¹⁷ In later chapters, I offer substantial evidence to speculate that Basile also wrote *Delizie di Posilipo*. Born to a family of the rapidly expanding Neapolitan middle class, Basile's career encompassed a variety of roles typical of a seventeenth-century courtier, including, as Nancy Canepa writes, "wandering soldier, titled bourgeois man of letters of noteworthy worldly success, and provincial administrator in the service of the neofeudal aristocracy."¹⁸ Basile's transient courtier status allowed him to straddle social divides between high and low ends (court and popular cultures) of Neapolitan society. For

¹⁴ William Stalnaker, "The Beginnings of Opera in Naples" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1968), 64.

¹⁵ By this period, opera had become a commonplace genre in Venice and Rome, with both cities establishing their own public theatres dedicated to opera performance. Ibid.

¹⁶ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 3.

¹⁷ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera in Naples," 5.

¹⁸ Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 39.

example, while in the service of courts throughout Italy, he wrote prolifically in aristocratic genres such as pastoral, Petrarchan poetry, and philological commentary that were standard requirements for a courtier in a metropolitan setting like the viceregal court of Naples.¹⁹ However, in addition, he wrote works in Neapolitan dialect that would have been associated primarily with Neapolitans of lower social status, such as his landmark collection of fairy tales *Lo cunto de li cunti*.²⁰ Basile thus occupied a precarious position within the interdependent social circles of Naples, traversing the boundaries of class and rank. The trajectory of Basile's career within the Neapolitan bureaucracy paralleled the performance of these spectacles, as his political advances as a courtier largely relied on their dramatic success at the viceregal court. Like other Neapolitan artists documented in this study, Basile reinforced tropes of the city that had permeated social discourse by the seventeenth century. Basile thus embraced a performative notion of *napolitanità* that was becoming increasingly important to the maintenance of Neapolitan mythology.

Both Basile and the spectacles he wrote existed within what Mary Louise Pratt terms “a contact zone,” which she defines as “the social spaces where cultures meet and clash in often highly asymmetrical relations of power.”²¹ Often occurring in colonial and postcolonial societies, contact zones occupy a “transient space of encounter,” a field of potential in which “it is not readily apparent who or what dominates.”²² While Pratt's argument applies to her reconfiguration of indigenous Andean voices in Spanish colonial texts, I find her methods

¹⁹ Ibid., 43.

²⁰ I discuss this work further in Chapter 3.

²¹ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” in *Profession* 91 (1991): 34.

²² Ibid.

equally applicable to texts and music written in Spanish Naples.²³ Pratt refers to such texts as autoethnographic, meaning that they involve a selective blending between idioms of native expression and those of the metropolitan conqueror.²⁴ The contact zone was an inherent feature of the socio-political landscape of Naples in the early modern period, and the Spanish court lay in such a field of potential. Here, the ancient nobility, the Spanish monarchy, and the rising *popolo* constantly adapted and repositioned their prerogatives to adapt to new social challenges.

Pratt refers to the dynamic process by which individuals negotiate this field as one of transculturation.²⁵ As a result of transculturation, autoethnographies (like those of Basile) are not exclusively “autochthonous forms of self-expression,” but rather sites where communal notions of self are collaboratively constructed by both conquerors and their conquered. Basile’s livelihood depended upon his ability to write texts that could reside in a field occupied by both the marginalized (Neapolitan) and the metropolitan (Spanish). Consequently, by reading the work of this courtier as exhibiting one such transculturated language, Basile’s artistic subjectivity exposes an individual performance of “Neapolitan-ness” (henceforth, *napolitanità*) that mirrors increasingly prevalent social practices in seventeenth-century Naples. These events, necessarily collaborative in nature, required performances of Neapolitans from multiple social spheres. Defying pre-conceived dichotomies of the local/foreign and the high/low, a shared language of spectacle (itself yet another transculturated language) proved essential to impact multiple stratae of Neapolitan culture. Therefore, I interpret these three spectacles as autoethnographic texts that reveal traces of an emergent communal subjectivity of *napolitanità*.

²³ Ibid., 35.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ This paragraph draws from Ibid., 34-36.

They thus provide a model by which broader cultural phenomena in early modern Naples can be better understood and fairly represented.

Ironically, the seemingly cooperative milieu of the early modern period also laid the foundations for Naples's southern problem, and through a combination of over-taxation, ill administration, and lack of economic diversification, the kingdom of Naples would be plagued by a paralysis that arguably continues to the present.²⁶ These realities make it difficult to discuss Naples without addressing how its southern problem has profoundly distorted perceptions of the city's history and culture, equally shaping the self-mythologies of its people. This thesis thus invokes a corrective approach as well as an interpretive one. Neapolitan history comesling myth, memory, and lived experience; its writing (and re-writing) must therefore acknowledge the spaces between these as essential to the reconstruction of Neapolitan identity.²⁷ The ephemeral qualities of spectacle reflect such an invented space, where social realities are inverted, distorted, and transformed.²⁸

In the complex social life of early modern Naples, the arts of spectacle, including music, provided tools to negotiate power within the Spanish bureaucracy, maintain appearances to foreign visitors and delegates of the monarchy, and manipulate the huge Neapolitan *plebe* that fell subject to the decadence of the upper and middle classes.²⁹ Consequently, I argue that the myth of Naples created in the early modern period cannot be viewed solely as a Spanish image

²⁶ Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills, "Between Exoticism and Marginalization: New Approaches to Naples," in *New Approaches to Naples (c. 1500-1800): The Power of Place*, edited by Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 2.

²⁷ John Marino, "The Disciplines of the Arts and Sciences in Naples: Introduction," *California Italian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 2.

²⁸ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 23.

²⁹ *Plebe* was an encompassing term for those lower classes without direct representation—*plebe* were not recognized citizens of Naples. *Ibid.*, 14.

of power imposed upon an oppressed people. Rather, Neapolitans from multiple social spheres participated in their own self-fashioning. In this study, then, I examine how the music of spectacle functioned in the contact zone to negotiate between power structures of Spanish Naples and to create a communal mythology of the city. I read the spectacles of Giambattista Basile as autoethnographic texts that reflect and reveal the processes of transculturation at work in the broader social sphere of Naples. *Venere addolorata* (1613), *Delizie di Posilipo* (1620), and *Monte Parnaso* (1630) reside in a field of play where transculturated senses of self and society interacted and achieved harmony with one another, maintaining order within the complex social structure of early modern Naples while also offering sites where voices of alterity might resonate. Early modern Neapolitans were thus not merely colonially oppressed peoples subject to a foreign ruler, but were rather active agents in defining and expanding their own field of play.

Identifications and Definitions of Neapolitan Spectacles

These spectacles seem, in a sense, united by their disunity. As they interacted with their political surroundings, musical and dramatic materials altered to adapt to changing times. However, what may seem a lack of continuity and consistency should not read as a sign of pure metropolitanism in music (i.e., “Spanish-ness”), nor construed as pointing to a lack of cultural authenticity (i.e., “Neapolitan-ness”). As I will demonstrate, this disunity suggests rather a conscious effort by Neapolitans to recreate themselves and their art to meet the socio-political needs of their environment. Such an attention to the autoethnographic manufacturing of self clearly marks these spectacles as features of the contact zone.

Existing documentation presents several challenges to this study. According to William Stalnaker, of these three works, “only one is preserved with reasonable completeness, with no

two of them preserved to exactly the same degree.”³⁰ For example, of the three, only *Venere addolorata* and *Monte Parnaso* have been definitively attributed to an author (Giambattista Basile). Similarly, although we know that music was composed for each work, only the music for *Delizie di Posilipo* survives in notated scores; the music for *Venere addolorata* also lacks attribution to a composer.³¹ Equally problematic, for *Venere addolorata* no definitive record or description of a performance exists.

In terms of form, content, and genre, each offers a unique combination and alteration of pre-existing dramatic conventions. For example, in the opening dedication page of *Venere addolorata* (1613), Basile terms the work a *favola tragica da rappresentarsi in musica* [tragic fable for representation in music], a description common to pastoral dramas as early as Angelo Poliziano’s *Orfeo* of 1478.³² Similarly, the work uses a classical five-act tragic form, typical of the Renaissance emulation of Greek drama. *Venere addolorata*’s subject matter, however, appears unique to this pastoral repertoire; according to Stalnaker, it was possibly the first libretto based on the Venus and Adonis myth.³³ Despite the lack of documentation on *Venere*, it remains an important source of information on early music drama in Naples, as well as a significant event in the life of Giambattista Basile. Furthermore, Stalnaker speculates that *Venere* offers the first performance of opera in Naples.³⁴ The operatic pastoral format of *Venere* thus served as a lynchpin in which Basile developed his own approach to the genre while simultaneously testing

³⁰ Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 111.

³¹ The music of *Delizie di Posilipo* has been compiled in a modern edition by A-R Editions, which I use as a source in my case study of this spectacle. Roland Jackson, ed., *A Neapolitan Festa a Ballo: Delizie di Posilipo di Boscarecce, e Maritime and Selected Instrumental Ensemble Pieces from Naples Conservatory Ms. 4.6.3* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1978).

³² Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 6.

³³ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

its limits. This blending of convention with innovation characterizes much of Basile's writing, a notion I address later in this project.

By contrast, *Delizie di Posilipo* (1620) appears much more closely tied to the tradition of *intermedi*, loosely-connected programmatic scenes set to music occurring between the acts of a pastoral drama. Unlike *intermedi*, however, *Delizie* stands on its own as a musical event, defined as a *festa a ballo* [literally, party with dancing], indicating the functional importance of dance. Lacking a cohesive dramatic plot, *Delizie* serves chiefly as an implementation of court rhetoric, commissioned for a viceregal celebration of the miraculous recovery of Philip III from sickness.³⁵ For example, the local nobility of the *seggi* actively engage in the spectacle; they frequently dance as *cavalieri* and are woven into the fabric of the drama.³⁶ The subtitle of the work (*boscarecce e maritime*) denotes the varied content of *Delizie*. While drawing from pastoral themes such as sylvan nymphs and shepherds, the author also includes maritime elements characterized as Neapolitan, such as references to sirens, nereiades, and most importantly, the real geographic location of the coast of Posillipo in Naples.³⁷ *Delizie*, then, fluidly blends the real and the imagined, as well as the political and the fantastical; this makes the work an ideal autoethnographic text. Furthermore, as the only work with extant music, it figures as particularly important to this study.

Similar to *Delizie*, *Monte Parnaso* (1630) was commissioned for a viceregal celebration, in this case the entrance of the empress Maria of Austria into the city.³⁸ As in the previous work, the Neapolitan *seggi* participated as *cavalieri* in group dances, intending to display an image of

³⁵ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 186.

³⁶ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 67.

³⁷ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 188.

³⁸ This paragraph relies on Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 85-90.

wealth and stability to the visiting monarchess. Labeled a *mascarata*, the work uses elements featured in the 1620 *fiesta a ballo* like group choruses, dances, solos, and quartets. In addition, Basile writes a series of sung dialogues that occur between musical numbers, in which allegorical characters talk amongst themselves and to the audience. Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing the extent of its musical content, as the composer Giacinto Lambardo's score was not included in the official published account. In comparison with *Delizie*, *Monte Parnaso* is much more grandiose, consisting of multiple sets of numbers delineated by Basile's inclusion of recitative. Indeed, the dramatic trajectory leading to *Monte Parnaso* (the largest of the three) indicates an increasingly dire political situation at the viceregal court as the seventeenth century progressed.

Despite this multiplicity of genres and styles, these works concurrently suggest a necessity to mold form and content to adapt to the ever-shifting features of the Neapolitan socio-political landscape. Pressures from within and without Naples dictated increasingly enlarged spectacles, requiring participation from performers and artisans from multiple social stratae. In each of these works, then, the expanse of the contact zone widens significantly. Speech-like recitative disrupts song, Dionysian dance disrupts Apollonian choreography, and the physical landscape of Naples breaks down the canvas of idyllic pastoral.

Much like these spectacles, Giambattista Basile's life and career reads as a pastiche. A leading intellectual figure in Naples, Basile was born in a village of Posillipo in 1575 to a middle class family that was, in Benedetto Croce's words, "respectable although not well-to-do."³⁹ After traveling outside the kingdom, by 1613 (the year of the publication of *Venere addolorata*), Basile

³⁹ Benedetto Croce, quoted in Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 39.

was back in Naples, where he would work for the remainder of his life as a courtier.⁴⁰ As he gained prominence as a writer, Basile worked his way up the Spanish bureaucracy, eventually acquiring a prestigious position as the governor of Anversa.⁴¹ His unique social position as both a native middle class Neapolitan and a member of the metropolitan Spanish court places him—and his works—firmly in the contact zone.

Probably the most famous of his works, his landmark *Lo cunto de li cunti* [The Tale of Tales] was published posthumously in 1632 as a collection of folk stories, fairy tales, and court games that initiated the European genre of literary fairy tales.⁴² Written in Neapolitan dialect, the work became incredibly popular in the seventeenth century and would have been recited, read, and consumed by all facets of Neapolitan society: Spaniards and Neapolitans, *plebe* and *populo*, high and low.⁴³ As in the spectacles he wrote, in *Lo cunto* Basile draws on a communal sense of what it meant to be Neapolitan in the seventeenth century. *Lo cunto* both celebrates and critiques Neapolitan identity through stereotypes and caricatures that leave no sphere untouched by satire and farce. Basile's carnivalesque ritual of writing thus mirrors a fragmentation and reconstitution of self that encompassed multiple levels of Neapolitan social discourse, including that of musico-dramatic spectacle.

I find that the fairy tales of *Lo cunto* exhibit features of the contact zone that are comparable, if not identical, to those of Basile's court spectacles. As John Marino demonstrates, parallels between these court games and court spectacles reveal “the governing principles, the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 42.

⁴¹ Ibid., 43.

⁴² Nancy Canepa, “Introduction” in *Giambattista's Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, translated by Nancy Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 7.

⁴³ Ibid., 9.

underlying contradictions, and the quotidian creativity of individuals in Neapolitan society.”⁴⁴ Concurrently, these constitute a field of play through which Basile transforms the model courtier devised by Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529) into a misshapen parody. In Basile’s hands, the noble courtier of Castiglione finds himself in a fiercely competitive environment in which notions of high/low as well as virtue/birth become increasingly ambiguous.⁴⁵ One must play the games, dance the dances, and sing the songs if he is to climb the social ladder. Consequently, Neapolitan identities are shaped through a series of such performative acts. The contact zone proves to be a field of play that, as Marino writes, “makes us all who we are, allows us to discern between the real and make-believe, and teaches us that rules always define or give meaning to our actions.”⁴⁶

Scope and Methodology

Geographically and chronologically I focus on the musico-dramatic life occurring in the immediate vicinity of the city of Naples as it existed in the early modern period.⁴⁷ In so doing, I do not incorporate the many equally active aristocratic feudal courts in surrounding areas of the Kingdom of Naples, which also devised and commissioned their own spectacles.⁴⁸ In addition, due to the scope of this project, I do not focus extensively on musical activities within the city’s

⁴⁴ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 168.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 173.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁴⁷ John Marino provides an overview of the city’s seventeenth-century geography; the city was divided into various *quartiere* that corresponded to socio-economic divisions. See map of the city in *Ibid.*, 105.

⁴⁸ According to William Stalnaker, Benedetto Croce surveys this expansive sphere of theatrical life in his 1891 *I teatri di Napoli*. Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 6.

many religious institutions.⁴⁹ However, this study demonstrates how the Spanish viceroy, the church, and the city's various citizen bodies of nobles "employed a Baroque political lexicon" that created a "common civic culture," one that relied heavily on allegorical meta-references to blend sacred and secular realms of experience.⁵⁰

The years 1608-1630 mark significant moments in the civic-religious ritual life of Naples, as well as in the career of Giambattista Basile. During this period, Naples bore the financial load of the Spanish Empire, brought on by its rapidly declining colonial system and the burden of its involvement in the Thirty Years War.⁵¹ Through the sale of bureaucratic and noble titles to rising middle class families, the viceroyalty maintained control of the nobility and the local *popolo*, while simultaneously losing its direct jurisdiction in large areas of the kingdom.⁵² *Venere addolorata* (1613), *Delizie di Posilipo* (1620), and *Monte Parnaso* (1630) belong to a body of propaganda literature that promulgated during this period of uncertainty. In an attempt to consolidate the power of the viceroy (and the absent king he represented), these kinds of publications often glorified the Spanish court and represented Naples as the *fidelissima città* of the empire. These provide invaluable records of elaborate civic-religious events tied to the calendars of the court and the church.⁵³

This thesis argues for an integration of place, identity, and performance, conceptualizing viceregal spectacles as embodied responses to crises of representation facing Neapolitans of the seventeenth century. Modern Italians locate Naples in the *Mezzogiorno*, a nineteenth-century

⁴⁹ These aspects of Neapolitan musical life are briefly addressed in Chapter 2. For a more comprehensive study of Neapolitan religious music, see Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), esp. 95-131.

⁵⁰ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 23.

⁵¹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 38.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 47.

term referring to the meridian line that runs through southern Italy.⁵⁴ Implying a land in between, southern Italy constitutes a border region where European, north African, Greek, and Arabic peoples intersect and interact. Inhabitants of Naples, then, have historically found themselves *in mezzo*. Such a state parallels notions of liminality as discussed by Victor Turner, of which he states: “the attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* (‘threshold people’) are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space.”⁵⁵ Throughout this thesis, I argue that to perform *napolitanità* necessitates such a condition of *in mezzo*.

In order to understand performances of Neapolitan “in-betweenness” within viceregal spectacles, my intellectual framework incorporates theories that conceive liminality as a continuum of processes rather than a singular state, and as spaces where culture is negotiated. In particular, three theories enable my approach: Mary Louise Pratt’s concept of the contact zone, Michel de Certeau’s notions of quotidian fields of play, and Philip Bohlman’s ideas about ethnomusicological pasts. These authors provide alternatives to essentialist theories of cultural dissemination that have polluted previous studies of Neapolitan music. Furthermore, each offers a unique perspective on the problem of interpreting the past through the lens of the postcolonial present, as well as to understanding states of *in mezzo*. Rather than stemming from a single point of origin, the spectacles of Giambattista Basile reside in spaces that interweave history, mythology, everyday practice, and musical performance. Though the texts that record these events are inherently fragmented, they constitute selective cultural memories that can be reassembled, providing glimpses of continuity in the social practices of Neapolitans.

⁵⁴ Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius*, 24.

⁵⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* [1969] (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), 97.

The fragmented topography of Pratt's contact zone mirrors and models the socio-political landscape of Naples in the early modern period. In his recent ethnography on the *neomelodica* music scene in Naples, Jason Pine has used this approach to explore the intersections of popular culture and organized crime in contemporary Naples.⁵⁶ Pine emphasizes that in Naples, things "are often more than what they seem," and that a state of simultaneous vitality and decay functions to maintain the status quo.⁵⁷ While Pine's analysis takes place in the twentieth century, the contact zone provides a model for conceptualizing interactions between cultures that occur within contested liminal spaces, where social hierarchies seem to dissipate, despite the representations of power to which they refer. The musico-dramatic activities of the Spanish court became resonant topographical features of the contact zone, rituals through which competing spheres of power attempted to adapt to its shifting rhythms.⁵⁸ As part of the ritual life of the court, Basile's spectacles provided a field of play for the negotiation of Neapolitan identity, a social art indicating cultural processes of transculturation.⁵⁹

Within this invented space, the possibilities for myth-making and self-construction become seemingly limitless. As Pine discovered in contemporary Naples, people communicate, interact, and create in ways that "extend the rhythms of the contact zone."⁶⁰ In early modern Naples, Marino demonstrates these same processes at work through his reading of court games and spectacles using the lens of Michel de Certeau.⁶¹ In his works *Culture in the Plural* (1974)

⁵⁶ Jason Pine, *The Art of Making Do in Naples* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 9.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 169.

⁶⁰ Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 9.

⁶¹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 168.

and *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1980), de Certeau (himself a scholar of the early modern period) characterizes court games as extensive and expressive uses of “quotidian creativity.”⁶² In de Certeau’s view, the “operativity and virtuosity of ordinary practices” and “the countless dynamics of daily activities” allow marginalized cultures to disappropriate themselves from the political forces that seek to utilize culture for colonialist purposes.⁶³ Working within existing socio-political structures, individuals implement “tactics and strategies” that transform a given language of power into what de Certeau calls “a song of resistance.”⁶⁴ Interestingly, de Certeau defines this process as “making do,” a phrase that Pine discovered Neapolitans have used throughout their history to describe their own negotiatory practices.⁶⁵ Thus, occupied cultures like Naples discover ways of “making do” with the situation handed to them.⁶⁶

Strategies of subversion and creative practices of “making do” allowed for an intersection of personal mythologies and a collective mythology of the city within performances of Neapolitan identity.⁶⁷ Spectacles like those at the viceregal court served to reinforce the city’s exceptionality, maintain Naples’s exotic allure, and designate sanctioned forms of Neapolitan identity through elaborate social rituals. Simultaneously, these works, particularly those by Basile, often exposed individual subjectivities that challenged government-approved ideologies, revealing highly personalized manifestations of *napolitanità*. Paradoxically, then, spectacle held

⁶² Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), vii; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Randall (Berkeley University of California Press, 1988), 34.

⁶³ De Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, viii.

⁶⁴ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 18.

⁶⁵ Notably, Pine does not cite de Certeau in his ethnography. To my knowledge, a connection between de Certeau’s “making do” and the Neapolitan practice of *l’arte di arrangiarsi* has not been made prior to this thesis. See Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 8-9.

⁶⁶ Ibid.; De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 18.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 36; Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 7.

the potential to disrupt the status quo utilizing the same cultural materials that supported it. By the same token these sights and sounds conceal as much as they reveal. De Certeau's commentary on images of advertising equally applies to spectacles, as they "insert into themselves the object that they display and, as if in a mirror, they produce but the inverted image of happiness whose flashes of sunshine they multiply in the urban landscape."⁶⁸ Given the dire economic and social crises of Naples in the seventeenth century, these exaggerated ritual displays demonstrate the importance of spectacle in keeping the city a functioning entity. In de Certeau's words, "what is most seen defines what is most lacking."⁶⁹

This thesis, then, involves an excursus into what Philip Bohlman has termed an "ethnomusicological past."⁷⁰ In Bohlman's conception, the study of the past necessitates an ethnographic approach that accounts for commonalities of lived experience within a culture over time.⁷¹ Similar to de Certeau and Pratt's theories, Bohlman views the field, and culture itself, as existing within the boundaries between the past and the present, making this space fluid, ephemeral, and contested.⁷² The reconstruction of the past depends on acknowledging that musical meanings form through *bricolage*, in which historical events, rituals, and everyday musical practices blur distinctions of past and present.⁷³ In Naples, such *bricolage* continues to occur, as many of the festivals and rituals that took place in the seventeenth century (in particular the Festivals of San Gennaro and San Giovanni) remain essential features of the Neapolitan

⁶⁸ De Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, 19.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Philip Bohlman, "Returning to the Ethnomusicological Past," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 250.

⁷¹ Ibid., 248.

⁷² Ibid., 249.

⁷³ Ibid., 250.

calendar and life cycle. The continual reinvigoration of the past that takes place in present-day Naples exposes fragmented traces of individual lived experiences that transcend divides of time and space, suggesting notions of Neapolitan identity that are trans-historical.

My methodology incorporates phenomenological modes of inquiry that explore how music interacted in what R. Murray Schafer terms a soundscape.⁷⁴ As a total sonic environment, or what Geoffrey Baker calls a “resounding city,” an array of sensory experiences contributed to the recognition of Naples as an inhabited place composed of distinctive sounds.⁷⁵ According to Tim Ingold, these shared notions of place come to fruition “behind the conventional image of a network of interacting entities.”⁷⁶ Ingold posits that individual lifelines interweave themselves in “a dense meshwork” that, when bound together, create inhabited knots.⁷⁷ As culturally constructed entities, landscapes and soundscapes—like the identities of inhabitants—“are woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape [soundscape], in a process that is continuous and never-ending.”⁷⁸ Thus, I seek to understand how Neapolitan musicians also constantly adapted their music-making to the changing sounds of their surroundings.

Close readings of contemporaneous music and texts enable the recreation, or what Bruce R. Smith terms “re-membering,” of lived experiences within these inhabited places by attending to the “liveness” of text.⁷⁹ Smith posits that in the early modern period, the written word

⁷⁴ R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1993), 4.

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Baker, “The Resounding City,” in *Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Geoffrey Baker and Tess Knighton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 1.

⁷⁶ Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 63.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 47.

⁷⁹ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 125.

remained united to bodily sensations of hearing and speaking.⁸⁰ In terms of music, Smith finds “music, in the sense of a written score, serves as metonymy for music as an acoustic event, as the cause for a particular range of effects.”⁸¹ Similarly, texts that describe acoustic experience could serve as a “somatic notation,” a memory device for capturing and re-capturing the effects of sound on the body.⁸² In her work on medieval patristic texts, Catherine Brown argues that the researcher’s subject position must necessarily be “in the middle;” by simultaneously acknowledging the closeness and distance of the past, scholars might reckon with the differences and commonalities of handling available cultural materials.⁸³ Brown holds that engaging with texts as both “here” and “there,” as both “us” and “them,” might help us understand the ways that we exoticize and other the past, and to take steps to reconcile these colonialist methods of reading.⁸⁴

This thesis, then, seeks to position the lives of seventeenth-century Neapolitans as residing in a meshwork of symbiotic relationships, where sound and sense worked to construct shared notions of the place of Naples. In taking up Baker’s call for “a musicology *of* the city,” an array of methodologies is useful to consider how the city left its mark on musical production, and how music in turn shaped urban experience.⁸⁵ By recognizing viceregal spectacles as texts that can re-member Neapolitan somatic experience, I strive to recover Neapolitan identities from colonialist readings that have continually rendered Neapolitans voiceless. Through

⁸⁰ Ibid., 116.

⁸¹ Ibid., 112.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Catherine Brown, “In the Middle,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 548.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 550.

⁸⁵ Baker, “Resounding City,” 1.

phenomenological close reading of these three spectacles, I argue for a re-membering of one such voice, that of Giambattista Basile, whose life and work positioned him “in the middle,” or *in mezzo*, at the center of a knot of Neapolitan musico-dramatic life.

Literature Review

Scholarship about Naples, and about southern Italy in general, has its own complex history. The full historiography and its long-term social ramifications of its claims lay beyond the scope of this paper.⁸⁶ Current trends in scholarship have begun to alleviate these wounds, examining Neapolitan artistic traditions contextually rather than comparatively. However, music studies have lagged behind in this endeavor, and thus my concerns are twofold: to pinpoint how perceptions of Neapolitan music have been distorted to circumscribe a musicological narrative of the early modern period, and to re-present Neapolitan musics in their cultural contexts. This approach necessitates a fusion of historiographical traditions and interdisciplinary methodologies that will facilitate new modes of discourse. Thus, this literature review encompasses a wide range of works written across disparate time periods and from multiple disciplines, occupying many vantage points and perspectives.

For the past two centuries, the cultural hegemony of northern Italian artists, writers, and musicians remained relatively unquestioned (and often reinforced) by a broad range of humanities scholars. When Giuseppe Garibaldi united Italy in 1860, northern Italians became linked socially and economically with their poorer southern neighbors for the first time.⁸⁷ In

⁸⁶ I am here referring to current cultural stigmas that exist both inside and outside of Italy concerning the “inherent rusticism or backwardness” of southern Italian peoples. These ideas are deeply engrained in established cultural norms, and continue to affect the writing of southern Italian history.

⁸⁷ Jonathan Morris, “Challenging *Meridianilismo*,” in *The New History of the Italian South*, edited by Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 5.

north Italy, liberal intellectual circles viewed the colonialist history of the south in disdain, and believed that the agrarian model of the south would hinder the industrial growth of the country.⁸⁸

This “southern problem” created a great deal of anxiety and led northern Italians to mark southerners as culturally, and even racially, different from them. In the years following the *Risorgimento*, a number of historians sought to write a new national history that would glorify the northern Liberal regime and redeem Italy’s decadent past, which many claimed to have roots in the rural south.⁸⁹ Continually addressing the history and culture of the south in terms of a southern problem, this perspective developed into a nationalist ideology called *meridianilismo*, which held that the economic issues of the south reflected a broader cultural inferiority, and thus southern culture was detrimental to modernist progress.⁹⁰

In scholarship on the arts, two traditions grew out of *meridianilismo*, an Italian nationalist school that sought to reinforce northern Italy’s cultural achievements, and a North American/British school that studied northern Italian masters, largely unaware of misrepresentations by the Italians themselves.⁹¹ As a result, music histories written by Italians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often infused cultural biases, and those by North Americans usually avoided Naples and southern Italy altogether.

The Italian school ultimately stems from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century scholar Benedetto Croce. A prominent philosopher, historian, and politician from southern Italy, Croce remained an instrumental figure in documenting and preserving southern Italian culture

⁸⁸ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 14.

⁸⁹ Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills, “Between Exoticization and Marginalization: New Approaches to Naples,” in *New Approaches to Naples (c. 1500-1800)*, edited by Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 3.

⁹⁰ Morris, “Challenging *Meridianilismo*,” 4.

⁹¹ Warr and Elliot, “Introduction,” 3.

prior to World War II.⁹² Especially important to this study are *History of the Kingdom of Naples* (1925) and *I teatri di Napoli, secolo XV-XVIII* (1891). Within these works, Croce gives an overview of the musical institutions that dominated Naples during the Aragonese and Spanish regimes, focusing on court entertainments and civic festivals.⁹³ Croce's work offers significant in-depth studies of now-lost manuscript sources, many destroyed during the bombing of Naples in World War II.⁹⁴ However, like much of nineteenth-century musical scholarship, Croce treated the early modern period teleologically; his basis of comparison was late-nineteenth century music, and he viewed music from previous periods as leading up to the "culmination" that produced the Neapolitan operatic tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁹⁵ Furthermore, consistent with the ideology of *meridianilismo*, Croce remained preoccupied with justifying and explaining the causes for southern Italian delays in artistic development and cultural refinement.⁹⁶ For these reasons, his work is mostly useful for its content rather than its substance.

In the early and mid-twentieth century, a number of Italian scholars followed in Croce's tradition and wrote subsequent studies on Neapolitan theatrical and musical traditions. In this thesis, I draw specifically from *Le origini della scuola musicale napoletana* (1914) by Guido Pannain, *I teatri di Napoli nel '600* by Ulisse Prota-Giurleo (1962), and *Feste ed apparati civili e religiosi in Napoli dal Viceregno alla capitale* (1968) by Franco Mancini. These monographs provide essential observations on seventeenth-century artistic figures, the trends they exhibited,

⁹² Morris, "Challenging *Meridianilismo*," 5.

⁹³ Dinko Fabris, "The Collection and Dissemination of Neapolitan Music," in *New Approaches to Naples, c. 1500-1800*, edited by Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 104.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁹⁵ Michael F. Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 13.

⁹⁶ Tommaso Astarita, *The Continuity of Feudal Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24.

and the relation of these trends to a broader pan-European context. However, these tend to favor the latter half of the century, in which plague, revolt, and bureaucratic ferment uprooted the Spanish dynasty and instituted a new independent kingdom of Naples under Bourbon rule.⁹⁷

This imposition of a Neapolitan nationalist narrative tends to permeate notions of the city's music. Many scholars claim Naples did not develop a uniquely idiomatic style until Spanish power began to decline in the latter seventeenth century. The exception to this rule lies in scholarship on the figure of Carlo Gesualdo, a Neapolitan nobleman whose personality and idiomatic compositional style was influential during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—his colorful life continues to captivate modern imaginations.⁹⁸ Otherwise, Neapolitan musics of the early modern period have gone largely unnoticed. This narrative changes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when opera exploded in Naples and a number of influential composers became marked as exhibiting a Neapolitan style of composition.⁹⁹ This “Neapolitan school” began with Alessandro Scarlatti in the late seventeenth century and continued into the nineteenth with *bel canto* composers like Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti.¹⁰⁰ Scholarship on these musics subsequently defined Neapolitan features attempting to account for its popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; melodramatic settings, “rustic” or “rural” themes, and an emphasis on lyrical melody all now have associations with Neapolitan music.¹⁰¹

As a result of these Italian historiographical traditions, music histories written in North America have followed a similar trajectory, emphasizing “the music itself” and largely

⁹⁷ Jordan Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 109.

⁹⁸ For a comprehensive account of Gesualdo, his compositional style, and his impact on twentieth-century composers, see Glenn Watkins, *The Gesualdo Hex: Music, Myth, and Memory* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010).

⁹⁹ Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera*, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Ironically, Scarlatti himself was a Roman. See *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 133.

neglecting the study of the culture in which it existed. For example, William Stalnaker's unpublished dissertation *The Beginnings of Opera in Naples* (1968) analyzes early possible models for opera in Naples. The study, largely a musico-textual one, positions Naples as isolated from the rest of Italy and neglects to account for the frequent exchange of ideas and musics throughout the peninsula. Similarly, Michael Robinson's *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (1972) largely bypasses the seventeenth century—Robinson holds that the arrival of Alessandro Scarlatti in 1684 initiated a Neapolitan style that had previously been untapped.¹⁰² Keith Larson's unpublished dissertation *The Unaccompanied Neapolitan Madrigal from 1536-1654* (1985) primarily concerns the impact of Carlo Gesualdo on Neapolitan music, utilizing stylistic comparative score study.¹⁰³

In the past two decades, many of the positivist and nationalist tendencies of these studies have begun to be broken down and problematized. Scholars in both Italy and North America now emphasize the importance of interdisciplinary discourse in avoiding research that views Naples exclusively in terms of the southern problem, as well as research that avoids the temptation to re-survey Neapolitan history using positivist frameworks. Notable historical overviews include Tommaso Astarita's *The Continuity of Feudal Power* (2002) and *Between Salt Water and Holy Water* (2005), Jordan Lancaster's *In the Shadow of Vesuvius* (2005), and Eleni Sakellariou's *Southern Italy in the Late Middle Ages* (2012). In addition, recent interdisciplinary collections of essays on southern Italy provide broad perspectives on Neapolitan artistic traditions in their cultural contexts, such as Lumley and Morris's *The New History of the Italian South* (1997), Warr and Elliot's *Art and Architecture in Naples, 1266-1713* (2010), Marino and Vecce's recent

¹⁰² Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera*, 16.

¹⁰³ Keith Austin Larson, "The Unaccompanied Neapolitan Madrigal from 1536-1654" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), ix.

special edition of *California Italian Studies*, entitled *The Disciplines of the Arts and Sciences in Naples* (2012), Calaresu and Hills's *New Approaches to Naples (c.1500-1800)* (2013), and Astarita's *A Companion to Early Modern Naples* (2013).

However, in the field of musicology, scholars have lagged behind other disciplines in coming to terms with the place of Naples and southern Italy in the history of western music. Until the publication of Dinko Fabris's *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples: Francesco Provenzale (1634-1704)* (2007), the only monographs available on Neapolitan music in the early modern period were Donna Cardamone's two-volume *The Canzone Villanesca Alla Napolitana* (1981) and Allan Atlas's *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (1985).¹⁰⁴ More recently, Anthony DelDonna published a book entitled *Opera, Theatrical Culture and Society in Late Eighteenth-Century Naples* (2012), which exhibits many of the teleological qualities that plagued the studies previously mentioned. Following in the tradition of Croce, both Fabris and DelDonna place emphasis on the development of the Neapolitan school in the late seventeenth century.¹⁰⁵ To date, there has been no work written in English surveying music in Naples during the sixteenth century, nor a comprehensive interpretation that integrates both centuries of Spanish rule—a period John Marino refers to as “the long sixteenth century.”¹⁰⁶ While new studies on Naples are being written every year in other disciplines, musicology continues to disregard the vitality of Neapolitan culture in the early modern period, clinging to the edifice of a canonical narrative of European music.

¹⁰⁴ Cardamone has recently released an additional volume in which she elaborates upon her chapters regarding issues of culture and politics in sixteenth-century Naples. Donna Cardamone, *The Canzone Villanesca Alla Napolitana* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008).

¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, I would add that Fabris's emphasis on the biography of Francesco Provenzale creates a substantial gap in the first half of the seventeenth century, when many of the institutions within which Provenzale worked were set into place.

¹⁰⁶ Marino, “Myths of Modernity and the Myth of the City,” 13.

In addition to these sources, my interpretation relies on recent historical monographs that discuss the dynamics of court culture in early modern Naples—Gabriel Guarino’s *Representing the King’s Splendour* (2010) and John Marino’s *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (2011). Marino and Guarino offer comprehensive accounts of early seventeenth-century Naples rare in the diverse literatures on the city, examining early modern Naples from an interdisciplinary perspective and making frequent reference to art, literature, and music. These authors maintain a focus on the complex rituals and festivals of the court and the church, showing that these provided a means of structuring Neapolitan sensory experience and worldview. Marino and Guarino offer unusually comprehensive and interdisciplinary accounts of early seventeenth-century Naples, challenging simplistic notions of *meridianilismo*.

Another branch of scholarship I utilize in this study focuses on the life and works of Giambattista Basile, the bulk of which constitutes literary studies related to the fairy tales of *Lo cunto*. Traditionally, Basile has been viewed as a minor figure in Italian literary history, and his monumental *Lo cunto* was considered as an isolated and bizarre phenomenon. However, Nancy Canepa illustrates Basile’s centrality to the history of the literary fairy tale and reassesses *Lo cunto* as crucial to understanding how baroque literature functioned in Neapolitan society.¹⁰⁷ In addition, Canepa has translated the work into modern English.¹⁰⁸ Because *Lo cunto* was written in an obscure Neapolitan dialect of Basile’s own making, in past translations, the work has been misinterpreted, censored, or simplified to appeal to mainstream audiences.¹⁰⁹ In her translation, Canepa attempts to capture the full force of Basile’s bold use of the vernacular dialect, paying

¹⁰⁷ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 62.

¹⁰⁸ Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, translated by Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007).

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

careful attention to the complex cultural connotations of his references and literary devices.

Canepa also alludes to several other recent studies of Basile's works by Michele Rak, Jack Zipes, and Suzanne Magnanini that treat *Lo cunto* as indicative of its cultural environment.¹¹⁰ The work of Canepa and her contemporaries on *Lo cunto* provides a framework for my own analysis of Basile's spectacles—texts that have previously been untreated. This thesis contributes to Basile studies by integrating the study of his Italian and Neapolitan works, considering his dramatic output as a bridge that traverses literary boundaries.

Finally, my reading of viceregal spectacles draws from recent studies of renaissance and baroque spectacle in early modern Europe. Edward Muir's groundbreaking work provides a foundational model for understanding political spectacle as ritual, arguing for interplay between sacred, secular, public, and private realms of discourse.¹¹¹ Similarly, a number of studies identify the importance of spectacle in manufacturing and maintaining images of royal personae, as well as implementing systems of social surveillance in early modern Europe. For example, in *Art and Power* (1984) and *Splendor at Court* (1973), Roy Strong surveys iconographies of power at the courts of France, Spain, and the Medici court of Florence. Kristian Auerke's *Gods of Play* (1994) also studies a wide range of courts (the Barberini in Rome, Charles V in Madrid, Louis XIV at Versailles, and the Hapsburg court of Leopold I) in order to demonstrate what he calls the "universal qualities" of European absolutist spectacle.¹¹² More recently, Nina Treadwell and

¹¹⁰ See Michele Rak, "Il racconto fiabesco," in *Lo Cunto de li Cunti*, by Giambattista Basile, edited and translated by Michele Rak (Milan: Garzanti, 1986); Jack Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001); Suzanne Magnanini, *Fairy Tale Science: Monstrous Generation in the Tales of Straparola and Basile* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

¹¹¹ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

¹¹² Kristian Auerke, *Gods of Play: Baroque Festive Performances as Rhetorical Discourse* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 26.

Kelley Harness have taken more concentrated approaches, focusing on the musical and theatrical life of Florence in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Working in the mid-seventeenth century, in *Echoes of Women's Voices* (2006) Harness studies the self-fashioning of female voices in the patronage circles of early modern Florence. Integrating sacred and secular musical realms, Harness examines patronage strategies from female regents and religious as a means of communication, thwarting post-Tridentine attempts to silence female voices.¹¹³

Treadwell documents the 1589 *intermedi* for a single Medici wedding in *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court* (2008), revealing how musical effects of *meraviglia* worked to establish the autonomy of the Medici to those attending the event. Treadwell identifies the Medici grand duke as “Neoplatonic magus,” one who displayed his proto-magical prowess through the artistic feats of others.¹¹⁴

In formulating an approach to Basile's spectacles, the exceptionality of Naples poses several challenges and complicates assumptions that have been used in previous contexts. For example, Aercke has argued for a scholarly distinction between communal festive forms (such as festivals, processions, and triumphal entries) and private festive performances (such as masques, *ballet de cour*, and *intermedi*), considering absolutist spectacle as pointing to the end of a “ruler-as-actor” model.¹¹⁵ In the same way Roy Strong, emphasizing the allegorical representations of “the idea of monarchy,” neglects to consider the artists behind those representations of power.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Kelley Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices: Music, Art, and Female Patronage in Early Modern Florence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 10.

¹¹⁴ Nina Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court: The 1589 Interludes for La Pellegrina* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 73; Nina Treadwell, “Music of the Gods: Solo Song and *Effetti Meravigliosi* in the Interludes for *La Pellegrina*,” *Current Musicology* 83 (Spring 2007): 69.

¹¹⁵ Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 26.

¹¹⁶ Strong, *Art and Power*, 68.

Utilizing frameworks of negotiation, my analysis considers Basile's writing as what Harness describes as "collaborative communication," serving an artist's self-fashioning, a fashioning of the absent ruler, and a fashioning of the city itself.¹¹⁷ Recently, Emma Dillon has used a similar approach to create a portrait of musical life in twelfth and thirteenth century France, recontextualizing diverse repertoires (from isorhythmic motets to street cries) within their medieval soundscapes.¹¹⁸ Like Dillon's work, my own purports to "listen to the past" and "listen in the past," taking viceregal spectacles as embedded in a broader field of play where place and performance both contribute to the shaping of Neapolitan identity.¹¹⁹

This study of early modern Neapolitan musico-dramatic spectacle thus encompasses a broad range of scholarship from multiple disciplines. As Bohlman writes, history itself forms in a space that is "contested because fragments of the past remain in the everyday of the present."¹²⁰ Entering the past from the present requires a wide range of methods that open up "modalities of interpretation," allowing for the recognition of an equally wide range of differences.¹²¹ Likewise, in this project I adopt an interdisciplinary approach that places the music of Spanish Naples in a broader cultural context and will facilitate future studies of early modern Neapolitan music. I integrate soundscape and spectacle studies and undertake phenomenological close readings of Basile's dramatic works to demonstrate how those involved in viceregal spectacles engaged in the negotiation and performance of their Neapolitan identities, ensounding themselves *in mezzo*.

¹¹⁷ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 4.

¹¹⁸ Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France, 1260-1330* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 25.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²⁰ Bohlman, "Returning to the Ethnomusicological Past," 249.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 255.

Chapter Overview

Chapter Two plots the urban metropolis of early seventeenth-century Naples and examines the lived experiences of its inhabitants. During this period, the city underwent significant growth, extending its borders to accommodate the expanding Spanish bureaucracy, the influx of rural migrants fleeing the oppressive conditions of the countryside, and the rise in religious orders and clergy members.¹²² In addition, the calendrical cycles of the church, state, and *popolo* underwent changes, as ever more public festivals and holidays were added to commemorate saints and events in the lives of the Spanish monarchs and viceroys.¹²³ The spectacles of Basile were an integral feature of this integrative soundscape, and thus entwined with the lives of Neapolitan citizens.

However, seventeenth-century Naples had a landscape both real and imagined. Place (and space) in the city constituted more than two-dimensional points on a map—they were three-dimensional sites where individuals structured themselves and their relationships with others. In this chapter, I draw from the phenomenological work of Tim Ingold and Bruce Smith to remember the “place” of Naples as an intricate web of individual lifelines that concurrently pulse to form the heartbeat of Naples, and the rhythm of the contact zone.¹²⁴ The city is thus not only a collection of geographical locations, but an overlapping series of sensory experiences that Ingold regards as a “meshwork” of tightly bound knots.¹²⁵ Within this meshwork the myth of Naples became enlivened through these lived experiences.

¹²² Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 115.

¹²³ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 17.

¹²⁴ See Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England* and Ingold, *Being Alive*.

¹²⁵ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 149.

Chapter Three focuses on one such experience, that of Giambattista Basile. Focusing on Basile's life as a lifeline within this complex meshwork, I examine his interactions with the noble and viceregal courts of Naples during the period in which his spectacles were published. While these works were written using Italian and Spanish, the languages of the court, I identify within them a thinly-veiled, biting harsh voice of cultural critique.¹²⁶ As Giuseppe Gerbino has observed, the pastoral forms with which Basile experimented were contemporarily recognized as protest genres.¹²⁷ Working within established languages of power (especially that of spectacle), Basile developed his own transculturated language that enabled him to subvert social norms, a process de Certeau and Pine refer to as "making do."¹²⁸ Furthermore, Basile's life can thus be viewed as an extended performative event: in both the public sphere of his courtier life and the private sphere of his writing, he strategically negotiated *napolitanità* to suit his political needs.

Using this performative framework, in this chapter I also present his landmark *Lo cunto de li cunti* (1631) as intricately tied to the three viceregal spectacles. Basile gradually worked on *Lo cunto* throughout his career, and made arrangements for the work to be published posthumously.¹²⁹ For Basile, the collection offered a reflection on the course of his career as a courtier and a culmination of his performance of Neapolitan identity.¹³⁰ The fairy tales of *Lo cunto* are thus crucial to understanding the subtleties of social discourse he presented in his spectacles.

¹²⁶ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 40.

¹²⁷ Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 30.

¹²⁸ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 36; Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 7

¹²⁹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 32.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Chapter Four is a case study of the three spectacles that re-members the transculturated voices of Neapolitan performers and musicians as resonant features of Pratt's contact zone. Though these events were issued and regulated by the Spanish viceroyalty, I suggest that as autoethnographic texts, these spectacles reveal communal notions of Neapolitan identity—a shared consciousness of the shifting topographies of power that contributed to the collapse of the Spanish regime. I utilize materials from previous chapters to present these events as indicative of the very societal tensions that they seek to conceal. I undertake a phenomenological close reading of Basile's spectacles that considers them as extensions of the festival soundscape, thus blurring distinctions between public and private, as well as high and low, forms of political discourse. Furthermore, I argue that by using tactics of making do, Basile demonstrates that performances of *napolitanità* in viceregal spectacles required constant negotiation, a blending of the courtly and the carnivalesque that could both support and subvert the status quo. Given their contexts, it is clear that the Spanish—as well as their Neapolitan subjects—were willing to go to extreme lengths to maintain images of cultural wealth and prosperity.

In the final chapter, I make conclusions concerning the repercussions of this study for future research on Neapolitan music. Despite such elaborate expressions of power, the Spanish Empire would continue to decline as the seventeenth century progressed, eventually leading to the fall of the dynasty in 1713.¹³¹ The social trends exhibited by Naples in the early seventeenth century continued to shape the development of the Italian South even after the Risorgimento in 1868.¹³² Further studies of early modern Neapolitan music are crucial to reevaluating trans-historical representations of Neapolitan culture. Most likely, contact zones exist within all such

¹³¹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 17.

¹³² Morris, "Challenging *Meridianilismo*," 12.

representations, through which Neapolitan identities have continually been performed. Thus, by re-assembling of re-membered sights and sounds, this thesis provides one answer to the mystery of *contrasenso* that so fascinated Bourdain. As we will see, Naples *works* not only “against sense,” but with it.

CHAPTER TWO

Hearing the Siren's Song: Geography, Sound, and Power in Naples

The vast side of the Euboean rock opens up and forms a cave; one hundred large openings, one hundred doors lead to it, from it flow out as many voices, the Sybil's responses.
—Virgil¹

The Sybil's Cave, The Siren's Song

The song of Naples has always been heard as a siren song. Both deceptively dangerous and hauntingly beautiful, its melody evades capture by the historian seeking to rediscover the voices of the past held within. If there is *one* song to be heard, it is not one whose source can be easily pinpointed. Those voices flowing from the cave of the legendary Sybil (the prophetess who foretold to Aeneas the founding of Rome) resound across the Campania, from the Phlegrean fields to the Pizzofalcone, all the while whispering stories of the past, gossip about current events, and even prophecies of the future.² If the *words* to this song of Naples lie within such whispers, by the time the echoes are heard within the city itself, they have become distorted and transformed, their original meanings lost in translation. Within this *bricolage*, however, a web of symbiotic relationships is forged—myth and history, as well as present and past, have become irrevocably intertwined, melding into the fabric of the Neapolitan landscape itself.

While its song remains elusive, at the heart of the myth (and history) of Naples lies the siren herself—Parthenope, daughter of Melpomene, the muse of tragedy.³ Following her failed seduction of Odysseus, the devastated Parthenope (in Italian, Partenope) threw herself into the

¹ Virgil, “Book VI, lines 42-44,” *Aeneid*, translated by Frederick Holland Dewey (1917; reprint, New York: Wildside Press, 2011), 260.

² Jordan Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 10.

³ Ibid.

sea for grief, washing up on the Neapolitan shore.⁴ Greek settlers from Cumae found her body and carried it to the top of a nearby hill, later to be called Pizzofalcone [meaning “high place of the falcon”];⁵ she was buried at the site on which they would build their city Paleopolis (also called Partenope).⁶ Half-human, half-bird, the dead siren would rise like a phoenix to be hailed as guardian, muse, and demon to the adjacent “new city” nestled within the arms of the Tyrrhenian Sea and beneath the shadow of Mount Vesuvius.⁷

For Naples (Neapolis), Partenope met the needs of diverse myths, many of which were concocted in the early modern period. For example, historian Michelle Zappullo wrote in 1598 that Naples, while founded as a Greek colony, “proved to be the first city of Europe converted to Christianity and the refuge of Christianity during the persecution of the primitive church...and is the most devout of every other part of Italy.”⁸ The pagan image of Partenope (and the sounds of her music) became a metaphor for Naples’s *buon governo*, testifying to harmony between politics, religion, and society.⁹ During Spanish occupation, the identification of Naples with harmony only intensified—secretary Capaccio emphasized the “perfect harmony” achieved with the host Kingdom of Spain, and that Partenope’s “nature as a bird signifies none other than the happiness of the ingenious Neapolitans, eager to disperse in the service of their Kings, most

⁴ Tommaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 11.

⁵ In the thirteenth century, the King of Naples, Charles I of Anjou, was said to have practiced his falconry atop the hill, the event from whence the name derives. With the addition of a church, the hill was also to take the name Mountain of God. Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius*, 14; Enrico Bacco and Cesare D’Engenio Caracciolo, *Naples: An Early Guide*, edited and translated by Eileen Gardiner (New York: Italica Press, 1991), 22.

⁶ Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius*, 13.

⁷ John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2011), 53.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

eager to acquire all their greatness, and to fly with contemplation to the heavens to fuse with the new Christian Religion to become superior to every nation.”¹⁰ At the turn of the seventeenth century, Naples had recast itself as a more perfect Rome, a new Jerusalem where God’s kingdom might come to fruition with the help of his Spanish emissaries.¹¹

As this mythology of the city was collaboratively constructed during the seventeenth century, there also arose in Naples a geographical conception of the city predicated upon shared sensory experiences. Just as Neapolitans had united as “willing vassals who have united the different states of plebs, *popolo*, and nobility” to serve their Spanish overlords, so too the inhabitants of the city came to conceive of their individually lived “spaces” as entwined within the communal “place” of Naples.¹² R. Murray Schafer’s notion of a soundscape proves integral to understanding this Neapolitan sense of place. The city achieved a concord between the imagined landscape of its myth and its physical topography, both of which became linked to the communal conception of a total sonic environment.¹³ According to Tim Ingold’s notion of place, such shared sensory experiences do not merely result from occupying the same *space* [i.e., the geographical space of Naples], but indeed contribute to a dense “meshwork” of overlapping and knotted “lifelines” in which *place* becomes culturally constructed and “inhabited”.¹⁴ Thus, I posit that the place of early modern Naples, while encompassing a geographical space partially imagined through a government-sanctioned myth, can also be interpreted as an intersection of

¹⁰ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, quoted in *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹² *Ibid.*, 52.

¹³ R. Murray Schafer, *The Soundscape* (Rochester, VT: Destiny Books, 1993), 4.

¹⁴ Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 148.

inhabiting lives that *ensounded* themselves within that myth through a social soundscape of place.

Though the soundscape of seventeenth-century Naples, like the myth of Naples itself, was collectively devised and shared by diverse social spheres, its various features were subject to censure and surveillance by hierarchical structures of power that kept certain sounds in their proper place. In other words, topographies of sound, determined by aural features such as keynotes [often imperceptible background sounds], signals [sounds that actively indicate themselves as consciously heard] and soundmarks [sounds that signal a particular place],”¹⁵ often corresponded with geographies of power.¹⁶ This ontological dynamic was reinforced through collaboration between the viceroys, church officials, and *seggi* members.¹⁷ During the seventeenth century, these groups made a consolidated effort to barrage Neapolitans with countless religious and civic festivals, which served to stave off social unrest caused by famine and plague, and to mask the destabilization of the city’s government and economy.¹⁸ These events, coincident with civic and liturgical calendars, provided for the Neapolitan populace constant reminders of the direct role God played in the affairs of his chosen city.¹⁹ Each festival had its own ceremonial procession, whose route emphasized the hierarchical structures of power that held the city together.²⁰

¹⁵ These terms will be further discussed below in my discussion of the physical geography of the city and its accompanied geography of power. Schafer, *Soundscape*, 9.

¹⁶ Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 50.

¹⁷ Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 1.

¹⁸ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 81.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁰ These routes were organized in accordance with the organization of Naples’s various neighborhoods—precise movements between noble, *popolo*, and Spanish sectors were treated as crucial

Ironically, while these processions served to reinforce rigidly defined social stratification, they also offered sites of negotiation operating within the sphere of Pratt's contact zone.²¹ As communal ritual, such spectacles necessitated intermingling between the voices of many social classes—these people shouted and sang together as *cavalieri* marched through the streets and musicians played on elaborate *apparati* floats decked with ornamental displays of viceregal power.²² Despite the regulatory intentions of Neapolitan authorities, the frequency and prominence of these festivals testify to an integrative soundscape, one in which the sonic experiences of viceroy, *plebe*, and everyone in between, coincided and created a shared language of spectacle. Furthermore, it is precisely this language, with its corresponding soundscape, that finds its way into the court-sponsored musico-dramatic spectacles of Giambattista Basile. The sounds and sights of Neapolitan festivals contributed to a shared phenomenology of Naples as a “resounding city.”²³ These can be reimagined through written accounts and preserved iconography, and by attuning our own senses to those of our historical informants, these records become enlivened through a process Bruce Smith calls “re-membering.”²⁴ Re-membering requires an acknowledgement of sounds as both immediately felt and recalled within the early modern body.²⁵ As Emma Dillon states, the researcher must “listen in the past” as well as “to the

to the maintenance of power structures. I will address these geographic trajectories further in my discussion below. Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 44.

²¹ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” in *Profession 91* (1991): 34.

²² Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 54.

²³ Geoffrey Baker, “The Resounding City,” in *Music and Urban Society in Colonial Latin America*, edited by Geoffrey Baker and Tess Knighton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

²⁴ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 101.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

past.”²⁶ Within these festivals, Neapolitans readily performed themselves as extensions of the social body of which they were part. Like those echoing from the Cave of the Sybil, their voices mesh with the rhythm of the contact zone.

Geographies of Naples: Physical, Mythical, and Political

I have never been to Naples. Having missed a chance some years ago, the city remains an illusion situated in my memory, a frustrating shadow of what *might have been*. I am left to speculate about the churches I could have visited, the castles I would have explored, and the natural phenomena I should have walked. Perhaps in the writing of this thesis, I am merely creating an idyllic Other to satisfy some fantastical vision. After all, my perception of the city is rooted in indirect observation of locations and secondary knowledge of events compiled from disparate sources, from which I attempt to piece together “what it’s all about.” However, such an ephemeral experience lies firmly within the realm of a manufactured mythology that was present in the seventeenth century and continues to permeate the “idea” of Naples.

In the early modern era, Naples increasingly relied on its topography as a means of shaping its cultural identity.²⁷ While to modern-day observers the rolling hills and gorgeous beaches dominate our sightlines, in this period the topography of Naples was understood primarily as “a topography of poetry” that fluidly blended Naples’s Greek past with its Christian present.²⁸ Travelers imagined the city as a collection of historically significant sites, many of them linked to an acclaimed classical literary tradition of “Neapolitan” writers ranging from

²⁶ Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France, 1260-1330* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 16.

²⁷ Harald Hendrix, “Topographies of Poetry: Mapping Early Modern Naples,” in *New Approaches to Naples*, eds. Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 81.

²⁸ Ibid.

Virgil to Giambattista Marino.²⁹ Likewise, the city's extensive network of churches, which housed countless saintly relics, evoked fascination and reverence from religious devotees.³⁰ Especially in the seventeenth century, maps of Naples juxtaposed images of Virgil's tomb against religious *topoi*, such as portraits of patron saints Gennaro and Giovanni.³¹ The publication of numerous guidebooks and travel narratives, both by locals seeking to draw people to the city as well as by foreigners recounting their visits, reinforced these tropes.³²

For example, in a 1648 map by Pietro Motte, an array of patron saints hover above a thriving city—the harbor appears full of ships and a long list of buildings and sites to visit is displayed below, which the reader can cross-reference on the map (Figure 2.1).³³ Interestingly, the streets appear to be quite wide and the neighborhoods are adequately spaced to account for the soaring population held within—images that had little correspondence with the reality of the over-crowded, narrow streets.³⁴ In a 1696 map, Paolo Petrini portrays the inner workings of the city through blown-up site-specific images that appear on the maps edges (Figure 2.2).³⁵ Common to the *vedutismo* [a genre of painting where landscapes and cityscapes are depicted in detail] style prominent in the seventeenth century, Petrini attempts here to produce views that describe the city as a whole, “both in its position within the landscape and as a sequence of

²⁹ Ibid., 84.

³⁰ Bacco, *An Early Guide*, xiv.

³¹ Helen Hills, “Through a Glass Darkly: Material Holiness and the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro in Naples,” in *New Approaches to Naples*, edited by Helen Hills and Melissa Calaresu (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 52-53.

³² Hendrix, “Topographies of Poetry,” 87.

³³ Vladimiro Valerio, “Plans and Views of Naples in the Early Modern Period,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 79.

³⁴ Ibid., 80.

³⁵ Ibid., 81.

particular important elements within a social and architectural context.”³⁶ Among the city’s highlights, Petrini chooses Mount Vesuvius (upper left hand corner), the Palazzo Reale (directly to the right of Vesuvius), and the coast of Posillipo (third image down on the right hand side). As we will soon see, these locations become incredibly important to the representation of Naples.

As the city’s population grew in size and diversity, this coexistence of the sacred and the profane, while seemingly contradictory, strengthened a notion of Neapolitan exceptionality. By 1600, residents numbered around 300,000, making Naples the largest city in the Spanish Empire, and one of the three largest in the Christian world.³⁷ These influxes of immigrants arrived with varying prerogatives: Spanish bureaucratic officials and soldiers came to impose additional order, aristocratic families arrived to pander to the Spanish court, foreigners (Genoese, Florentine, Catalan, Flemish, German, French, English, and others) established markets that provided imported goods, and impoverished peasants fled even harsher conditions in the Campania.³⁸ Within such an array of people groups, the municipal secretary Capaccio found in Naples “the greatest vices, freedom of flesh and the senses...and impatience with the yoke of virtue.”³⁹ The same official, however, conceded that “the city of Naples ennobles all who come to live here...when some of them come to live here they seem to be reborn, and they change

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 159.

³⁸ During the sixteenth century, lenient Spanish policies accounted for these migrations. Neapolitans living in the city paid lower taxes than residents of other areas of the kingdom, the royal government supplied cheap bread, and noble families living in Naples were granted procedural privileges. Ibid., 161.

³⁹ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, quoted in Ibid.

customs, and the roughness of the countryside becomes civilization and the liberty of Naples.”⁴⁰

According to a common proverb, the city was “a paradise inhabited by devils.”⁴¹

However, the city’s particular geography and infrastructure proved poorly adapted to meet the needs of a metropolis. Until the sixteenth century, city authorities consolidated the

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

316. Paolo Petri, View of Naples, 1696-98.

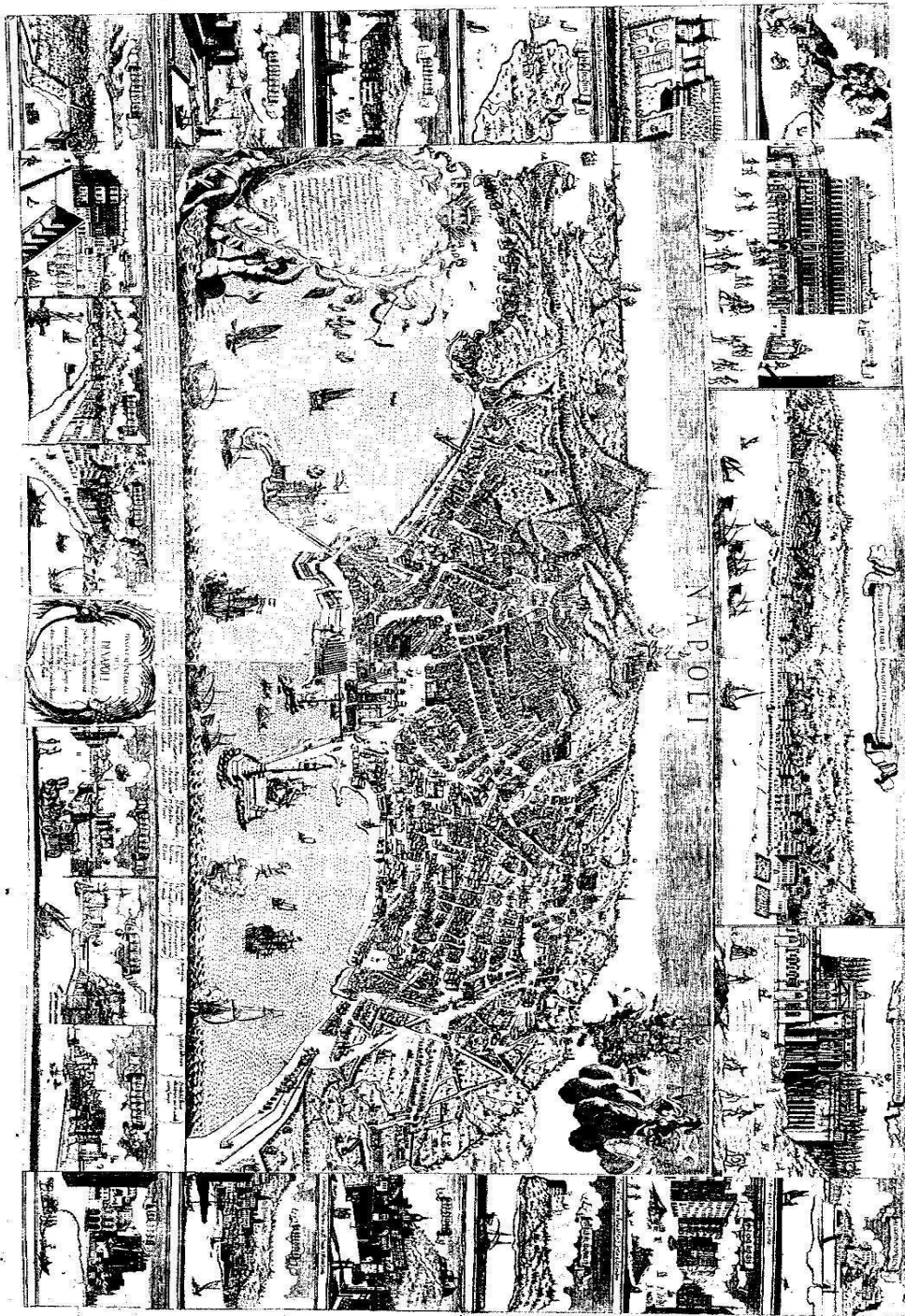


Figure 2.2 View of Naples, 1696-98⁴³

⁴³ Source: Paolo Petri, "View of Naples, 1696-98," Figure 3.16 in Ibid.

urban center of Naples closer to the shore; the Spanish made a concentrated effort to extend the boundaries of the city further east and north.⁴⁴ Even so, the population density became one of the highest in Europe (some 7,000 per square kilometer), and buildings four to six stories high a common (albeit unique) feature of Neapolitan architecture. While the church, government, bureaucracy, military, and nobility offered employment and required a variety of artisan services, huge numbers of unemployed *lazzaroni* [meaning “lepers,” the word derives from St. Lazarus] lived in destitution. In the meantime, the nobility constructed increasingly spacious palaces, the church continued to commission sanctuaries and monasteries, and the Spanish built government facilities to house its huge bureaucracy and prisons to confine traitors and wrong-doers. In this highly contested space, the balance of power was facilitated through the “three Fs:” *farina, forza e festini*—flour, the scaffold, and festivals.

Though cramped living conditions made contact between these groups inevitable, social topographies remained situated within a geographical hierarchy that dated back to the rule of the Angevin kings.⁴⁵ For much of its history, five traditional *porti* [gates] led into the city: Capuana, Nolana, San Gennaro, Nova, and Del Carmine.⁴⁶ Neapolitans symbolically associated these with the five noble *seggi*, a term with a fourfold meaning: it denoted a district, the council that represented a prominent aristocratic group of families living in that district, the building in which this council met, and the representative elected by the council to the city’s six *eletti seggi*.⁴⁷ During the bulk of the Spanish rule, the most powerful family group was Capuana, followed

⁴⁴ This paragraph draws from Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius*, 90-92.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁶ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 99.

⁴⁷ Tommaso Astarita, *The Continuity of Feudal Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 24.

closely by Nido, with Porto, Portanova, and Montagna holding relatively little power.⁴⁸ The *seggio del popolo*, centered at the Piazza della Selleria, held a significant portion of the rising merchant class, of which a number of families bought noble titles from the Spanish viceroy.⁴⁹ New neighborhoods were built around the city center to accommodate this expanding *popolo*, as well as the Spanish bureaucracy into which they were becoming integrated.⁵⁰ While these spaces offered some relief, the old center retained a social prestige associated with the noble *seggi*, and thus remained a center of activity.⁵¹ In these poor living conditions, all classes lived close together—a typical Neapolitan residential building often housed the poorest residents on the *basso* [ground] floor, slightly less poor tenants on the highest floors, and the wealthy nobility within the spacious middle floors.⁵² Compelled by a consistently warm climate, many Neapolitans spent much of their day outside, producing the vibrant soundscape that Capaccio refers to as “the buzzing of bees.”⁵³

While the city’s mythology was adapted to address the presence of new social topographies, two features of the Neapolitan landscape remained firmly fixed within its topography of poetry. I am referring to the regions situated at the twin peaks of Posillipo and Mount Vesuvius, which conveniently correspond to the boundaries by which the city of Naples defined itself. Maps of the city do not usually attempt to depict regions of the Campania beyond them, and guidebooks normally confine their lists of families, neighborhoods, and churches to

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 101.

⁵⁰ Astarita, *Continuity of Feudal Power*, 25.

⁵¹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 166.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 167.

these peripheries.⁵⁴ Furthermore, these sites were crucial to the representation of Naples's Greco-Roman heritage. Residents believed that the coast of Posillipo once served as the site of the summer palaces of high Roman officials like Nero; Pompeii and Herculaneum, of course, were the infamous Roman cities laid to waste by the fires of Vesuvius in 79 CE.⁵⁵ According to a seventeenth-century guidebook by Enrico Bacco, the coast of Posillipo provided "a place of quiet and repose for the habitation of those ancient Romans who were free from the burdens of every care," which contemporarily held "some of the most beautiful palaces, with charming and delightful gardens, built by the Neapolitans for comfort and the pleasures of summer."⁵⁶ The same writer held Vesuvius, on the other hand, as capable of "making strange madness...this mountain has thrown up flames of fire, ash and balls of sulfurous minerals, with burning stones, great ruin, and notable damage to the city and neighboring villas, as many different authors write."⁵⁷

In both of these passages, Bacco insists on the continuity of Neapolitan exceptionality that links the past and the present, a trope consistent with the myth of Naples. Significantly, he positions the Neapolitan nobility as holding the rightful inheritance of their Roman ancestors. Indeed, Posillipo seems to be the symbol of all "the delights that mitigate every sorrow that afflicts the heart," while Vesuvius holds the potential for death and destruction.⁵⁸ However, regarding the same sites, Neapolitans held contradictory opinions. For example, contemporary accounts express abject horror at the excesses of festivity taking place at Posillipo—in the 1610s the Viceroy Count de Lemos issued a decree restricting Neapolitans from swimming nude on its

⁵⁴ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 56.

⁵⁵ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 13.

⁵⁶ Bacco, *An Early Guide*, 13.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.

beaches, also ordering prostitutes not to frequent its shores.⁵⁹ While inhabitants feared the flames of Vesuvius, Bacco identified the mountain as “famous for the fertility of its shrubs and vines, which produce the best Greco grapes and a wine very pleasant to the taste.”⁶⁰

Such contradictions, however, seem in complete compliance with the paradoxical myth of Naples. Just as the sacred and the profane necessarily coexisted, the images of Posillipo and Vesuvius reveal a parallel dichotomy of pleasure and terror. These dualities, anything but mutually exclusive, contributed to a cohesion essential to the balance of power. The pagan delights of Posillipo required the holy and cleansing fires of Vesuvius. The repeated presence of these images in this study suggests a dual geographical and mythical conception of the city shared across multiple social spheres—though locations, they became to Neapolitans *ideas* that explained God’s unique role and continuous presence in the history of Naples. Posillipo and Vesuvius, while constructed memories of the city’s mythical past, nonetheless held the potential to erupt into the present social sphere with the coequal force of a Dionysian frenzy or a volcanic explosion.

Furthermore, to the Neapolitan public, these images corresponded with sounds that resonated within the public imagination—on the one hand, the soothing tides of the rolling sea that seemed to place a maritime paradise within reach, and on the other, the roar of the volcano, the groan of the ground that crumbled beneath the feet of screaming citizens fleeing an oncoming pyroclastic flow—both of which could stimulate horror and wonder, as well as incite riot and devotion. Thus, these sounds proved difficult to separate within public perceptions to designated peripheries of “keynotes, signals, and soundmarks.”⁶¹ Rather, in Ingold’s words, “landscapes are

⁵⁹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 163.

⁶⁰ Bacco, *An Early Guide*, 31.

⁶¹ Schafer, *Soundscape*, 11.

woven into life, and lives are woven into the landscape.”⁶² The linkage between socio-political topography, physical geography, and sensory experience became crucial to the collaborative construction of a Neapolitan identity, one mirrored in civic-religious festivals.

Topographies of Sound and Power

While Naples was an integrative soundscape, the city’s rigid socio-political structure created a hierarchy of musical life that affected the way Neapolitans interacted with the music they heard and also how musicians interacted with one another.⁶³ The topographies of power discussed above corresponded to ideal topographies of sound designed to maintain the socio-political structures of the city. However, the cramped realities of life in Naples constantly blurred the lines between such sonic hierarchies. Nevertheless, the myth of Naples required a simulacrum of hierarchical “sound areas” that had their own “keynotes, signals, and soundmarks,” reinforcing the city’s topographies of power.⁶⁴ Within the meshwork of Naples, its various neighborhoods constituted what Smith terms “speech communities,” individuated by the interaction between speech and soundscape.⁶⁵ For example, contemporary accounts contrast the “noisy babble of the *popolo*” against the serene sounds of the Real Cappella.⁶⁶ Before I turn to the *festivi*, where the lines between such hierarchies faded into the roar of the crowd, it is useful to consider how Neapolitan musicians used existing structures of power to their sonic advantage.

According to Dinko Fabris, a pyramidal organization of musical institutions imitated the governmental system, leading to spheres of patronage emanating from the viceroy, the church,

⁶² Ingold, *Being Alive*, 47.

⁶³ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth Century Naples*, 15.

⁶⁴ Schafer, *Soundscape*, 9.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 51.

⁶⁶ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 44.

and the *seggi*.⁶⁷ At the top of this pyramid, the position of *maestro* of the Real Cappella oversaw a royal choir established by the Aragonese court, one that remained in place during the Spanish era.⁶⁸ In 1540, Viceroy Pedro Álvarez de Toledo moved the choir to the new Palazzo Reale, close to its former home at the Castelnuovo.⁶⁹ This consolidation of musical power strategically placed the Real Cappella at the center of Spanish authority, establishing its geographical position as the sonic heart of the resounding city.⁷⁰ Similarly, the most prestigious musical events were centered at the viceregal court, including *festini*, balls, comedies and opera, as well as the celebration of royal birthdays and marriages.⁷¹ For these events, composers often wrote songs in the many languages of the court; for example, Giovanni Maria Trabaci composed songs in Italian, Latin, and Spanish, creating a polylingual vocality that reflected the diversity of Naples.⁷² The viceroy equally expected the *maestro* to assist in the organization of these events; just as well, the singers of the Real Cappella (either the choir in total or its individual singers) performed in spectacles both in the confines of the Palazzo Reale and in the various ceremonies and celebrations taking place within its periphery.⁷³

Maestri positions and ensemble jobs were also available in subsequent “steps of the pyramid.” For example, the six *seggi eletti*, in charge of planning public feasts and processions,

⁶⁷ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 15.

⁶⁸ Allan Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28.

⁶⁹ The choir consisted of some twenty-six singers and twelve instrumentalists. This remained relatively fixed until Alessandro Scarlatti’s appointment to the position in 1684. Ibid., 27; Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 19.

⁷⁰ Baker, “Resounding City,” 7; Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 19.

⁷¹ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 15.

⁷² Keith Austin Larson, “The Unaccompanied Neapolitan Madrigal from 1536-1654” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 112.

⁷³ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 18.

delegated a *maestro di Cappella della Fidelissima Città* to organize the extensive artistic activities of each festival.⁷⁴ Located in the lavish palaces of the *seggi* neighborhoods surrounding the five *porti*, the households of the nobility often employed *musici di casa* for particular occasions, and commissioned composers to publish collections of music (especially madrigals) in honor of their family name.⁷⁵ Many musicians provided their services as educators within private homes of these noble families, especially prior to the advent of the city's four famous conservatories in the latter half of the seventeenth century.⁷⁶ Oftentimes, too, noblemen were amateur musicians and composers, though an attempt to make a living as a musician posed a threat to social standing—the exception to this rule, of course, lay in figures like Carlo Gesualdo.⁷⁷ Significantly, unlike northern Italian cities, few intellectual academies developed in Naples during Spanish rule, as viceroys “regarded such groups as potential hotbeds of religious and political rebellion and suppressed them.”⁷⁸ Of the ones that briefly existed, such as the Ardeni, the Incogniti, and the Sereni, we know little of their activities, and even less about their musical endeavors.⁷⁹ It is perhaps for the lack of institutions akin to the Florentine Camerata or the Venetian Incogniti (hence, the lack of opera) that scholars have tended to refer to Neapolitan music as frequently “behind the times.”⁸⁰

Situated opposite the Palazzo Reale near the Porta Nolana, the Duomo of San Gennaro held separate *maestri* posts for the archbishop's private chapel at the Palazzo Archivescovile, the

⁷⁴ For the Feast of San Giovanni, a special *maestro* was elected by the *popolo*, since the nobility generally did not participate. Ibid., 19.

⁷⁵ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 70.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 70.

⁷⁹ The exception to this rule is the Accademia degli Oziosi, which I discuss in Chapter 3.

⁸⁰ Michael F. Robinson, *Naples and Neapolitan Opera* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 23.

Tesoro di San Gennaro, and the Cappella del Duomo.⁸¹ While it is known that these institutions maintained their own singers and instrumentalists (in the Duomo, an organ on each side of the nave facilitated the singing of double choir compositions “in the Venetian style”), the lack of complete records makes it difficult to speculate about the size of church musical forces.⁸² In addition, oratories, confraternities, and churches of foreign communities throughout the city also maintained their own musicians, many of which had choirs in residence.⁸³ Music-making was also quite common in convents, where women’s voices, though confined to claustration, could often be heard singing sacred polyphony.⁸⁴ Within these religious communities, music provided an important means of spreading and strengthening the Catholic faith. In addition to daily liturgical music, frequent performances of moralistic plays, sacred *intermedi*, and choruses of *laudi spirituali* reinforced the belief in the exceptionality of Naples within God’s kingdom.⁸⁵

Unlike other European capitals and cities within the Italian peninsula, the frequent change of viceroys and the relative financial instability of noble courts made patronage patterns sporadic and flexible.⁸⁶ In the period under investigation (1608-1630), the Spanish government changed out viceroys no less than seven times.⁸⁷ While this could occur for a variety of reasons,

⁸¹ Fabris suggests that the archbishop and his circle was in direct competition with the musical forces of the viceroy. While he seems to associate musicians of the archbishop as constituting “true Neapolitan institutions,” I interpret them as part of the larger landscape of power. Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 19.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 22.

⁸⁴ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 123; for more on Neapolitan nuns in convents, see Helen Hills, *Invisible City: The Architecture of Devotion in Seventeenth-Century Neapolitan Convents* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) and Elisa Novi Chavarría, “The Space of Women,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013).

⁸⁵ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 121.

⁸⁶ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 15.

⁸⁷ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 29.

due to the increasingly transitory nature of the position, few viceroys after the famous rule of Pedro Álvarez de Toledo (1532-1553) made significant changes to the musical system of patronage.⁸⁸ However, conditions for Neapolitan musicians gradually improved as opportunities for music education increased among the expanding *popolo*, resulting in a rise in musicianship as a professional occupation.⁸⁹ During the sixteenth century, viceroys often imported their own musicians, most of whom were typically Franco-Flemish or Spanish composers and singers who worked at courts throughout the peninsula.⁹⁰ However, during the seventeenth century, viceroys increasingly awarded positions at the Palazzo Reale to Neapolitan musicians, and upon the death of Jean de' Macque in 1614, Giovanni Maria Trabaci was elected as the first Italian (and Neapolitan) *maestro di cappella*.⁹¹

Due to the lack of long-term employment from the declining houses of the nobility, the relative autonomy of the church, and the special relationship between the viceroy and the *popolo*, Fabris speculates that musicians, while reliant upon authoritative approval, were equally reliant upon “the rule of merit” bestowed through the public opinion of the *popolo*.⁹² Such a flexible system allowed musicians of diverse social backgrounds to develop spheres of influence and prestige among the competing forces of power.⁹³ This was especially true for the competitive *maestri*, who often carefully planned the dedications of their many publications of religious and secular vocal compositions to meet their political needs.⁹⁴ A number of musicians worked as

⁸⁸ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 16.

⁸⁹ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 120.

⁹⁰ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 18.

⁹¹ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 109.

⁹² Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 17.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 70.

manufacturers of instruments and publishers of such music, and their ties with composers potentially implicated them in these political ends.⁹⁵ In addition, a large number of *sonatori* [a term that usually indicated players of wind instruments] and *musici* [a broader term that encompassed string players and singers] constituted a mixture of *plebe* and *popolo* musicians ranging from “galley prisoners; itinerant, mendicant musicians such as *cantastorie* [story-telling bards who often improvised poetry and music]; free-lance instrumentalists; and possibly salaried trumpeters, pipers, and drummers hired by the church, the city, and the Kingdom.”⁹⁶ Particularly among this latter group, there lay the opportunity to be granted jobs as heralds and *sonatori* in the viceregal court and in churches, as the city’s many *festini* relied heavily on large instrumental forces.⁹⁷ Yet while these jobs offered social prestige, they were most likely not lucrative enough to make a living; indeed, a viceregal *prammatica* issued in 1558 forbade *sonatori* from going door to door begging for money.⁹⁸ In the absence of an effective guild system (the first for musicians was not established until 1569), aligning oneself with a *maestro* who held political, financial, and social power became a way for these performers to gain access to resources and positions radiating from these centers.⁹⁹ As a result, topographies of power increasingly correlated to topographies of sound, resulting in a *place-binding* of knots of musicians that resonated and rippled through the meshwork of Naples.¹⁰⁰

Accordingly, Fabris states that the display of musical power that accompanied public festivals “were occasions to exhibit the prestige gained by different institutions, also providing

⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 25.

⁹⁹ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 63.

opportunities for a direct comparison of, and competition between, the *maestri* and their musical forces.”¹⁰¹ Indeed, festivals served as representations of the status quo, while intersecting musical and social forces that might unravel the metaphor of the city, making them highly contentious events.¹⁰² At any point, a variation from precedent could result in a reorientation of social power that could have long-term effects.¹⁰³ In Marino’s words, “festivals create a special time outside of time that permits inversion, which in turn reinforces the social order but also provides the language and practices for resistance that can sometimes be used to challenge that order.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, because festivals occupied the liminal space of the contact zone, they share a language of resistance with viceregal spectacles, enabling a fusion of “public” forms of discourse with “private” forms of entertainment.¹⁰⁵ The key to this social process, as Ingold states, is *movement*.¹⁰⁶

Ensounding the Meshwork: The Geographical Mythology of Naples

In the seventeenth century, Naples was “a resounding city” where a shared sense of place and a language of spectacle made possible an integrative soundscape that had the potential to *ensound* Neapolitan identities within the meshwork of the city.¹⁰⁷ Rather than attempt a comprehensive outline of the complex calendrical cycles of the state and the church, I now focus

¹⁰¹ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 17.

¹⁰² Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 44.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁰⁴ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 66.

¹⁰⁵ For a counter-argument to this integration of public and private spectacles, see Kristian Aercke, *Gods of Play: Baroque Festive Performances as Rhetorical Discourse* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 32-36.

¹⁰⁶ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 150.

¹⁰⁷ Baker, “Resounding City,” 2; Ingold, *Being Alive*, 139.

on two major Neapolitan spectacles: the Festival of San Giovanni, which occurred on June 23-24 and centered around the *popolo*'s Piazza della Selleria, and the *Spassi di Posillipo*, which occurred during the months of July and August on the beaches of Posillipo.¹⁰⁸ These two spectacles are united by their use of the cavalcade, a spectacle format that functioned as the processional framework wherein political and social hierarchies were represented.¹⁰⁹ I find these two events significant in the ways they relate to, deviate from, and invert the hierarchical frameworks of the cavalcade, as well as expressed the extremes of social convention present in the rituals of the nobility and of the *popolo*. Posillipo, characterized by Dionysian debauchery, embodies everything that the moralizing Feast of San Giovanni is not. Yet both share links to the language of spectacle that the cavalcade initiates, and both illustrate the commonalities that the sense of *napolitanità* entails. Furthermore, it is through *movement*—that of their dancing, their singing, their stomping, their marching in procession or penitence—that Neapolitans *ensounded* themselves upon the myth of Naples, and the myth upon themselves.¹¹⁰ As a result, from multiple topographies of sound, power, and sense, a common phenomenology emerges that initiates an ontology of the city's geography.

Cavalcades replicated and symbolized the system of correspondences that governed the early modern world.¹¹¹ For example, while an *urbs* was merely a walled structure (a body), a *civitas* was “a number of men joined by a social bond” (a soul).¹¹² Cavalcades were specifically

¹⁰⁸ For detailed accounts of festival calendars, see Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 6-17; also see Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 245-253.

¹⁰⁹ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 43.

¹¹⁰ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 139.

¹¹¹ For an in-depth study of the early modern body politic, see Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

¹¹² Richard L. Kagan, “Urbs and Civitas in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Spain,” in *Envisioning the City*, edited by David Buisseret (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1998), 75.

intended for civic events, and this distinguishes them from processions, which were religiously oriented. However, neither was mutually exclusive and, as we have seen, Neapolitan mythology lent itself well to *contrapposti* of the sacred and the secular.¹¹³ A kind of chorographic depiction of a communal metaphor, “these ritual manifestations aided in putting aside social schisms and political conflicts by fostering ideas of communal order and transcendental hierarchy.”¹¹⁴ The continued presence of the public at large in all those celebrated occasions relevant to the Spanish monarchy maintained crucial harmony in the song of Partenope, lest it devolve into anarchic shrieking.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the cavalcade continued a precedent set by foreign rulers going back to Charles I of Anjou, rooting the spectacle deep within the identity of the city.¹¹⁶ The viceroy provided the embodiment of this absent king, and all proximities of power within the cavalcade functioned in relation to him.¹¹⁷

The cavalcade’s procession traced the topography of power laid out in the myth of Naples. Established through the precedent of King Alfonso of Aragon’s triumphant entry in 1443, the route began at the traditional imperial entrance to the city, Porta Capuana.¹¹⁸ The order of appearance of city authorities reinforced this historic precedent. First, a company of *cavalieri*, soldiers on horseback, led the way, establishing proof of the viceroy’s power.¹¹⁹ Typically, the blasting of trumpets and drums, a *concerto di trombone e cornetti*, accompanied their entrance.

¹¹³ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 41.

¹¹⁴ Kagan, “Urbs and Civitas,” 77; Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 43.

¹¹⁵ Gabriel Guarino, “Public Rituals and Festivals in Naples,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 264.

¹¹⁶ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 52.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹¹⁸ Dinko Fabris, “Musical Festivals at a Capital Without a Court: Spanish Naples from Charles V to Philip V,” in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance*, edited by J.R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 274.

¹¹⁹ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 47.

These sounds provided a “signal,” in Schafer’s sense, that the public space was undergoing a conversion, as the viceroy was near.¹²⁰ The nobility, riding in a scattered formation to avoid distinguishing social status within their ranks, came next, and their presence indicated a continued line of tradition that demanded spectators to acknowledge their importance.¹²¹ Their strained relationship with the *popolo* and *plebe* likely did little to merit the shouting of praise—perhaps rather there were snide remarks or expletives yelled in protest. The seven *eletti* were next in line, the representatives of the six *seggi* with the figure of the *sindaco*, an electorate mayor who chiefly served a symbolic function as steward of Naples.¹²²

In its trajectory of power, the cavalcade made its way through the five noble *seggi* districts in order of precedence (Capuana, Nido, Porto, Portanova, and Montagna; see page 9).¹²³ The Seven Great Officers of the Realm followed, who, despite their position at the center of the cavalcade, served no governmental function. Rather, these offices were bought by the nobility to acquire social prestige for individual families.¹²⁴ The viceroy and another symbolic “mayor” likely stimulated the loudest cheering and praise from the *popolo*—following the journey through the noble *seggi*, the itinerary turned to the *popolo*’s Piazza Sellaria, finally ending at the viceregal Palazzo Reale.¹²⁵ At the end of the cavalcade train, a large group of tribunals, or *togati* marched. These legalists and lawyers constituted the heart of the Spanish bureaucracy, and

¹²⁰ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 33; Schafer, *Soundscape*, 11.

¹²¹ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 49.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 51.

¹²³ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 102.

¹²⁴ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 52.

¹²⁵ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 113.

wielded incredible power. Ending where we began, a final line of *cavalieri* completed the cavalcade, reaffirming the power of the viceroy to invoke both wonder and fear.¹²⁶

In the following image from a 1658 *festino* celebrating the birthday of Philip IV, we can see the full force of the spectacle that came at the end of the cavalcade at the Palazzo Reale (Figure 2.3). On this occasion, four allegorical floats accompanied the procession, representing the four continents of the Spanish empire.¹²⁷ A temporary stage has been constructed in the center of the *piazza*, on which officials are lined like allegorical statues. In the same way, the viceroy's Spanish soldiers appear in neat lines around the *piazza*, standing in attention to and awe of the activity in the center. Apparently absent are the thronging crowds of *popolo* and *plebe* that would have flocked to the square to watch the spectacle.¹²⁸ Rather, this image focuses on representing the military might of the viceroy and the splendor of the absent king.¹²⁹ Such a display of power was crucial to establishing the Palazzo Reale as the center of the resounding city.¹³⁰

However, while marching *through* the city, the various groups of the cavalcade contributed to tracing a topography of power through their collective movement *of* the city. Through this movement, the nobility, the *popolo*, and the viceroy collaborated in making the city of myth into a physical reality. As in the civic processions of Latin American Spanish cities, the whole of Naples turned into a performative force in which civic meaning could be both read and heard. Thus, as Michel de Certeau claimed, "a migrational city slips into the clear text of the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Franco Mancini, *Feste ed apparati civile e religiosi in Napoli dal Vicereame alla capitale* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1968), 39.

¹²⁸ Gabriel Guarino, "Spanish Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 29.

¹²⁹ Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 40.

¹³⁰ Fabris, "Music Festivals in Spanish Naples," 280.

planned and readable city.”¹³¹ The musical forces of the city’s *maestri* played a crucial role in reinforcing the audibility of power. *Tromboni, cornetti*, and drums were oft heard in the immediate foreground, signaling the authoritative presence of Spanish military forces.¹³² In the same way, the serene voices of the Real Cappella usually sang at stops in various *piazze*, demonstrating the artistic prowess of the viceregal court.¹³³ Further, a number of “soundmarks” (Schafer’s term for sounds that are associated with particular places) corresponded to the different neighborhoods.¹³⁴ For example, spectators often commented on the dense noise of the *popolo seggio*, with its street criers, merchants, mendicant preachers, and likely the sounds of barking dogs and shrieking pigs.¹³⁵ Perhaps most important, and present even today in Naples, the “keynote sounds” (Schafer’s term for background sounds potentially indistinguishable to listeners) of the sea remained always within earshot, and visible throughout much of the city.¹³⁶ Such sounds could potentially disrupt the topographies of sound dictated by those in power, yet all were necessary to maintain the ideal of the harmonious city of a singing siren.¹³⁷ A geographic meshwork emerged as a result of this coincidence of topographic layers—the strange, the beautiful, the profane, and the sacred—all were subsumed in the space of the festival.¹³⁸ The following sketch of a festival celebrating the birth of Charles III in 1716 provides a vivid representation of how these interactions played out on ground level (Figure 2.4). Drawn for the

¹³¹ Baker, “Resounding City,” 4; Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Randall (Berkeley University of California Press, 1988), 93.

¹³² Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 70.

¹³³ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 19.

¹³⁴ Schafer, *Soundscape*, 11.

¹³⁵ Ibid.; Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 58.

¹³⁶ Schafer, *Soundscape*, 11.

¹³⁷ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 11.

¹³⁸ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 41.

local newspaper *Giornale e Sommario* by Carlo Antonio Sammarco, the artist depicts a bustling piazza, where stagecoaches rush past people stopping for conversation.¹³⁹ Unlike the previous image, here we see activity between multiple social spheres. For example, in the bottom foreground, clergy members appear to be gossiping with soldiers, men and women marvel at the four prominent catafalques that have been erected for the occasion, and stagecoach drivers gesture at people to get out of their way. The procession seems to have already passed or not yet arrived, highlighting the chaotic panoply of sounds with which it would have mingled and competed. Furthermore, unlike the previous artist's use of open spaces and structured lines, here the city's sounds and sights are represented as incredibly dense, overlapping one another and fading into the urban landscape.

If we are to find similar voices of alterity within this resounding city, they must be sought within spaces where this visual depiction of power became misshapen and its corresponding sounds distorted. The Festival of San Giovanni provided such an event. Held at the end of June, the vigil and feast propelled an explosion of activity from the *popolo*, who politically linked themselves to it.¹⁴⁰ San Giovanni was among the city's oldest festivals, possessing ancient vestiges of pagan fertility celebrations.¹⁴¹ The *popolo*'s direct control of the festival resulted in a diverse soundscape that encompassed many of those unrepresented in the hierarchical cavalcade. According to visitor Jean Jacques Boussard, in every street "stages were built for representations

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 6.

¹⁴¹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 95.

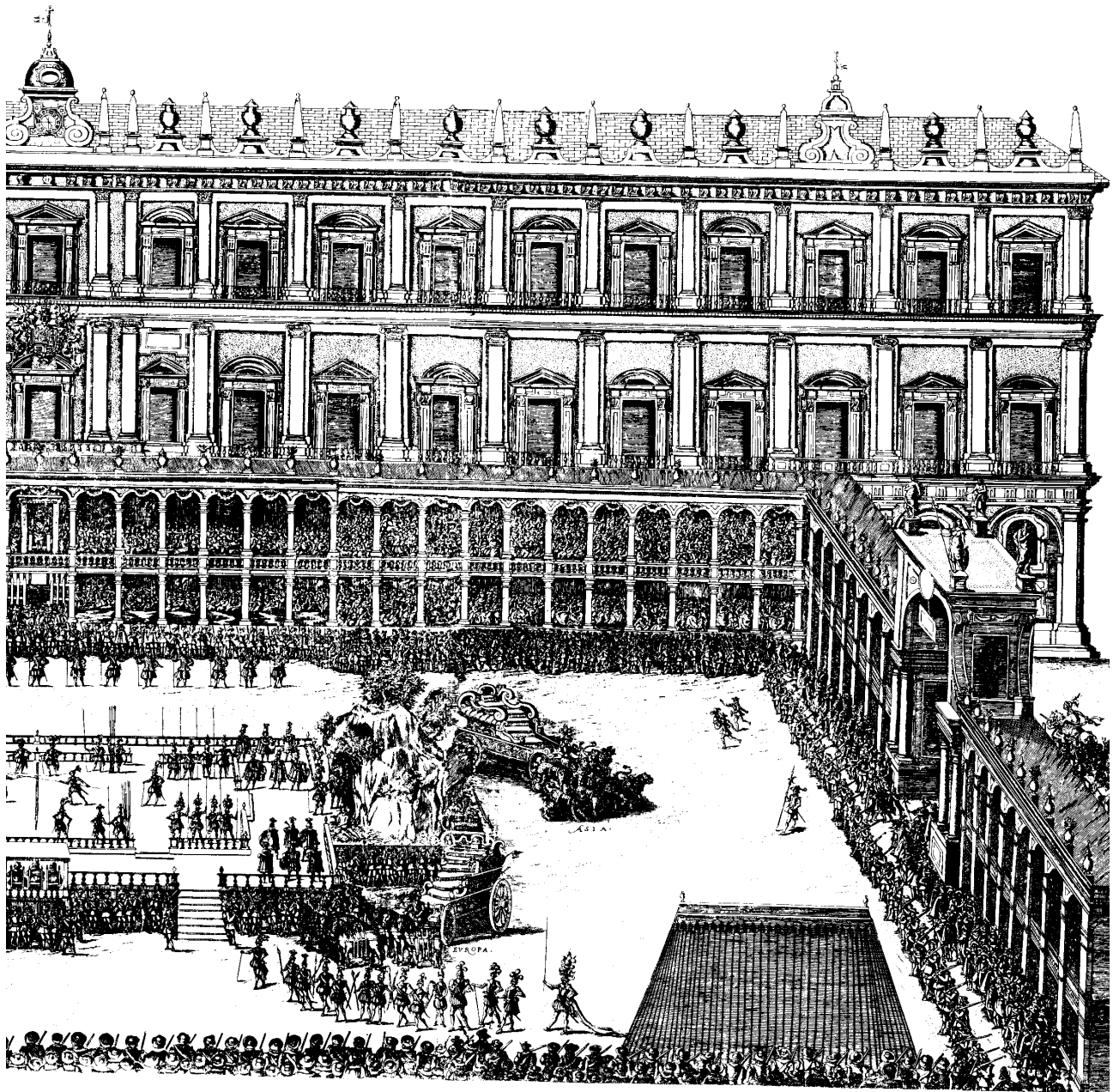


Figure 2.3 Celebration at the Palazzo Reale¹⁴²

¹⁴² Source: “Teatro per il torneo, con I allegorici raffiguranti i Continenti,” in Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 40.



Figure 2.4 A Crowded Piazza¹⁴³

of young children who dance and sing dressed as angels and antique gods.”¹⁴⁴ Every year, the *popolo* built a large wooden structure called the *Catafalco del Pendino*, decorating it with “allegorical statues, paintings, inscriptions, anagrams of viceroy’s names, poems, and song lyrics.”¹⁴⁵ Placed at the center of the Piazza della Selleria, for the *popolo* the catafalque functioned as a symbol of the *seggio* (building) that had been torn down by Alfonso I of Aragon.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Source: Carlo Antonio Sammarco, “Festa fatta innanzi Palazzo per la nascita di Carlo III,” in Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 35.

¹⁴⁴ Jean Jacques Boussard, quoted in Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 6.

¹⁴⁵ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 46.

¹⁴⁶ Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour*, 47.

The trajectory of the cavalcade in the festival of San Giovanni differed significantly from other celebrations in several respects. The nobility was absent, allowing for the symbolic representation of the direct link between the *popolo* and the viceroy to become readily apparent.¹⁴⁷ As a result, the spectacle only processed through the *piazze* within the *seggio del popolo*, neglecting to pass through the five noble *seggi* districts.¹⁴⁸ In the cavalcade itself, the popularly appointed “captains” of the *ottine* [the subdivided neighborhoods of the *populo seggio*], who took their place where the nobility and the Spanish bureaucrats would normally appear. Perhaps most significantly, at the end of the cavalcade, the viceroy rode side by side with the represented *eletto* of the *popolo seggio*, reinforcing the political ties between the two entities. At the end of the ceremonial procession, the viceroy bestowed honors upon the representative, symbolizing a “reassertion of long-eroded rights and privileges” that, ironically, never came to fruition.

While many of the symbolic exchanges between the viceroy and *popolo* were devoid of sincere social significance, during this event, the *popolo* asserted themselves as vital voices of the resounding city. In 1624, spectator Scipione Guerra had much to say about the sounds of San Giovanni:

And among the other noteworthy things a catafalque was created with many choruses of angels, which were accompanied by flutes and other musical instruments all in harmony with the voices of the angels and by spiritual hymns, which deafened the place. And once the song of the first set had finished, a cloud opened from which other angels likewise came down singing and playing. And once they had descended all the while continuing their harmonious sound, we saw the first angels who had sung rise up on the cloud. In this way, whilst in the presence of His Excellency [viceroy Duke of Alba] and his entourage, they continued to play their music, continually offering various innovations.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 51.

¹⁴⁸ This paragraph draws from Ibid., 47.

¹⁴⁹ Jean Jacques Boussard, text and translation in Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 6.

This example illustrates a rare account of how the *popolo* used established spectacle practices to subvert and challenge the status quo. According to the rules of the cavalcade, when the viceroy's entourage entered, his musicians would have played their own music, and all other musicians were expected to cease their activity.¹⁵⁰ By choosing to play and sing in the viceroy's presence, these *popolo* deliberately violated precedent, albeit under the guise of offering religious songs to San Giovanni.¹⁵¹ Though the *popolo* remained invested in the success of the festival, through these performative gestures they asserted their own voices, making sounds that were meant to challenge the viceroy's hegemonic power.¹⁵²

In the same way, the erected catafalque, while providing a symbol of the viceroy's alliance, equally served as a site of communal memory where absence of their power and livelihood seemed achingly present. For while the *popolo* had regained their representation in the *seggi* since the arrival of the Spanish, the elaborate catafalque served as a reminder of the transitory nature of their influence—they were useful to the viceroy only as long as they kept the nobility in check.¹⁵³ As Michel de Certeau remarks regarding the discourse of the city, this spectacle is representative of “a paradox...the discourse that makes people believe is the one that takes away what it urges them to believe in, or never delivers what it promises.”¹⁵⁴ In the Festival of San Giovanni, the constant movement of Naples suddenly halted and the knots of the *popolo* became ensounded and *place-bound* within the geography of the myth of Naples.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Fabris, “Music Festivals in Spanish Naples,” 275.

¹⁵¹ Guarino, “Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples” 33.

¹⁵² Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 194.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 93.

¹⁵⁴ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 105.

¹⁵⁵ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 70.

On the other side of the city, in the months of July and August, a very different type of spectacle occurred along the beaches of Posillipo, where the nobility maintained luxurious palaces to occasionally escape from the dirty confines of the *centro storico*.¹⁵⁶ Since antiquity, this area had been culturally marked as a site of leisure, pleasure, and escape, and identified with the ancient nobility that traced their lineage to the Romans.¹⁵⁷ For example, historian Enrico Bacco remarked that their ancient buildings “became rocks in the sea and give shelter to the shellfish and sea urchins,” testifying to a continued identity of Posillipo as a marine paradise.¹⁵⁸ In an account modeled on Bocaccio’s *Decameron*, historian Tommaso Costo described festivities in 1571 involving a certain noble prior, Francesco Ravaschiero, and a number of his friends.¹⁵⁹ The protagonists, all hiding behind academic names, made their way to the “*villa della sirena*” at the beach, in a festive procession that mimicked the traditional cavalcade.¹⁶⁰ Aristocratic ladies and noblemen arrived aboard separate boats (*feluche*), with flags indicating their courtly position.¹⁶¹ These *feluche* held elaborate floats decorated with noble *insegni*, as well as musicians who competed in contests of sound on their way to the shore.¹⁶² Costo describes the experience of hearing this music from the beach: “while there, they saw a most beautiful *filuca*, in which, among many gentlemen, were several musicians singing a *villanella*...and with them

¹⁵⁶ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 7.

¹⁵⁷ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 15.

¹⁵⁸ Bacco, *An Early Guide*, 13.

¹⁵⁹ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 90.

¹⁶⁰ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 7.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

other famous male and female musicians who were playing and singing several beautiful pieces en route.”¹⁶³

These sonic displays of power were often the subject of discussion in accounts of the *Spassi*, and among the nobility the music of *feluche* became an opportunity to display financial prominence.¹⁶⁴ Regarding the music of the *Spassi*, Capaccio noted in 1607 that “the Sirens sang so sweetly there that all those attending Posillipo only expect great delights, with many quirks and with so many expenses as cannot be conceived, except by those who have enjoyed them.”¹⁶⁵ Capaccio estimates that Neapolitans spent some 15, 000 ducats a year on the *Spassi di Posilipo*.¹⁶⁶ Competition grew so fierce that by Bouchard’s visit in 1632, every nobleman brought at least three or four *feluche* each, many of them designated for musicians and courtesans.¹⁶⁷ Bouchard saw “hundreds of *feluche* at Posilyppe all gilded and covered with satin and velvet with a thousand colors, and lavish gold embroidery.”¹⁶⁸

Significantly, the viceroy also appeared on a galley in the *feluche* procession, where his musical forces were expected to compete with those of the nobility.¹⁶⁹ Bouchard noted that a dozen galleys accompanied him for “protection from pirates” and three ships for musicians.¹⁷⁰ However, if the viceroy’s boats of musicians passed noble *feluche*, the musicians on those boats

¹⁶³ Tommaso Costo, quoted in Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 91.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 93.

¹⁶⁵ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, quoted in Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid..

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Bouchard claimed that on one of the ships were Italian musicians, and on the other were Spaniards. He apparently preferred the sounds of the Spanish, for they had “a regal air, sweet and melancholic, that greatly affects.” Ironically, on the third ship were courtesans. Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 93.

would immediately stop playing.¹⁷¹ The viceroy's presence at the *Spassi* placed him in a precarious position—he was expected to socialize and make peace with the nobility, while maintaining his ultimate authority over them.¹⁷² In multiple *prammatiche* [a civic ordinance or ruling], the viceroy banned nude bathing on Posillipo's beaches, and in 1607 he prohibited courtesans to arrive by boat.¹⁷³ While his appearance was necessary to assert his precedence, the *Spassi* thus continued to be primarily the priority of the nobility. In a humorous anecdote, it was said of the severe viceroy the Duke of Alba (c. 1622) that “he did not want much conversation, but he liked the music of the *Spassi di Posilipo*.”¹⁷⁴

The songs of the *Spassi*, with their connotations of noble licentiousness and luxury, made their way into popular Neapolitan imagination. A tradition of *ariette e canzonette di Posilipo* appeared in madrigal prints and instrumental collections throughout the Spanish rule, and continued to do so well into the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁵ For example, Giuseppe Biffi issued a publication of *canzonette a 3-5* in 1606 entitled *Della Ricreatione di Posilipo*.¹⁷⁶ While it remains unknown whether Biffi (and composers like him) ever attended the *Spassi*, the sounds of the festival clearly were known to a wide range of social spheres, as these publications made them available for consumption by the *popolo*.¹⁷⁷ By following the titles of pieces published in these, one could partially recreate the events of the *Spassi*.¹⁷⁸ In the same way, these publications would have connoted the geographic location of Posillipo, and the uneasy social exchanges

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 92.

¹⁷⁴ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 7.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 8

¹⁷⁶ Larson, “Unaccompanied Madrigal,” 96.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

between the viceroy and the nobility that took place there. Located on the periphery of the city, Posillipo thus became *ensounded* within Neapolitan consciousness as a potential site of the disruption of social values, a pastoral setting where anything might happen.

Partenope's Song: Movement in the City and the Rhythm of the Contact Zone

In his classic essay, "Walking in the City," Michel de Certeau describes the sensation of walking through the streets and peering down from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center onto late-twentieth century New York City.¹⁷⁹ The city lies tense with agitation:

It is transformed into a texturology in which extremes coincide—extremes of ambition and degradation, brutal oppositions of races and styles, contrasts between yesterday's buildings, already formed into trash cans, and today's urban irruptions that block out its space.¹⁸⁰

Looking on the countless walkers below, he ponders the implications of their movements:

Their story begins on ground level, with footsteps. Their swarming mass is an innumerable collection of singularities. Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces. They weave places together. In that respect, pedestrian movements make up one of these "real systems" whose existence in fact makes up the city.¹⁸¹

What de Certeau uncovers here strikingly resembles the process in which Neapolitans from multiple social spheres actively assembled the geography of their city. In the seventeenth century, Naples indeed constituted a shifting landscape in which spaces themselves vied for place, and the wayfaring paths of walkers constructed the lines that constitute the metaphorical city. Like de Certeau's New York, the story of the making of Naples played out in these exchanges of movements occurring "on ground level."¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 91.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 97.

¹⁸² Ibid.

The song of Partenope thus did not result from a singular voice easily susceptible to control. Rather, like the voices echoing from the Sybil's cave, the inhabitants of Naples ensounded themselves within a meshwork that shaped topographies of sound and power into a mythological geography of the city that was at once ontologically understood and phenomenologically felt. As Ingold states, in this way “the forms of the landscape—like the identities and capacities of its human inhabitants—are not imposed upon a material substrate but rather emerge as condensations or crystallizations of activity within a relational field.”¹⁸³ Sound was a crucial activity in the making of this field, and despite authorities' best efforts to hierarchically segment this “material substrate,” the prominence of festivals created an integrative soundscape shared among all living in Naples.¹⁸⁴ In the same way, these events provided a language of spectacle that could cipher voices of alterity within conventionalized tropes, allowing for assertions of identity and contestations of place. Such a language enabled oppressed groups like the *popolo* to express their protest, as well as ambitious ones like the nobility and viceroy to assert their precedence. As the following chapters demonstrate, this language proved crucial to the spectacles of Giambattista Basile, whose life and work blended into the mythological meshwork of Naples. Whether in the delights of Posillipo or the terrors of Vesuvius, the sounds of the city coalesced into the geography of its myth, pulsating to the rhythm of the contact zone.

¹⁸³ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 47.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

Negotiating *Napolitanità*: Giambattista Basile, the Art of Making Do, and the Poetics of Subversion

And they all lived together, happy and content, proving after a thousand hardships and a thousand woes that more happens in one hour than in a hundred years.
— Giambattista Basile¹

At the end of Giambattista Basile's fairy tale of "The Cockroach, the Mouse, and the Cricket," the narrator relays this maxim that sums up "what it's all about." In addition to the animal characters of its title (all of whom possess magical powers that give them virtuosic musical abilities), the story features the dim-witted farmboy Nardiello, his ambitious father Miccone, and a King whose daughter is being courted by a charmless German lord.² With a bit of luck and the help of his animal friends, Nardiello succeeds in winning the heart of the princess, albeit not before making the German lord soil his bed sheets three times.³ In this case, the happy ending occurs only when the established order has been turned on its head; "all's well that ends well" thus comes at the price of social precedent. Placed at the center of the *Pentamarone*'s [five-day] structure, the tale's moral rings true to the social conditions of Naples in the early seventeenth century—change comes without warning, and Lady Fate leaves none unmarked beneath her spinning wheel of fortune.⁴

Making Do With Giambattista Basile

The life and literary career of Giambattista Basile provides an exemplary case of how one Neapolitan negotiated his place in the ever-shifting political landscape of Naples. Basile's

¹ Giambattista Basile, *The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, translated by Nancy L. Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007), 254, emphasis original.

² *Ibid.*, 252.

³ *Ibid.*, 253.

⁴ Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 110.

literary persona came to fruition within the noble and viceregal courts during a period of high tensions in Naples. During the first decades of the seventeenth century, the refeudalization of the Campania, the increased participation of the *popolo* in political affairs, and heavy taxation from the Spanish monarchy combined to place the entire kingdom “in a state of chaotic illegality.”⁵ As a lifeline within the city’s tensile meshwork, Basile’s every action sent ripples that possessed the potential to affect and alter the myth that tied it together. Basile’s prerogative, then, lay in manipulating the field of play in which he found himself.

In a passage from one of his *Lettere* of 1604, we encounter a direct reference to the mastery of fate, a kind of self-referential declaration of how to play this field. Writing to his friend and literary colleague Giulio Cesare Cortese, Basile recounts a dream sequence in which “an old man with a beard like a goat” says the following:

Don’t be astonished, my son, if a hundred beggars and good-for-nothings so easily make their way to the top of Fortune’s wheel, because she, envious of men of virtuous quality, soaps up her wheel to make sure everyone slips on it. So, all the field-hands, garbage collectors, and wreckers, whose hands are filthy with dirt, grab onto it gracefully and in spite of her precautions go right up to the top without slipping. On the other hand, all those who are clean and elegant, as soon as they get on it start slipping and tumble down to the ground. Therefore, take this advice and write it in block letters: never wash your hands if you want to get hold of Fortune’s wheel without danger.⁶

This striking passage, while rhetorically linked to a classical tradition of court writing, also indicates the precarious position of the court intellectual in the early seventeenth century.

According to Nancy Canepa, because job security increasingly depended upon promoting the prince’s power, the humanistic ideal that literature possessed the power to change, even save the world, “was downsized to a pragmatic adaptation to the world as it was.”⁷ In his own adaptation,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Giambattista Basile, *Lettere*, text and translation from Ibid., 74.

⁷ Ibid., 48.

Basile employed what his contemporary Giambattista Marino termed a “poetics of the marvelous,” in which themes of metamorphosis, disguise, and dissimulation blur the lines between reality and fiction, and as Canepa observes, “transcend the realm of courtly ceremony to become a part of real transformation.”⁸

Basile’s method, in Neapolitan terms, can be understood as *l’arte di arrangiarsi*, or “the art of making do.”⁹ In Jason Pine’s study of the *neomelodica* scene in early twenty-first century Naples, he determines that for Neapolitans, the “personal sovereign” is one who “makes do” with the situation handed to him.¹⁰ More than “getting by,” making do involves an “arranging of things”—a manipulation of people, events, and situations through a deployment of charismatic and artistic speech practices.¹¹ As a courtier whose life straddled the boundaries between cultures of the nobility, the viceroy, and the *popolo*, Basile’s *l’arte di arrangiarsi* proved essential to maintain his privileged status and artistic voice. To do so required making do with the forms, genres, and literary devices of multiple social spheres, an arranging of artistic materials and blending of idioms that closely resembles Pratt’s concept of “transculturation.”¹² By interweaving tradition, innovation, and subversion in his writing, Basile’s pluralistic language created “an open, polysemic universe” that found ample space in the contact zone of Naples.¹³ In his theory of popular culture, Michel de Certeau describes “making do” as a practice of “uses and tactics,” wherein the *way of using* imposed systems constitutes the resistance to those same

⁸ Ibid., 62; Nancy Canepa, “Literary Culture in Naples, 1500-1800,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 444.

⁹ Jason Pine, *The Art of Making Do in Naples* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 9.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 8.

¹² Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” in *Profession 91* (1991): 36.

¹³ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 24.

systems.¹⁴ De Certeau claims that “people have to make do with what they have,” and they thus rely on tactics that “use, manipulate, and divert” the spaces constructed by the system of power that has strategically organized those spaces.¹⁵ These kinds of popular tactics, or ways of “making do,” exploit the very ideological discourse that traps them within “the order of things;” here, de Certeau, claims, “order is tricked by an art.”¹⁶

In this chapter, then, I examine how Basile deployed the art of making do in the dualistic spheres of his writing, both of which manifest themselves in the musico-dramatic spectacles he wrote for the court of the viceroy. Like many Neapolitans, Basile found himself caught *in mezzo*, a condition that required a negotiation of self, as well as between structures of power. Increasingly in the seventeenth century, the Neapolitan courtier became little more than a secretarial administrator, wielding little political authority and serving as a bridge between cultures of the nobility and the *popolo*.¹⁷ Though he wrote in the appropriate languages and genres of a courtier, Basile, to borrow a phrase from de Certeau, “established a degree of plurality and creativity” that can be identified throughout his oeuvre, blurring the lines between his seemingly contradictory literary personae.¹⁸ By making do, Basile fluidly blended the “strategies” dictated by the dominant system with “tactics” appropriated from popular culture, and thus developed his own transculturated language that enabled him to subvert social norms within the utopian space of his writing.¹⁹ Through what de Certeau identifies as “an art of being

¹⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Randall (Berkeley University of California Press, 1988), 18.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18, 30.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁷ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 24.

¹⁸ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 30.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

in between,” Basile’s life can thus be viewed as an extended performative event: in both the public sphere of his courtier life and the private sphere of his writing, he strategically performed *napolitanità* to adapt his own movements to those of the contact zone.²⁰ Furthermore, by directly engaging with representations of his own “otherness,” Basile establishes an autoethnography of Naples in the seventeenth century that continues to influence notions of Neapolitan identity.²¹

The first section of this chapter traces the early years of Basile’s life, and demonstrates how he fits within the mythological geography of Naples. As we will see, Basile’s background made him familiar with the harsh realities of everyday life faced by the *plebe* and lower *popolo*, as well as the extravagancies of the nobility and rising *popolo*.²² Like many of the *popolo* who attempted to climb the social ladder, Basile struggled to find work in the hierarchically defined place of Naples. Disillusioned and frustrated, he would follow in the tradition of Neapolitan writers as far back as Virgil and seek his fortunes elsewhere.²³ However, the soundscape and imagery of Posillipo remained firmly rooted in his mind, echoing throughout his oeuvre. By the time he returned to Naples in 1608, he began to develop a clear style characterized by negotiation and, in Pratt’s terms, transculturation.²⁴

The second section examines how this transculturated language became crucial to his social life as a courtier and academy member during the period 1610-20, in which he served in the bureaucracy of the viceroys, the Count of Lemos (Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro) and the Duke of Osuna (Pedro Tellez-Girón), and worked as a prominent member of the Neapolitan

²⁰ Ibid., 30.

²¹ Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34.

²² Tommaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 170.

²³ Suzanne Magnanini, *Fairy Tale Science: Monstrous Generation in the Tales of Straparola and Basile* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 20.

²⁴ Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34.

Accademia degli Oziosi.²⁵ While his successes during this period gave him newfound fame and social stability, Basile learned that this came at the price of intellectual freedom; he thus began to explore alternative forms of expression through dialect. As a result, a dual sense of formality and irony pervades works written at the time, such as *Le avventurose disavventure* (1610) and “A lo re viene” (1612).²⁶ Nevertheless, while at the Oziosi, Basile gained the ability to produce grotesque parodies of conventional court characters, a practice of making do that he further exploited in the spectacles that he wrote for the viceregal court.²⁷

In the final section I identify qualities of performative negotiation and transculturation in Basile’s landmark *Lo cunto de li cunti* (published 1634-36) that also appear prominently in the three viceregal spectacles. Basile gradually worked on *Lo cunto* throughout his career, and arranged for the work to be published posthumously.²⁸ For Basile, the collection offered a reflection on the course of his career as a courtier and a culmination of his performance of *napolitanità*.²⁹ The fairy tales of *Lo cunto* are thus crucial to understanding the subtleties of social discourse that he presented in his spectacles. As Nancy Canepa states, by opening up generic and linguistic paradigms through a transculturated language of the marvelous, Basile “promoted a poetics dedicated to excavating and representing, with proto-anthropological curiosity and critical acumen, the Kingdom of Naples in its daily life and rituals, popular culture, and folklore.”³⁰ As we will see, the monstrous, cyborgian figures of *Lo cunto* penetrate the

²⁵ Otis H. Green, “The Literary Court of the Conde de Lemos at Naples, 1610-1616,” *Hispanic Review* 1, no. 4 (October 1933): 307.

²⁶ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 43.

²⁷ Magnanini, *Fairy Tale Science*, 15.

²⁸ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Nancy Canepa, “Little Heroes, Epic Transformations: Giulio Cesare Cortese’s Neapolitan Mock Heroic,” *California Italian Studies* 3, no. 1 (2012): 2.

sacralized realm of the myth of Naples and expose a polysemic universe, where all social spheres in Naples have to “make do” to evade the crushing wheel of fortune.³¹

To Posillipo and Back Again: The Making of a Courtier

Giambattista Basile was born in 1575 in the village of Posillipo, just outside of the city limits of Naples.³² Located on the ridgeline above the shore, the village was one of many to be integrated into the life of the city proper during the late sixteenth century. According to Tommaso Astarita, Viceroy Pedro de Toledo implemented an expansion project in areas that had previously been rural environs of the *contado*, such as Posillipo, Chiaia, Nisida, and Mergellina.³³ By the mid-seventeenth century, these areas were “full of splendid Baroque buildings, and are today among the city’s most interesting neighborhoods.”³⁴ As part of a Spanish plan to expand the city and the bureaucracy, and in an effort to refeudalize the surrounding areas of the kingdom, the viceroy began to sell titles of nobility to rising middle class families of the *popolo*, many who found jobs in Spanish employ.³⁵ With breathtaking views and open spaces, nearby villages like Posillipo became havens for this new semi-aristocratic class, where families could construct residences outside the rigid social confines of the *seggi* districts.³⁶ Indeed, Giovanni Muto claims that by the late seventeenth century, Posillipo “housed

³¹ Magnanini, *Fairy Tale Science*, 71. For accounts of cyborg figures in the early modern period, see Jonathan Sawday, “Forms Such as Never Were in Nature: The Renaissance Cyborg,” in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies, and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, edited by Erica Fudge, Ruth Gilbert, and Susan Wiseman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

³² Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 39.

³³ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 175.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Jordan Lancaster, *In the Shadow of Vesuvius* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 73.

³⁶ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 175.

at least fifteen villages with gardens, lodges, and fountains and became the favorite locale for aristocratic sociability.”³⁷

Giambattista’s immediate family, according to Benedetto Croce, was “respectable although not well-to-do.”³⁸ Likely of the rising *popolo* class, Basile senior (his Christian name unknown) and his wife Cornelia Daniele had at least seven children, many of whom worked as courtiers, writers, and artists in Naples and abroad.³⁹ For example, Giambattista’s brother Lelio (c. 1575-1623) served at the Gonzaga court at Mantua as a poet and writer of madrigals.⁴⁰ Recently, Dinko Fabris posited two other potential relatives of Basile—one Giovanni Andrea Basile, father of Chiara Basile (the bride-to-be of composer Francesco Provenziale), and Felice Basile (who would serve as the *eletto del popolo* until his death in 1659).⁴¹ His most famous relative, however, was undoubtedly his sister Adriana Basile, one of the foremost soprano divas of the early seventeenth century, who premiered many of Claudio Monteverdi’s operas in Mantua and Venice.⁴² Adriana proved a crucial figure in advocating for Giambattista’s writing, and though she would leave Naples for long periods of time, she was nonetheless referred to throughout Italy as “la sirena di Posilipo.”⁴³

While scholars know little of Basile’s early years, in his youth he likely acquired the skills needed to become an accomplished man of letters worthy of Naples. Indeed, since

³⁷ Giovanni Muto, “Urban Structures and Population,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 42.

³⁸ Benedetto Croce, *Nuovi saggi sulla letteratura italiana del Seicento* (Bari: Laterza, 1931), 4.

³⁹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 39.

⁴⁰ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 170.

⁴¹ Dinko Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 68.

⁴² Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 169.

⁴³ For a comprehensive, albeit dated account of Adriana Basile’s life, see Alessandro Ademollo, *La bell’Adriana a Milano (1611)* (Città di Castello: San Lapi, 1888).

antiquity, the city's mythology boasted a prominent literary tradition—for example, Virgil, although from Mantua, was believed to have “made his home” in Naples.⁴⁴ This reputation continued in the medieval period: before his crowning as poet laureate, Petrarch came to the Angevin court of Naples to be tested before Robert the Wise (ruled 1309-43).⁴⁵ Following in this line, Jacopo Sannazaro, Giovanni Pontano, Torquato Tasso, and Giambattista Marino featured prominently in the city's poetic topography.⁴⁶ In their lifetimes, all of these authors *left* Naples to pursue their literary careers in the city-states and kingdoms of the north. Strikingly, Pine found that the idea “in order to make it in Naples one first has to leave” continues to permeate the Neapolitan conception of one who makes do.⁴⁷ Once outside of Naples, however, even the most skilled at *l'arte di arrangiarsi* assumes the status of “Neapolitan” or “southern Italian,” rendered as an exoticized other from the other side of the world, or at least the far end of Italy's boot.⁴⁸

Around 1600, Basile followed this tradition and left Naples in search of work. Failing to find a noble patron, Basile became a wandering courtier, eventually ending up in Venice as a “soldier of fortune.”⁴⁹ In the service of the Venetian patrician Andrea Cornaro, he joined the Accademia Stravaganti, taking on the academic name he would use throughout his life—Il Pigo, or the Lazy One.⁵⁰ It is notable that in his choice of academic name, Basile readily embraced the northern Italian stereotypes of Neapolitans as rural, lazy, and backward. Indeed, by the late

⁴⁴ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 13.

⁴⁵ John Marino, “Myths of Modernity and the Myth of the City: When the Historiography of Pre-Modern Italy Goes South,” in *New Approaches to Naples*, edited by Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 12.

⁴⁶ Harald Hendrix, “Topographies of Poetry: Mapping Early Modern Naples,” in *New Approaches to Naples*, eds. Melissa Calaresu and Helen Hills (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 93.

⁴⁷ Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 102.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁴⁹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 40.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

sixteenth century, an established tradition of *canzone villanesca alla napolitana* had become widely popular in the north and abroad, often emphasizing pastoral themes and using the Neapolitan dialect to comic effect.⁵¹ Even during this early period, then, Basile recognized that performing one's identity required an adaptation to a language of power. Drawing on commonplace tropes of *napolitanità*, Basile began to experiment with his own in-betweenness.

While in the Accademia Stravaganti, Basile likely learned how to compose works in the classical style of the courts. This Petrarchan tradition entailed eclogues, madrigals, sonnets, pastoral dramas, and rhetorical and philological exercises and treatises.⁵² In the early seventeenth century, however, a tradition of anti-classic (and anti-Tuscan) writing was on the rise, as faith in the literary forms of the preceding centuries began to wane.⁵³ Giambattista Marino famously stated, "the poet's aim is to create marvel: I speak of the excellent, not the awkward sort; and may he who cannot amaze be sent to the stables!"⁵⁴ The new baroque poetics of the marvelous embraced dialect as an ideally expressive vehicle for the "metaphors, topoi and linguistic registers conventionally unfamiliar or inadmissible to literary canons, by virtue of their novelty."⁵⁵ In the hands of Basile and his colleague Giulio Cesare Cortese, Neapolitan dialect became a literary language that, in addition to enabling rhetorical experimentation, also pointed toward an archaic and originally oral folk tradition.⁵⁶ The Venetian academy allowed Basile to

⁵¹ Donna Cardamone, *The Canzone Villanesca alla Napolitana* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 23.

⁵² Suzanne Magnanini, "Telling Tales Out of School: The Fairy Tale and Italian Academies," *The Romantic Review* 99, no. 3-4 (May-November 2008): 257.

⁵³ Nancy Canepa, "From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile," *Italica* 71, no. 3 (Autumn 1994): 292.

⁵⁴ Giambattista Marino, quoted in Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 435.

⁵⁵ Nancy Canepa, "Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile," 292.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

implement popular tactics that might reinvigorate established courtly forms through innovative models, laying the groundwork for the style that would permeate his career.⁵⁷

Basile's five *Lettere* of 1604 are his earliest works to exhibit qualities of *in mezzo*. Likely written to Cortese from Venice, in these writings Basile uses dialect to describe in anthropological detail the everyday experience of living in the city.⁵⁸ For example, in the fourth letter he positions the neighboring Calabria region as primitive in comparison to Naples, and describes the games people play and the songs they sing there. While in Calabria they wear nothing but wool and live in shanties, in Naples,

They wear nothing but Florentine cloth, the finest linen or shirting, a sight to see, and all day they do nothing but play *Lucky You, You've Got a Chain; Hey, Pal, Your Ass is Showing, Let it Show Cause it's Nice to See; The Seven Brothers*...and you hear the little ones singing a thousand things: "Come Out Sun, Come Out;" "Thunder and Lightning, Back Off;" "We are Poor Wanderers;" and a hundred other ditties."⁵⁹

In a kind of "parody of a pastoral-like encounter" between cultures, Basile combines a conventional frame (a rhetorical comparison) with uniquely Neapolitan cultural references that together register unexpected meanings.⁶⁰ We are unsure whether this passage means to be sincere or ironic, or whether Basile is praising popular Neapolitan practices or mocking them. Similarly, in his third letter, he uses the trope of distance to convey the pain and suffering felt from being away from Naples:

I do nothing but complain, whine, and whimper, as I think about that blessed hour when I'll be able to come back to see my Naples, running and jumping with strides of four arm-lengths apiece! These damned towns, where I find myself relieved of health and so emaciated and dazed that I've become sick again, so that if my mama saw me she would

⁵⁷ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 435.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 294.

⁵⁹ Games appear in italics and songs are in quotes; Giambattista Basile, *Lettere*, quoted in Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 71.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

give forth a lament for a whole month. Therefore your Lordship will pardon me if I do not satisfy you by writing something quaint. Apart from everything else, owing to all the medicine I've taken, my Muse has abandoned me in a state of stink and shame, and as soon as I get to Naples I'll have to give eight or nine coins to some lad and have him go ring a bell for her in the vicinity of the Sebeto River, and promise a nice drink to anyone who can find her for me.⁶¹

In this passage, Basile juxtaposes a formal language of personification and allusion over a popular language of exchange and negotiation, where *mamas* occupy the same space as Muses and local street urchins possess the power to traverse the mythical Sebeto River running underneath the city. Ambivalences in this passage reinforce similar ones felt by Basile towards his precarious life as a courtier.

By 1608, Basile had made it back to Naples, and had found a position at the court of Luigi Carafa, a nobleman who held the title Prince of Stigliano.⁶² This success probably resulted from the fame of Adriana, who had also taken a job at Carafa's court with her husband, Muzio Barone.⁶³ Adriana was enthusiastic about her brother's writing career, and in Carafa's employ Basile took up duties typical of a courtier—administrative tasks, secretarial duties, and writing and organizing spectacles.⁶⁴ Interestingly, in the same year (1608), Basile's *Lettere* were published and attributed to a Gian Alessio Abbattutis.⁶⁵ This mock Latinate name would serve as a pen name for all of Basile's dialect writing until after his death in 1632. Moreover, for an unestablished courtier, the name provided a safety net that he could hide behind until he found a more secure post. In 1609, Basile printed in Naples his first major publication (under his own

⁶¹ Ibid., 73.

⁶² Ibid., 41.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 87.

name), the edition *Delli madriali et ode*, with a dedication to his sister.⁶⁶ With it came his formal entrance into conventional courtly society, where such a publication marked a rite of passage for an aspiring man of letters. Given the bitter disillusionment of his *Lettere* we are left to wonder if he viewed his appointment to a noble court with the same irony. Regardless, by this point in time Basile had begun to learn how to make do in Naples.

1610-1620: *In Mezzo* at the Accademia degli Oziosi

In 1610, the course of Basile's career began to speed up rapidly. While Adriana acquired a position at the Gonzaga court of Mantua, Basile remained in Naples, where he had gained a strong foothold in the city's literary life.⁶⁷ In this same year, the arrival of a new viceroy, Pedro Fernandez de Castro, Count of Lemos, ushered in a flourishing period of artistic activity.⁶⁸ Under the leadership of the intellectual Giambattista Manso (the mentor and patron of Giambattista Marino), Basile and a number of other courtiers organized one of the first academies in Naples since the Aragonese reign of Ferrante I, the Accademia degli Oziosi.⁶⁹ The Oziosi, or the Idle, became a crossroads of Italian and Spanish cultures, drawing writers from throughout the Spanish empire.⁷⁰ During his time with the Oziosi, Basile delineated boundaries between his published works in Italian and those written in Neapolitan dialect. For example, while his Italian writings appeared under his own name (as well as his academic name "Il Pigro"), he continued to mask his use of Neapolitan dialect under the pen name Abbattutis.⁷¹ This fracturing of identities

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 170.

⁶⁸ Green, "Literary Court of the Conde de Lemos," 308.

⁶⁹ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 435; Magnanani, "Telling Tales," 267.

⁷⁰ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 42.

⁷¹ Ibid., 87.

indicates a necessity for adaptation—in order to make do in Naples, Basile recognized that his self-presentation should avoid alienating one social sphere or another. However, at the same time Basile learned the inherent power of *in mezzo*, and during this period, we can identify his continued investment in exploring the representation of Neapolitan identity.

Indeed, as a member of the Oziosi, Basile's courtly writings attracted wide readership, and the success of his *Madriali et ode* led to second (1612), third (1613), and fourth (1617) edition printings both in Naples and in Mantua.⁷² Perhaps inspired by his newfound fame, his publishing activities increased with fervor; in 1612 the *Ecloghe amorse e lugubri* [Eclogues of Love and Mourning], another collection of *Madriali et ode*, and notably, the musical drama *Venere addolorata* (to which I return in Chapter Four), were all published in Naples.⁷³ Also appropriate to a man of letters, he began work on philological editions of classic texts of Petrarchan and mannerist poets. For example, in 1615 he gave a series of lectures at the Oziosi on Petrarch, and in 1616 a series of writings on Pietro Bembo.⁷⁴

No doubt due to his success as a writer, Basile held a number of court positions throughout the kingdom of Naples and abroad. In 1613, he received an invitation from Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga to join his sister Adriana in Mantua, where she had advocated for his appointment; he stayed long enough to be named a “gentleman” of the court, and also published a collected *Opere poetiche*.⁷⁵ By the end of the year he was back in Naples, serving as a feudal administrator for various nobles who governed provinces in regions adjacent to the city: in 1615 he served in Montemarano; in 1617 in Zuncoli; in 1618 he worked for Marino Caracciolo in

⁷² Ibid., 43.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 42.

Avellino; and in 1619 he acquired a prestigious position as the governor of Avellino.⁷⁶ While these sorts of jobs were highly prized by courtiers of the period, the constant travel and administrative work left little time for intellectual activity, a fact that likely left Basile disillusioned about his role in Neapolitan society.⁷⁷

Furthermore, Basile's activities reflect the wider phenomenon of the changing roles of the court intellectual in seventeenth-century Naples. While the academy seemed to offer a safe space for intellectual endeavors, as Canepa notes, to a large extent the academicians of the Accademia degli Oziosi "interacted in an idealized but ultimately ineffectual dimension, and were in reality often as subordinate to the reigning powers as their courtier colleagues."⁷⁸ Indeed, the viceroy kept close watch over the academy's activities, even dictating its policies. For example, in a statute of its ideals, the academy aspired to "the foundation of a new type of intellectual organic to the strategy of the hegemony of the monarchy, and resulting in a cultural practice of the entire public that is nothing but a competition of skill."⁷⁹ Similarly, the statute advocated social *concordia*, while blatantly banning the discussion of political or theological topics.⁸⁰ Thus, while the members of the Oziosi may have aspired to the political and social influences that marked academies of the High Renaissance, the viceroy (and members of the academy itself) imposed rules that made it little more than an artistic outlet where administrators of the Spanish bureaucracy could display their own literary prowess and prestige.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 43.

⁷⁸ Canepa, "Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile," 297.

⁷⁹ Text in Ibid. Translation mine.

⁸⁰ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 441; Magnanini, "Telling Tales," 267.

⁸¹ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 442.

Perhaps as an alternative to the strictures of the academy and courts, during this same period Basile and his contemporary Giulio Cesare Cortese developed a literary language in which Neapolitan dialect posed “a new poetics, transposing into the literary arena materials that until then had been largely excluded from it—popular culture, folklore, and the rituals of everyday life.”⁸² Yet these innovations also had precedent, as Neapolitan (along with other Italian dialects) had by the seventeenth century become commonly used in plurilinguistic contexts for expressive and comic potential, especially in pastoral theater and in *commedia dell’arte*.⁸³ Even so, in the tenuous courts of Naples, where one’s position depended on acquiescence to authority, straying from approved models was potentially dangerous for courtiers. For precisely this reason, Cortese’s position in Neapolitan society fundamentally differed from Basile’s. Throughout his life, Cortese published solely in Neapolitan dialect, and as a result, struggled to keep a job and often resorted to moneylending to make ends meet.⁸⁴ Mock epics such as *Micco Passaro ‘nnammorato* (1619) and *Viaggio di Parnaso* (1621) were incredibly popular among the *popolo* (and were likely read in court environments as well), yet yielded little financial proceeds for Cortese.⁸⁵

Basile’s sole work in Neapolitan dialect from this period (and prior to his death in 1632) appears in the opening dedication to Cortese’s mock epic *La vaiasseide*, written around 1604, but not to be published until 1612.⁸⁶ Entitled “A lo re de li viente,” or “To the King of

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Canepa, “Giulio Cesare Cortese’s Neapolitan Mock Heroic,” 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 6.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 5.

the Winds,” Basile once again hides under the Latinate pen name Abbattutis.⁸⁷ In “A lo re,”

Basile lays out his most explicit stance on life in the courts and the practice of writing.

It would therefore be a good idea never to publish anything, or if this mistake really has to be made, my view is that the dedication should be to the wind. He must, indeed, be the greatest man in the world, for I hear him mentioned by everyone; they all say they work for him. Just look at those who serve in the courts; you serve now, you serve later, you serve today, you serve tomorrow, and then, suddenly, it’s night for you, you’re told to turn yourself around and get out! And everything he does goes to the wind, like my own affairs.⁸⁸

Contrary to the veiled discourse of the earlier *Lettere*, “A lo re de li viente” conveys a vividly polemic stance towards the hierarchies of patronage, suggesting that to learn how to play the political games of the court is akin to serving the wind.⁸⁹ Furthermore, by parodying the customary dedication that came at the beginning of these kinds of works, Basile expressed his own frustrations with working in a courtier culture where his employers dictated his literary output:

The lover paces the floor, coughs, sneezes, runs, perspires, pines away, swells up with emotion, and when he expects at least a wink of the eye from his coy sweetheart, he finds that he has labored in vain, for the wind! Petrarch complained of this, when he said: “How many hopes the wind carries off!” And likewise the poor poet—sonnets over here, verses of every other sort over there, madrigals for this one and *barzellete* for that one—as soon as he collects his wits he finds himself with an empty head, a shrunken stomach, and ragged elbows, one foot sunk in misery, and always naked as a louse.⁹⁰

In this passage, Basile exhibits the same style of in-betweenness that characterized his *Lettere*.

For example, the lover’s bodily functions—his coughs, sneezes, and perspiration—crudely parody the classical allusion to the Petrarchan blazon. In this context, the fickle patron stands in

⁸⁷ Ibid., 7.

⁸⁸ Giambattista Basile, “A lo re de li viente,” text and translation in Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 76.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 77.

⁹⁰ Basile, “A lo re de li viente,” text and translation in Ibid., 77.

for the unattainable lady, and the pragmatics of financial hardship impose upon the allegorical realm of Petrarchan formalism.

Basile's use of dialect as polemic could be construed as a separation of his literary personae. Given that he never published Neapolitan works under his own name while employed as a courtier (from 1608-1632), some might view his writings in Italian as distinct from his Neapolitan works. However, scholars as early as Croce have posited that while employed at the courts, as early as 1615 Basile was working on his two dialect masterpieces, *Le Muse napoletane* and *Lo cunto*.⁹¹ Furthermore, the philological projects of this period, in which Basile analyzed and compiled elements of classical lyric grammar present in poets of the past, likely paralleled the project of compiling folk and popular tales needed to make these dialect works possible.⁹² Thus, while Michele Rak has considered the "official" output of the Italian corpus as counterpositional to the dialect works, I find it more useful to consider them as complementary.⁹³ Since Basile worked on *Lo cunto* throughout his life in the courts, the characters and locales of *Lo cunto* easily found their way into his larger oeuvre, as I demonstrate further in Chapter Four. Intertwining with his lived experience as an inhabitant of Naples, these works opened up the expanse of the contact zone and became part of the fabric of the myth of Naples.

For example, in his 1610 *Le avventurose disavventure* [The Disadventurous Adventures], Basile employs the same style of making do evident in his dialect writings. Dedicated to his patron at the time, Luigi Carafa, *Le avventurose* features a colorful cast of fishermen, pirates, nymphs, and siren daughters of Partenope.⁹⁴ This kind of marine pastoral (also called piscatorial

⁹¹ Ibid., 43.

⁹² Ibid., 63.

⁹³ Michele Rak, *Immagine e scrittura: Sei studi sulla teoria dell'immagine della cultura del Barocco a Napoli* (Naples: Liguori Editori, 2003), 23.

⁹⁴ Canepa, "Giulio Cesare Cortese's Neapolitan Mock Heroic," 4.

epic) became increasingly popular in Naples, as the characters of conventional pastorals were converted into figures appropriate to a maritime setting.⁹⁵ The genre's precedent dated back to the late fifteenth century, when Jacopo Sannazaro deployed it in works like *Arcadia*, where, according to Canepa, "the people and places of contemporary Naples are transposed into a fantastic and metaphorical Arcadia but so also do domestic, intimate themes and realistic representations of daily customs and routines."⁹⁶ Moreover, *Le avventure* is partially autobiographical, as the main character Nifeo's banishment from his home country mirrors Basile's own wanderings, as does his ultimate return:

You will hear, then, that I first opened my eyes to daylight on this very shore. It should cause no marvel that I am not recognized as a countryman here, for I have roamed afar for so long that my dress and manners appear different from those here. Nor should it appear marvelous that I spent my first years learning the art of a skilled helmsman: how, and when, proud ships should leave their ports, or stay moored on the safer shore. Then, when I had journeyed half of my life's way, a new spirit inflamed in me the desire for higher study, and although I knew I was a swamp bird, I strived to equal the most noble swans. But when I thought most surely that my fatherland was going to confirm me in winning laurels, I then saw those who should have loved me most, ignore me. Ah, the harsh conditions of our age, in which the most noble virtues of children are abhorred by their own mothers! And so I arranged to flee the ungrateful shores, and to search for my fortunes elsewhere.⁹⁷

Like the fairy tale genre that he would also explore, Basile's marine pastoral reimaged an established genre "in a distinctly Neapolitan key."⁹⁸ As this passage makes clear, for Basile this was more than a rhetorical exercise—it was a highly personal task that involved working out his own identity. The fact that he sets *Le avventure* in his hometown of Posillipo indicates the attachment he felt to a place so intricately woven into the city's mythical landscape.

⁹⁵ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 42.

⁹⁶ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 429.

⁹⁷ Giambattista Basile, *Le avventure disavventure*, text and translation in Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 40.

⁹⁸ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 429.

Furthermore, the self-deprecating reference to himself as a “swamp bird” in an arcadian world inhabited by swans alludes to the continued frustrations he felt about his underappreciated work in Naples. Nevertheless, by juxtaposing fantastical occurrences with the physical features of everyday life in Posillipo, Basile acknowledged his own place within its mythic space, and thus within the myth of Naples, which he would further explore in the viceregal spectacle of 1620.

This repeated journey to a “native” space of literary creativity reinforced the interweaving of Basile’s literary personae of both court and *popolo*, leading to a poetics of the marvelous *alla napolitanità*, in essence, the art of making do with the condition of *in mezzo*.⁹⁹ For Basile, art reflected life, and life art. Within this fabulous, utopian space, as de Certeau states, “the formality of everyday practices is indicated, which frequently reverse the relationships of power, and ensure the victory of the unfortunate.”¹⁰⁰ In the realm of what de Certeau calls “the past, the marvelous, the original,” the everyday tactics needed to subvert the established order can be revealed.¹⁰¹ It is precisely this practice of making do that manifests itself most vividly in the tales of *Lo cunto de li cunti*.

1620-1632: *Lo cunto de li cunti* and Negotiating Neapolitan Identity

In 1620, Basile returned to Naples following a period of employment in the nearby town of Avellino.¹⁰² In that same year, his sister Adriana was also back in town for a performance of Basile’s musical drama *Il guerriero amante* [The Lover Warrior].¹⁰³ As I argue in the following chapter, it is highly likely that in this same year he was commissioned to write the viceregal

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 43.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

spectacle *Delizie di Posilipo*, performed in March of 1620. Through his work in ancillary courts, his contacts in the Oziosi, and with the intercession of his famous sister, Basile gained a foothold at the viceregal court, eventually acquiring the prestigious position of the Governor of Anversa in 1626.¹⁰⁴ Finally, in 1630, he was appointed by the Viceroy Duke of Alba as master of ceremonies for the Palazzo Reale, the year that his *Mascarata, Monte Parnaso* was performed.¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately, following a violent eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 1631, a flu epidemic hit Naples, to which Basile fell prey and died in February of 1632.¹⁰⁶

In the years prior to his death, however, Basile fervently made arrangements for the publication of his two dialect landmarks: *Lo cunto de li cunti* (published 1632) and *Le muse napoletane* (published 1635). Often represented as the culmination of his life's work, literary scholars tend to emphasize *Lo cunto*'s contraposition to his Italian output.¹⁰⁷ However, if considered rather as complementary with courtly works often deemed "unoriginal" or "unauthentic," we might avoid romanticizing this narrative. Furthermore, as a process, the composition of *Lo cunto* in conjunction with other genres reflects a working out of his Neapolitan identity, and his immersion within the contact zone of Naples.

In the opening frame tale to this monumental collection, the king of Valle Pelosa (Hairy Valley) appears distraught, as his daughter Zoza has not been able to laugh for some time.¹⁰⁸ Ordering a great fountain of oil to be built in front of the palace, the two wait patiently for passers-by to slip and fall, hopefully inciting Zoza to laugh. When an old woman stops to mop up the precious oil (a valued commodity in impoverished neighborhoods), a court page throws a

¹⁰⁴ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 434.

¹⁰⁵ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 44.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 245.

¹⁰⁸ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 36.

rock at her, smashing the jar and enraging her to the point that she “lost her phlegmatic compass bearings, and raised up the stage curtain and revealed a woodsy scene.”¹⁰⁹ To get a sense of the sheer gravitas of Basile’s language, it is worth quoting the old woman’s insult in full:

Ah, you worthless thing, you dope, shithead, bed pissers, leaping goat, diaper ass, hangman’s noose, bastard mule! Just look, even fleas can cough now! Go on, may paralysis seize you, may your mother get bad news, may you not live to see the first of May! Go on, may you be thrust by a Catalan lance or torn apart by ropes, may you suffer a thousand ills and then some with wind in your sails! May your seed be lost! Scoundrel, beggar, son of a taxed woman, rogue!¹¹⁰

In this startling passage, Basile employs the full expressive potential of Neapolitan dialect, hurling out a string of insults that would have made Shakespeare blush. The tale goes on: Zoza, unable to control her laughter at this incident, further angers the old woman, who puts a curse on her, that she will never have a husband except the Prince of Roundfield, Tadeo, who is currently under a sleeping spell only to be awakened by an urn of her tears.¹¹¹ Embarking on a journey to meet the prince, Zoza encounters three magic fairies who give her objects to aid her on her quest. Reaching the prince and the urn, she falls asleep, and a slave named Lucia seizes the urn and cries the tears needed to fill it, awakening Tadeo, who immediately takes Lucia as his wife.¹¹² The magic objects—a walnut, chestnut, and gold-spinning doll—might prove useful to Zoza in her quest to get Tadeo back, but Lucia steals them from her. Zoza asks the doll to instill in Lucia an insatiable desire to hear fairy tales. The next five days, or the *Pentamarone*, are delegated to the playing of games and the telling of tales, through which Zoza plans to reveal Lucia’s dastardly deeds.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, text and translation in Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 83.

¹¹⁰ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 37.

¹¹¹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 84.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid., 85.

In this opening sequence, Basile demonstrates his virtuosic ability to blend elements of the fantastic and the everyday, the marvelous and the banal. The king himself, whose kingdom of Hairy Valley is no doubt a reference to the “woodsy scene” to follow, ironically parodies the absent king of Naples, for whom the viceroy provides a temporary substitution. In his attempt to appease his daughter, he presents spectacles that reflect commonplace occurrences of public festivals. Specifically, the fountain of oil alludes to the viceregal practice of providing *cuccagne*, elaborate floats often loaded with pasta, macaroni, sausages, and sweets, for which starved *plebe* often fought and stabbed each other.¹¹⁴ Many of these were built in the shape of Mount Vesuvius, spewing out fountains of wine that parodied the very real and terrifying pyroclastic flows that occasionally devastated the region.¹¹⁵ In addition, the old woman’s insults contain a string of references to public festivities. The “Catalan lance” refers to the popular spectacle of the Spanish bullfight and lance game, both of which were dangerous and drew large crowds. Multiple references to rope tortures remind us of the frequent public hangings and executions that also helped to maintain order in the city.¹¹⁶

Equally intriguing, heroine Zoza displays a keen sense of street smarts and a knack for improvisation throughout *Lo cunto*. Like many of the characters of the tales, Zoza demonstrates a mastery of the art of making do. For example, although granted magical objects of various types, Zoza ultimately succeeds without them, bypassing the magical *deus ex machina* that characterizes many other fairy tales of the period.¹¹⁷ Despite her status as an upper-class woman, she knows how to relate to everyday practices happening on the streets and countryside of

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Gabriel Guarino, “Public Rituals and Festivals in Naples, 1503-1799,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 275.

¹¹⁷ Magnanini, *Fairy Tale Science*, 41.

Naples, proving herself an “enterprising heroine” in the cutthroat environment of *Lo cunto*.¹¹⁸ In this regard, Basile grants her, as well as many other heroines in the tales, an agency uncharacteristic of many representations of women in the seventeenth century.¹¹⁹ In her practices of making do, she thus reflects Basile’s own empowered *in mezzo* identity of both courtier and *popolo* member.

As cited in this chapter’s introduction, Basile’s tale of “The Cockroach, the Mouse, and the Cricket” exposes a vivid portrait of the socio-political condition of contemporary Naples. In this story, the lowly character Nardiello, a classic fool figure, is charged by his father Miccone to go to the local market to buy some steer.¹²⁰ Though he has good intentions, he returns no less than three times (a significant number in fairy tales), each time having purchased instead a magical creature—a guitar-playing cockroach, a dancing mouse, and a singing cricket.¹²¹ Needless to say, his father is furious, chasing him off with a club; eventually, he ends up in Lombardy.¹²² While there, he stumbles across the court of a king, and seeing his beautiful daughter, asks the king for permission to court her. Though he considers Nardiello “the dregs of humanity,” the king decides to grant his request, giving him three nights to woo his daughter into bed.¹²³ Unfortunately, he falls asleep and gets thrown into a lion’s den. Because he frees his animal friends, they vow to win the heart of the princess for him. By now, she has been claimed by a German nobleman, who also has three nights to consummate the marriage. Each night, before he can make love, the cockroach crawls into his colon, causing him to soil his sheets and

¹¹⁸ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 157.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹²⁰ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 247.

¹²¹ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 194.

¹²² Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 249.

¹²³ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 195.

terrify the princess. The king, greatly distressed, banishes the German nobleman and give Nardiello the princess's hand in marriage. Thus the ending moral rings true, that "after a thousand hardships and a thousand woes that *more happens in one hour than in a hundred years*." ¹²⁴

In this story, a kind of parody of a *Bildungsroman* [coming of age tale], Nardiello progresses from an incompetent country peasant to a nobleman, albeit through no feat of his own doing. In its carnivalesque reversal of social realities, Nardiello's rise to prominence mimics aspects of Neapolitan society. Rising middle class families, of no noble blood, could easily purchase titles of nobility from the Spanish court, and were increasingly encouraged to do so as the seventeenth century progressed. ¹²⁵ In this regard, money provided the equivalent to the magic of the fairy tale, capable of changing more "in an hour than in a hundred years." ¹²⁶ Furthermore, Nardiello's tale in many ways reflects Basile's own career as a wandering courtier. In a self-deferential salute to himself, Basile embraced his "humble" Neapolitan roots, and his academic name Il Pigro followed him throughout his life. ¹²⁷

This tale further reinforces his representation of fluid transgressive motion between social spheres. For example, the musical activities of the animals reflect commonplace entertainments that took place in many noble Neapolitan courts. ¹²⁸ As temporary employees, these musicians often occupied a lower social status, as the music industry lacked consistent patronage

¹²⁴ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 254. Emphasis original.

¹²⁵ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 51.

¹²⁶ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 254.

¹²⁷ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 430.

¹²⁸ Keith Austin Larson, "The Unaccompanied Neapolitan Madrigal from 1536-1654" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 123.

practices.¹²⁹ In the same way, classical allusions mingle with everyday vulgarities, such as the description of the stench of soiled sheets: “he uncorked his body in such a way that one might have said, with Petrarch: ‘love drew from him a subtle liquid.’...When he saw the sort of perfume he had incensed his idol with, he nearly died of shame!”¹³⁰ In the world of Basile’s tales, no one is safe from parody or critique, and all partake in the wonders and horrors of life in Naples.

Lo cunto thoroughly demonstrates Basile’s penchant for spectacle, and his ability to both shock and awe his readers (and listeners) made him an effective dramatic librettist.¹³¹ Firmly rooted in what Marino called “a poetics of the marvelous,” his characters refused to be contained to the page, bursting from the contact zone and onto the Neapolitan stage.¹³² As we will see in the next chapter, Basile’s works make their way to the most important stage in early seventeenth-century Naples, that of the viceroy’s Palazzo Reale.¹³³ Furthermore, just as the king of the frame story deploys his knowledge of festival life and civic activities, Basile would bring the sounds and sights of the streets of Naples into the viceregal theatre—both the noisy rabble of everyday life and the grandiose displays of power that equally attempted to ensound themselves upon the urban landscape.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 252.

¹³¹ On the practice and aesthetics of *meraviglia* in early Italian theatre, see Nina Treadwell, “She Descended on a Cloud from the Highest Spheres: Florentine Monody alla Romanina,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 16, no. 1 (2004): 4.

¹³² Canepa, “Literary Culture in Naples,” 249.

¹³³ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth Century Naples*, 19.

Making Do With Naples, Inhabiting the Contact Zone

Clearly, Giambattista Basile maintained a complex relationship with his cultural environment, and his multivalent identity manifests in his literary output. Born into a family destined to be courtiers and artists, he found himself caught between cultures of the dominant and the oppressed. As such, he discovered practices of making do with Naples, using what de Certeau defines as “tactics” and “strategies” to manipulate his field of play.¹³⁴ Following de Certeau’s prescriptions for the practice of making do, Basile became “a poet of his own affairs, tracing indeterminable trajectories that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move.”¹³⁵ As a model of the Neapolitan personal sovereign, he fashioned himself and his writing through a language of *in mezzo*, a transculturated blending of speech practices that appealed to multiple social spheres in Naples.¹³⁶ Existing in a liminal limbo where social improvement was akin to playing an elaborate game, Basile resided in the contact zone, into which he brought his writings.¹³⁷ However, in his virtuosic performance of *napolitanità*, and in this thesis, he has yet to take his final bow.

¹³⁴ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 23.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹³⁶ Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” 34.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

CHAPTER FOUR

Performing *Napolitanità*: Music, Spectacle, and Identity

What can be seen designates what is no longer there.
—Michel de Certeau¹

*Festa, riso, gioco, e gioia son quest'onde, e questo monte! [Festive, laughing, playing and joyful
are these waves and this mountain!]*
—*Festa a Ballo, Delizie di Posilipo*²

In 1504, Jacopo Sannazaro, the most eminent Neapolitan humanist and poet of the Renaissance, published what was to become the “blockbuster” of the next two centuries, the *Arcadia*.³ The first allegorical pastoral romance of its time, the story (to be copied, parodied, and worshipped) describes the travels and travails of the lover Sincero, who leaves his lady and homeland of Naples to visit the mythical land of Arcadia, only to return and find she has perished.⁴ Written at the cusp between the Aragonese reign of Naples and the reign of the Spanish viceroys, at the conclusion of *Arcadia* Sannazaro laments for the end of an era.⁵ The Naples he knew was quickly fading into the realm of myth:

Our muses are extinct, our laurels dessicated; our Parnassus is in ruins, our woods are mute, and our valleys and mountains have gone deaf from sorrow. Nymphs and satyrs no longer populate the forests, the shepherds have lost their song, flocks and herds barely graze the pastures...everything is lost, every hope failed, every consolation dead.⁶

¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven Randall (Berkeley University of California Press, 1988), 108.

² Roland Jackson, ed., *A Neapolitan Festa a Ballo: Delizie di Posilipo di Boscarecce, e Maritime and Selected Instrumental Ensemble Pieces from Naples Conservatory Ms. 4.6.3* (Madison: A-R Editions, 1978), xiv.

³ Giuseppe Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 32.

⁴ Nancy Canepa, “Literary Culture in Naples, 1500-1800,” in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 428.

⁵ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 29.

⁶ Jacopo Sannazaro, *Arcadia*, text and translation in Canepa, “Literary Culture in Naples” 427.

Though in the following centuries Naples grew to become the largest city in the Spanish Empire, Sannazaro's words continued to resound within both courtly and popular Neapolitan discourse. For example, in a *villanella* of the late sixteenth century, the popular composer Velardiniello relays a list of wondrous festivities that apparently characterized the life of the city of the past, lamenting "where do we do such wonderful things today, enjoy such great pleasure and such festivity?"⁷ While conveyed with an ironic tone that I have identified in many Neapolitan works of the period, these comments testify to a continued sense of cultural loss that seems contradictory to the unprecedented pomp and circumstance of seventeenth-century Neapolitan spectacle. Indeed, in the words of contemporaneous historian Mario Santaro, "the cry of pain with which the *Arcadia* closed was becoming a daily lament."⁸ However, like many of the dichotomous contradictions inherent in Naples (i.e., the sacred and the profane; delight and terror), so much lamenting called for celebrations ample enough to fill this void. Referring to the ubiquitous presence of advertising images in the modern city, what de Certeau deemed as "inverted images of happiness that multiply in the urban landscape" equally applies to the role of spectacle in early modern Naples.⁹

This chapter positions three musico-dramatic spectacles of the viceregal court as mirroring and modeling the complex nature of Neapolitan identities in seventeenth-century Spanish Naples. The librettos for these three events were likely penned by the courtier and intellectual Giambattista Basile, whose writing style constitutes an ideal example of what Pratt

⁷ Velardiniello, quoted in Dinko Fabris, "Musical Festivals at a Capital Without a Court: Spanish Naples from Charles V to Philip V," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance*, edited by J.R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 272.

⁸ Mario Santaro, quoted in Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples" 427.

⁹ Michel de Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, translated by Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997) 19.

terms transculturated language, in which blended idioms of metropolitan (in this case, Spanish) and native (Neapolitan) cultures render speech expressive to a broad range of social spheres.¹⁰ *Venere addolorata* (1613), *Delizie di Posilipo* (1620), and *Mascarata, Monte Parnaso* (1630) give voice to this individual, who found himself caught between cultures of the viceroy, the nobility, and the *popolo*, within the liminal space of the contact zone. Furthermore, due to their collaborative nature, these musico-dramatic spectacles were also communal rituals that continuously performed and recreated the myth of Naples, thus imitating and complementing the public festivals that served the same function.¹¹ In turn, I argue that by attending to the negotiatory voice of Basile's writing, we might open up the expanse of the contact zone, and expose Neapolitan voices residing within, caught *in mezzo*.

Spectacle in Naples: An Approach to Ritual, Liminality, and Wonder

As discussed in Chapter One, this analysis draws from previous studies of early modern spectacle, yet adopts methods that account for the challenges of Neapolitan exceptionality. Many scholars emphasize the “baroque-ness” of spectacle, suggesting that these events were “total works of art” that served the intentions of absolutist rulers, and that spectators experienced them as ephemeral and awe-inspiring. However, I argue that Neapolitan viceregal spectacles were negotiative rituals, functioning to fashion the identities of the performers involved, that of the absent ruler, and of the city itself. By integrating soundscape and spectacle studies, I undertake phenomenological close readings of Basile's dramatic works to demonstrate how Neapolitans negotiated and performed their identities in these events, resulting in the position of Naples *in mezzo*.

¹⁰ Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” in *Profession 91* (1991): 34.

¹¹ Fabris, “Music Festivals in Spanish Naples,” 271.

Previous studies have advocated for an approach to spectacle “from above,” holding the sponsor-ruler as the ultimate author of meaning. For example, Strong credits the invention of artificial perspective (in both painting and stage construction) as ushering in an era of absolutist art, in which “the preference became more and more for indoor spectacles where viewers could be forced to look at things in a certain way.”¹² Considering the meaning of spectacles as uncontested, Strong ultimately defines the Renaissance court fête in relation to the prince, and holds that “its fundamental objective was power conceived as art.”¹³ Similarly, Auerke characterizes baroque spectacle as exhibiting “rhetorical discourse,” in which rulers addressed “a small, fairly well-educated group, no longer a community or polis.”¹⁴ While the public festival constituted an *open* discourse between the ruler and his subjects in which the ruler was an “actor on display” for the entire *polis*, the rise of absolutist courts led to a *closed* discourse in which the ruler’s power was displayed *for* him to a select audience.¹⁵ Auerke claims that as performances grew increasingly private, only the “initiated” were allowed access to the sacred presence of the ruler, while the majority were excluded.¹⁶ This “sacred play” led to the elevation of spectacle as a “total work of art” that could communicate allegorical truths of divinely-appointed kingship, reinforcing social hierarchies and creating sharp divisions between cultures of the high and low.¹⁷

¹² Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 32.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁴ Kristian Auerke, *Gods of Play: Baroque Festive Performances as Rhetorical Discourse* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 98.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

However, I am interested in asking questions about the artist's active role in the self-fashioning of the ruler-sponsor, and in pursuing the possibility that a spectacle could fail in its cultural work of royal self-aggrandizement. As Harness has demonstrated, "rulers were active, although not sole authors of their self-fashioning."¹⁸ If court spectacle might be viewed as a means of communication, Harness stresses "it is important to remember that a variety of individuals took part in the conversation."¹⁹ Viceregal spectacles, while enclosed within the space of the court, nonetheless required massive performing forces from throughout Naples, making them communal rituals as well as private events. As Muir writes, like any ritual, political ritual is "a social activity that is repetitive, standardized, a model or a mirror, and its meaning is inherently ambiguous."²⁰ Muir finds the ambiguity of rituals both powerful and dangerous, especially to systems of power seeking to control them.²¹ Citing Natalie Zemon Davis, Muir claims "festive life can on the one hand perpetuate certain values of the community (even guarantee its survival), and on the other hand, criticize political order."²²

I find that Giambattista Basile's spectacles, infused with both the courtly and the carnivalesque, promote ambiguous (or outright treasonous) readings, and that they served both as rituals of glorification and vehicles of protest. As Treadwell and Harness write, due to their ephemeral nature, musical spectacles were subject to multiple interpretations.²³ In particular,

¹⁸ Kelley Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices: Music, Art, and Female Patronage in Early Modern Florence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 3.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

²¹ Ibid., 5.

²² Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975), 97, quoted in Ibid., 100.

²³ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 2; Nina Treadwell, *Music and Wonder in the Medici Court: The 1589 Interludes for La Pellegrina* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 7.

Treadwell emphasizes that the transient nature of spectacle could potentially subvert the ruler's perspective, as "spectator-auditors privileged some parts of the experience, while ignoring or discarding others."²⁴ Oftentimes, Treadwell claims, "shock and awe" techniques of *meraviglia* functioned in unexpected ways or "did not work at all," demonstrating that the audience "was no mere receptacle for the messages that contributed to the notion of the prince-as-god."²⁵ Similarly, the socio-political conditions of Naples made the task of exalting the monarch tentative, even improbable. For Neapolitans, though the viceroy represented an embodiment of the absent emperor, the precariousness of his position and his reliance upon local structures of power (the *seggi*, the *popolo*, and the church) made his absolute sovereignty impossible.²⁶ Like the contact zone that they "mirrored and modeled," in these spectacles, "it is not readily apparent who or what dominates."²⁷

Nevertheless, social precedent demanded a continuation (and elaboration) of such events, many of which were tied to the Aragonese court of past centuries.²⁸ This was indeed a symbiotic process—the Spanish viceroys claimed to carry on the line of Aragonese authority, and Neapolitans rewrote the myth of Naples to adapt to this new narrative.²⁹ As a result, what Aercke refers to as "private festive events" in Naples were anything but private, and distinctions were not as clear-cut.³⁰ In her work on late medieval Paris, Dillon also found that "artists and thinkers

²⁴ Ibid., 6.

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Gabriel Guarino, "Public Rituals and Festivals in Naples, 1503-1799," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 261.

²⁷ Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 35.

²⁸ Fabris, "Music Festivals in Spanish Naples," 272.

²⁹ John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 24.

³⁰ Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 32.

of the city recognized a compatibility of urban, everyday contingent sound of the city and the more enduring, artful sound of song.”³¹ Even a treatise as learned as Johannes de Grocheio’s *De Musica* “grounds theory in Parisian practice, one constantly reinforced by citing contemporary songs as proof.”³² In the same way, seventeenth-century viceregal spectacles sought accessibility to a broad social sphere, and as extensions of the public festival calendar, conductivity to the collaborative myth of Naples.³³ More than displays of Spanish authority and the glory of the absent king, viceregal spectacles had to reflect the magnificence of the city as well as its “most faithful” people.

The role of the artist-performer was thus crucial, and her political position complex. Charged with communicating to and speaking for a diverse city, these individuals drew from a wide range of sources, including the classical language of Arcadia, the ceremonial rhetoric of the courts, and the everyday experience of the *popolo*. Like the fairy tale world created by Basile, the pastoral genres of viceregal spectacles entailed an excursion to a land outside of the rigid confines of the city.³⁴ Suspended in the liminal *place* of the sylvan and the oceanic, as well as the liminal *space* of performance, those involved teetered on the precipice of multiple divides. Turner saw such a state as a mediation of “*communitas* and structure,” between a speculative

³¹ Emma Dillon, *The Sense of Sound: Musical Meaning in France, 1260-1330* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83.

³² *Ibid.*, 82.

³³ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 91.

³⁴ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 32. For a convincing interpretation of liminality in pastoral settings, see Gale Sigal, “Courtied in the Country: Women’s Precarious Place in the Troubadours’ Lyric Landscape,” in *Text and Territory: Geographical Imagination in the European Middle Ages*, edited by Sylvia Tomasch and Sealy Gilles (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997) 185-206.

state of solidarity and a finalized form of social structure.³⁵ However, contrary to the Turnerian notion of ritual liminality as a temporary state, I characterize the Neapolitan condition of *in mezzo* as a process that demanded continual negotiation.³⁶ In Muir's terms, the liminality of spectacle transgressed the divide between "the carnivaleque lower body" and the "mannered upper body."³⁷ As Treadwell claims, the virtuosic acts of performers further blurred these lines through acts of *meraviglia* that depended upon audience interpretation.³⁸ As such, the performative acts of Neapolitans can be read as ambivalent and contested, constituting ways of making do capable of simultaneous subversion of and subordination to the values of government and community.

Due to his transient status as a courtier who straddled several social spheres, Giambattista Basile positioned himself to produce spectacles capable of speaking for and to the resounding city of Naples. Basile created a world where the deities and creatures of Arcadia coexist with the monstrous hybrids of *Lo cunto*, providing an expression of his own Neapolitan identity. Yet this personal ritual also served as a medium in which multiple performers could embody the actions and emotions of his crafted characters and situations, expressing their own identities as Neapolitans *in mezzo*.³⁹ Thus, they became active agents in a collaborative fashioning of *napolitanità*, breaking through the contact zone.

³⁵ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* [1969] (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1995), 134.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

³⁷ Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 100, 128.

³⁸ Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, 20.

³⁹ Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 83.

La Venere addolorata: Emotive Performances of Napolitanità

Entitled a *favola tragica da rappresentarsi in musica*, [tragic fable for representation (reciting) in music)], the spectacle *La Venere addolorata* [The Lamenting Venus] likely took the form of an opera, the first to be performed and published in Naples.⁴⁰ *Venere* follows the standard five-act format that characterized early operas produced in northern Italian courts, and its poetic structure of 607 lines makes it around the same length.⁴¹ Acts are divided into two scenes each, with choruses concluding each scene with commentary on its moral meaning.⁴² The cast of characters includes standard pastoral types, such as a dual chorus of nymphs and shepherds, as well as allegorical characters like Jealousy.⁴³ Probably the first opera based on the story of Venus and Adonis, the plot of *Venere* narrates the tragic tale whose origins lie in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.⁴⁴ Venus falls in love with the beautiful young man Adonis, but they are parted when Adonis is killed while hunting, at the end of which Adonis transforms into "an anemone, an ephemeral flower whose petals tremble in the wind."⁴⁵ However, Basile's setting often thwarts the ideals the myth purports to ennoble, and multiple forces within the opera work to unravel the love between the protagonists.

⁴⁰ This has been discussed by both Stalnaker and Croce, who both underplay its significance due to its "inferior plot" and absence of music. Stalnaker takes the use of the transitive verb "rappresentarsi" to mean that it was intended but not realized, and does not pursue the question further. See William Stalnaker, *The Beginnings of Opera in Naples* (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1968), 7 and Benedetto Croce, *I teatri di Napoli, secolo XV-XVIII* (Napoli: Presso Luigi Pierro, 1891), 116.

⁴¹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 7.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Giuseppe Mazzotta, "Giambattista Marino's Operatic Aesthetics," in *Word, Image, and Song: Essays on Early Modern Italy*, edited by Rebecca Cyprus, Beth L. Glixon, and Nathan Link (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013), 255.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 253.

For Basile, the writing of *Venere* offered a vital opportunity to display his literary prowess and to express his own brand of *napolitanità*. As the first opera libretto by a Neapolitan, and due to the fact that he may have never seen an opera, Basile had to make do with the dramatic precedents with which he was more familiar, such as the comic theatres and public entertainments of Naples, as well as the creative space of his writing.⁴⁶ The very choice of the Venus and Adonis myth as subject material represented a bold move, as its erotic content possessed widespread connotations of obscene pornography under the guise of classical allegory.⁴⁷ Basile took full advantage of these associations and extended them, reinforcing the myth's erotic content, breaking down the archetypal qualities of its classical characters, and subverting the audience's expectations of its dramatic scheme. *Venere* reads as a progression of vivid emotions that often do not conform to the progression of the story's actions, and its characters show little regard for either classical precedents or operatic tropes. As a kind of personal ritual, *Venere* signaled a transition in Basile's life as a courtier and his debut as a dramatic writer, and its dramatic contradictions may well represent his own ambivalent emotions about life in the courts. However, when sung on stage, performers embodied these emotions and rendered them subject to the interpretation of the spectator-auditor, who might have ranged from the lowest servant to the viceroy himself. As a communal ritual, *Venere* enabled a performance and negotiation of Neapolitan emotions—emotions whose semantic meanings, in Bruce Smith's terms, can be re-membered as embodied texts.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 434.

⁴⁷ Louise Stein, "Eros, Erato, Terpsichore, and the Hearing of Music in Early Modern Spain," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 3-4 (Autumn 1998): 659.

⁴⁸ Bruce R. Smith, *The Acoustic World of Early Modern England: Attending to the O-Factor* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1999), 148.

Venere first appeared in an *Opere poetiche* published in Mantua in 1613, a collected edition of Basile's works that included his two part *Madriali et ode, Egloghe amorose e lughubri, Le avventurose disavventure*, and the sacred poem *Pianto della Vergine*.⁴⁹ Though issued from the "stampatori ducali," the press of the Osanni brothers controlled by the Gonzaga dukes of Mantua, the dedication for *Venere addolorata* is addressed to Marcello Filomarino di Fabritio, a Neapolitan nobleman of the Capuana *seggio*.⁵⁰ A prominent family that included archbishops, Vatican canons, and foreign delegates, the Filomarini also patronized many of the arts in Naples.⁵¹ Interestingly, at the time Basile's employers were the Carafa of the competing Nido *seggio*; Basile's flattery of Marcello's "degnissimo nome e antica origine" may indicate his desire for new employment, rather than the standard rhetoric designated for dedications.⁵² This subtle gesture should come as no surprise; as we have seen thus far, Basile displays a mastery of playing the field and making do with his situation.

Unfortunately, scholars know little about *Venere*'s performance context, not even where or when it was written. The music, descriptions of scenery, and lists of performers that usually accompanied these publications have all been lost, and what remains is a tentative record of an already ephemeral event. As Stalnaker writes, the Mantuan publication likely occurred after the event itself, as its dedicatory letter to Filomarino (signed on September 5, 1612) predates the printing in 1613.⁵³ At the time, Basile worked for Luigi Carafa (whose court he arrived at in

⁴⁹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 4.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 6. For a full list of families included in the *seggi*, see Enrico Bacco and Cesare D'Engenio Caracciolo, *Naples: An Early Guide*, edited and translated by Eileen Gardiner (New York: Italica Press, 1991), 132-136.

⁵¹ Keith Austin Larson, "The Unaccompanied Neapolitan Madrigal from 1536-1654" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1985), 895.

⁵² Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 5; Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 40.

⁵³ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 5.

1608), although he frequently contacted his sister Adriana at the Gonzaga court of Mantua.⁵⁴ While this first edition (1612) has been lost, *Venere* was likely performed in Naples, as Basile stayed in Mantua for only a few months.⁵⁵ Furthermore, as the first documented spectacle exhibiting clear qualities of opera, *Venere* represented a significant contribution to the artistic resurgence promoted by the Viceroy Count de Lemos and his Accademia degli Oziosi.⁵⁶

Furthermore, while it is possible that *Venere* was performed at the household of the Carafa, it is equally probable and likely that it made its way into the Real Sala of the viceregal Palazzo Reale. In 1612, Basile was a prominent member of the Oziosi, which increasingly pursued artistic innovation and experimentation that would place it on par with northern Italian academies. Even so, the Oziosi's activities remained under the careful watch of the Viceroy Count de Lemos, who quickly suppressed works containing controversial political or religious commentary.⁵⁷ As Stalnaker argues, *Venere*'s operatic narrative and pastoral content both draw on contemporaneous precedents established in northern Italian academies, most notably the Camerata in Florence (responsible for producing both Peri and Caccini's *Euridice*), the Invaghiti in Mantua (patrons of Monteverdi's early operas), and later, the Incogniti in Venice.⁵⁸ Larson notes that noble households like the Carafa rarely employed in-house forces capable of operatic production; furthermore, the cramped spaces of noble houses located in the *seggi* neighborhoods would have proved unfavorable for stage productions.⁵⁹ As the center of musical activity in

⁵⁴ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 41.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 431.

⁵⁷ Suzanne Magnanini, "Telling Tales Out of School: The Fairy Tale and Italian Academies," *The Romantic Review* 99, no. 3-4 (May-November 2008): 123.

⁵⁸ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 5.

⁵⁹ Larson, "Unaccompanied Madrigal," 71; Tommaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 121.

Naples, the residence of the viceroy, well-staffed with full time singers and instrumentalists, would have been much more conducive to a fully staged performance of *Venere*. The viceroy would have likely wished to establish the precedent at his own court. As the first documented performance of an opera in Naples,

The following image of the Real Sala, or the Gran Sala, in 1713 adequately portrays how an opera like *Venere* might appear on this stage (Figure 4.1). While depicted one hundred years after *Venere*, the Real Sala served as the main performance venue for viceregal (and later, royal Bourbon) spectacles until the completion of the Sala Teatro in 1768.⁶⁰ Here, we can see a stage large enough to hold a number of musicians, actors, and dancers, who in a more elaborate spectacle would have probably also occupied the ground below. By contrast, the audience sits comfortably below the stage and on the second level. The artist depicts everything in its proper place: spectators appear in neat lines of chairs on either side of the stage, the actors and musicians situate themselves center-stage, and even the drapery folds of the ceiling above seem perfectly aligned. Through the use of one-point perspective and symmetrical composition, this presentational format imitates the vantage point of the sponsor-ruler, which Aercke and Strong argue occupied all aspects of artistic production.⁶¹

However, in *Venere* Basile consistently deploys tactics of making do that challenge the myth's traditional format, potentially subverting the political needs of the viceroy and disrupting the status quo. Given the opera's courtly context, audiences expected displays of emotion to conform to classical dramatic precedents that translated into contemporaneous social values.⁶² As

⁶⁰ Franco Mancini, *Feste ed apparati civile e religiosi in Napoli dal Vicereame alla capitale* (Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1968), 55.

⁶¹ Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 33; Strong, *Art and Power*, 40.

⁶² Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 123.

Harness argues, court artists' choices of genres and styles reinforced the prestige, power, and gender of those present; in this case, the use of proper "mannered" musical styles and gestures for noble mythological characters would seem appropriate.⁶³ To the contrary, *Venere* runs a gamut of emotions that would have been considered strikingly misplaced to both the original myth and its viceregal audience.⁶⁴ Rather than occupying a one-point perspective under the complete control of the ruler, Basile's characters leap from the page through their emotive acts. Thus, as Smith puts it, "marks on the page become registers of bodily experience," demanding to be re-membered.⁶⁵

For a story supposed to be about love and beauty (specifically, the Neoplatonic striving towards a refined love), Basile's setting centers around the instability of love, especially when under duress from the forces of jealousy, suspicion, and anger.⁶⁶ For example, unlike typical operatic formats, the prologue's muse of Jealousy (*Gelosia*, an odd choice to begin with) intercedes directly into the narrative with intentions contrary to those of the protagonists. Abandoning all subtlety, Jealousy reveals her goals quite clearly. Since she is "love's daughter," (Cupid) Jealousy plans on tattling on her grandmother Venus, who has become unfaithful to her lover Mars and has begun an affair with Adonis.⁶⁷ Though some will criticize her for this, Jealousy resolves that she is an "enemy only of those who are deceitful in love." Her presence resonates throughout the opera, propelling both the main plot and its subplots. Jealousy's messenger, the nymph Lydia, delivers the news to Mars; herself having been scorned by her past

⁶³ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 9.

⁶⁴ Stein, "Eros, Erato, Terpsichore," 655.

⁶⁵ Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 121.

⁶⁶ Mazzotta, "Giambattista Marino's Operatic Aesthetic," 253.

⁶⁷ The plot summary in these paragraphs draws from Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 8-10.

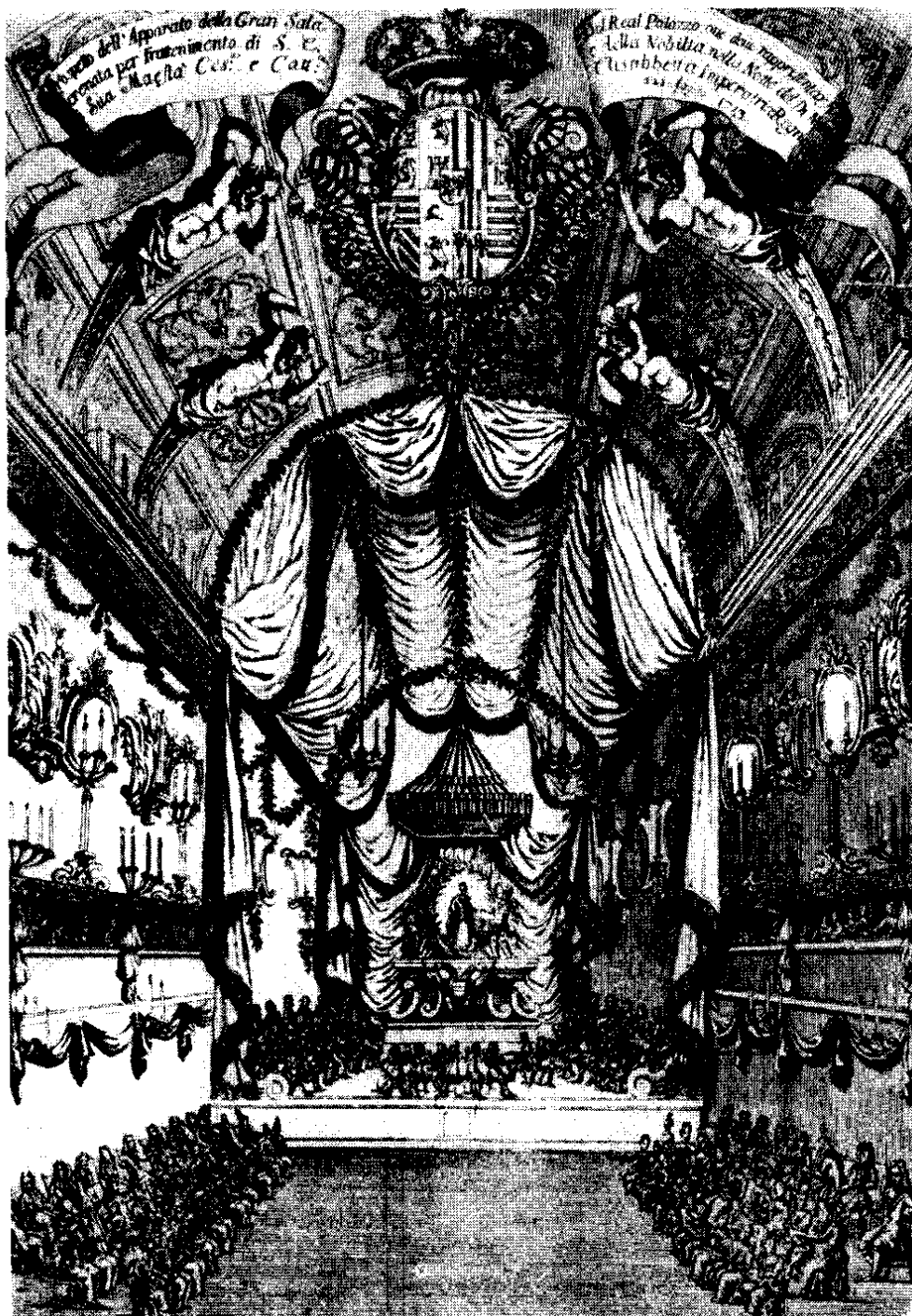


Figure 4.1 View of the Stage in the Gran Sala⁶⁸

⁶⁸ G. Papis, "Prospetto dell'Apparato della Gran Sala," in Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 38.

lover Adonis, Lydia seeks revenge against Venus. Mars, furious after assuming the dreaded role of the cuckold, arranges for Adonis's imminent death by a boar. Even Venus and Adonis, whose love is supposed to be eternal, often suspect each other's unfaithfulness, and their ultimate separation seems more ironically inevitable than tragic.

As in his other writings, Basile's linguistic depictions of the emotions brought on by Jealousy fluidly blend the courtly and the carnivalesque, revealing emotional tropes of anger that transcended class distinctions of high and low. For example, in her opening monologue Jealousy expresses her anger at Venus, that "treacherous and disloyal lover" who abandoned Mars, a formal insult appropriate to courtly discourse.⁶⁹ However, Jealousy's informal reference to Venus as a "grandmother" in the same sentence suggests a comedic register. Following Harness's argument that spectacle participants adapted musical and physical language to the court poet's text, it seems logical that the performers of *Venere* would also blend high and low artistic languages, aiming to accessibly communicate these emotions to a broad audience.⁷⁰

Jealousy's opening scene models the wide range of musico-dramatic gestures *Venere*'s evocative characters called for, and exhibits Basile's virtuosic mastery of both courtly and popular entertainment conventions. For example, the poetic form of Jealousy's monologue, predominately alternating seven and eleven syllable lines of *versi sciolti*, suggests a dramatic recitative style of monody similar to that used by La Musica in Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, which contains lyrical declamatory musical lines.⁷¹ Jealousy's disgruntlement would have called for a

⁶⁹ Ibid., 10.

⁷⁰ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 10.

⁷¹ Gary Tomlinson, "Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi's *via naturale alla imitazione*," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34, no. 1 (Spring 1981): 64; Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 92.

rapid *concitato* style, which had widespread connotations of anger in operatic language.⁷² When combined with appropriately comedic physical gestures, this opening scene would have doubtless been off-putting to an audience used to prologues praising the status of the ruler-sponsor.⁷³ Furthermore, this passage reverses the typical classical separation of exterior commentary and interior narrative. The narrator is not neutral, but reveals her own contrasting agenda, a confusing situation like the relationship in *Lo cunto de li cunti* between the frame story and its interior tales.⁷⁴

Jealousy's angry musico-dramatic gestures echo in the actions of subsequent characters, threatening to burst into violence. For example, following a love scene between Venus and Adonis in Act II, Lydia conveys her vehement anger at Venus and tells the audience of her plan to spill the beans to Mars: "He will know of your fraud / the offended Mars / And my dear Adonis / for whom I suffer in grief / to me will be returned."⁷⁵ Lydia's music here would likely have been harsh and declamatory, continuing Basile's ironic counterposition of the frame story with its interior plot.⁷⁶ Perhaps the most violent expression of Jealousy, however, comes from Mars, who vows vengeance on the interloping lover Adonis: "I will kill him who disturbs my happiness/ I will murder he who takes my every pleasure from me."⁷⁷ In this dramatic scheme, Mars has been cuckolded and must reassert his masculine authority by killing the man who has

⁷² Suzanne Cusick, "'There Was Not One Lady Who Failed to Shed a Tear': Arianna's Lament and the Construction of Modern Womanhood," *Early Music* 22, no. 1 (February 1994): 26.

⁷³ For a discussion of eighteenth-century Neapolitan comedic theatre, see Barbara Ann Naddeo, "Urban Arcadia: Representations of the 'Dialect' of Naples in Linguistic Theory and Comic Theater, 1696-1780," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 52.

⁷⁴ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 42.

⁷⁵ In alternate accounts of the myth, the figure of Persephone replaces Lydia. Text in Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 22. Translation mine.

⁷⁶ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 85.

⁷⁷ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 22. Translation mine.

taken his property.⁷⁸ Ironically, Venus and Adonis do not seem to be the defenders of eternal love, but rather the usurpers of proper social norms, bypassing family ties in the service of amorous leanings. Basile treats the myth, then, in a decidedly ambiguous fashion; while he consciously subverts the audience's expectations by blending elements of high and low, the characters nonetheless appear subject to the same social structures that governed real-world Naples.

Basile conveys the same ambivalence in his depictions of passionate emotions associated with love. Subverting what should be the central theme of the work, Basile often underplays love and emphasizes eroticism; the characters seem more concerned with love's pragmatic realization than with its allegorical idealization.⁷⁹ Basile blends the bawdy and the bloody within a classical framework, and the performers would have recognized the dramatic potential for lewdness and obscenity. For example, Act I features an extended love scene between Venus and Adonis, and with the sun rising, the two express their fears about leaving one another for the garish light of day. Adonis is skeptical that Venus will return to Mars, though Venus assures him that she would forsake Love itself [her son Cupid] for Adonis—Cupid has since left her womb, but Adonis now enters her heart.⁸⁰ In this tense scene where the forces of love and jealousy push and pull against one another, the two seem to need simultaneous distance and closeness. For example, Adonis wants to part, but only “to retrieve for you pretty flowers / a crown of golden horsehair.”⁸¹ Venus, aware of his doubts, answers back,

⁷⁸ In this regard, *Venere* bears striking resemblances to the Neapolitan *sceneggiata* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which a male personal sovereign is cuckolded and must reclaim his manhood by killing his male rival and abusing his wife. Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 136.

⁷⁹ Stein, “Eros, Erato, Terpsí chore,” 656.

⁸⁰ Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 9.

⁸¹ Text from *Ibid.*, 13. Translation mine.

You of much suspicion,
 you have stolen my heart
 Oh, please believe me, oh my soul
 that every flower on which I gaze
 that for kissing you, I fear, would open
 many vermillion lips, so many purple leaves;
 And while I speak the flower is, like [rotting] blackberries, wasting away
 Oh me, the language [tongue] of love!”⁸²

[Tu di maggior sospetto
 M’ingombri il cor, deh credi anima mia,
 Ch’ogni fior ch’io rimiro
 Temo, che per baciarti apra talhora
 Tante vermiglie labra
 Quant’hà porpuree foglie;
 E s’ei languendo more
 Pur dico il fior ohime langue d’Amore]

Venus and Adonis sense the fleeting nature of their love, ironically alluding to the same pretty flowers that, by opening, signal the death of Adonis. In their exchange, the two foreshadow the plot to come, in which Adonis becomes a flower after his impalement during a boar hunt. Like Jealousy’s monologue, the music for this scene was also likely in *stilo rappresentativo*, the expressive recitative style in which narrative action contained music that compelled dramatic action.⁸³ Musical themes from later in the opera might have been used to foreshadow future events, perhaps reinforced through characters’ uses of physical gestures signaling their recognition of the scene’s dramatic irony.

Basile intersperses a vulgar sexual language within “the language of love” that reinforces these themes of skepticism and ambivalence. Indeed, the juxtaposition of Adonis’s *baciarti* [kisses] with *more* [rotting blackberries] intimates a juiciness that might have easily been musically and gesturally indicated by a singer’s erotic bodily movements.⁸⁴ The phallic *langue* [tongue] further penetrates the scene, indicating the decadence of their passion, destined to end

⁸² Text from Ibid. Translation mine.

⁸³ Tomlinson, “Madrigal, Monody, and Monteverdi,” 65.

⁸⁴ Mazzotta, “Giambattista Marino’s Operatic Aesthetic,” 253.

badly. As Emma Dillon has observed, these kinds of vulgar songs were closely associated with charivari rituals, in which young men asserted their manhood to the community through loud, often violent disruption.⁸⁵ Interestingly, Muir associates charivari practices in Italy closely with the *mattinata* tradition of lovers serenading their beloved with “songs full of obscene innuendos and insulting words.”⁸⁶ Similarly, Venus and Adonis waste no time here with allegorical niceties, resolving rather to take advantage of each other’s physical presence before it is too late. In his conveyance of love’s passionate emotions, then, Basile appealed to the embodied physicality of passion, reinforcing the controversial eroticism of *Venere* while underplaying the original myth’s central theme, a Neoplatonic love of beauty.⁸⁷

However, in his depictions of lament, Basile exhibits his most virtuosic subversion of dramatic conventions. Specifically, lamenting becomes a vehicle in which irony serves to thinly veil ambivalences bordering on apathy. For example, in Act II, Venus discovers Adonis sleeping, and upon awakening him, finds him startled and distraught. Adonis has had a vision of Venus’s abandonment. She attempts to counter this by showering him with praise for his beauty, which should protect him from all evil: “Do not grieve, my love / for my heart with thee languishes / even if thou should pour tears and ooze blood.”⁸⁸ Here Venus, who should be heartbroken, does not express extreme pain at her parting; she even manages an ironic reference to the “oozing blood” that will soon issue from Adonis’s side.⁸⁹ Subverting the feminine connotation of lament, the singer could have underplayed an expression of grief and supplemented an ironic gesture

⁸⁵ Dillon, *Sense of Sound*, 94.

⁸⁶ Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 109.

⁸⁷ Mazzotta, “Giambattista Marino’s Operatic Aesthetic,” 253.

⁸⁸ Text from Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 15. Translation mine.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

worthy of Basile's wordplay.⁹⁰ By contrast, Adonis seems more lamentful than the title character: "Oh me! The soul divided / Oh me! Only thinking of your parting / I feel like dying."⁹¹ Unfortunately, his fears are well founded, as Mercury arrives to take Venus back to Mt. Olympus.⁹² Before leaving, Venus gives Adonis one last expression of her love, and also warns him to avoid hunting:

"Harden yourself with grief, my soul
I'll be with you soon
Yes, it's a tough game
Although the end [foot] has started, may the life remain
And may Adonis remain in peace
Stay in peace, my love,
Farewell, Adonis!"⁹³

[Tempra il duol alma mia,
Ch'io sarò tosto teco.
Che'n sì dura partita.
Ben che si parte il pie, resta la vita.
Or resta Adone in pace,
Resta in pace amor mio,
A'Dio Adone, à Dio!]

In this passage, Basile's previous allusions to parting are brought to full fruition. In an extensive wordplay on the words for parting (*partire*) and game (*partita*), Basile playfully suggests that love is a game that many play and few win. Furthermore, her farewell "a'Dio" substitutes the word for good-bye with "to God," and by asking Adonis to "rest in peace," she once again foresees his death. In a reversal of opera's title and of the typical gendered norms of lamenting, Venus feels little remorse for her actions, and she herself rarely laments. In the next lines, however, Adonis laments bitterly:

"Oh me! You part from me, oh my light

⁹⁰ Cusick, "There Was Not One Lady," 26.

⁹¹ Text from Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 15. Translation mine.

⁹² Ibid., 10.

⁹³ Text from Ibid., 15. Translation mine.

I remain here in the darkness
 Alas, you part my soul from my heart
 Though in my weeping I would like your game
 but who can weep without life?"⁹⁴

[Ahi tu parti ò mia luce, io quì rimango
 In tenebre; ahime, tu parti
 Anima del mio core,
 Ond'io pianger vorrei la tua partita
 Ma chi può lagrimar senza la vita?]

Indeed, Adonis in this act wails the most vehemently, for without the "partita" of Venus, he is without life. Finally, given the context of the scene, the chorus's conclusion is somewhat of a non sequitur, as Adonis will not only suffer from parting, he will die quite soon. At the end of Act III, the boar pursued by Adonis gores and kills him.

In Act V, these embodied emotions—jealousy, passion, and lament—come to an excessive climax when Venus returns and angrily demands explanation for Adonis's death. The shepherds, who have previously expressed apprehension at explaining this to Venus, relay the story of the boar having overcome Adonis. Venus laments for the first time in the opera, albeit for only 80 lines, a length similar to the multiple laments by other characters, most prominently Lydia and Adonis.⁹⁵ As if she didn't see this coming, Venus resolves that her former prize will turn into a new flower: the rose, Adonis himself transformed.⁹⁶ Venus quickly turns her thoughts away from grieving and towards vengeance. Finally, the chorus concludes the opera with the maxim that "a thousand of love's pleasures are outdone by a single misfortune."⁹⁷

In these concluding scenes, Basile expresses no remorse for the fate of the tragic hero of Adonis. Furthermore, his incompetency, both as a lover and as a warrior, renders him almost

⁹⁴ Text from Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 15. Translation mine.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 23.

⁹⁶ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 12.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

dispensable to the plot, which revolves around the actions of Venus. In yet another reversal of its title, Venus only laments long enough to convey the fable of Adonis becoming a rose, before she draws her attention to revenge on Mars, Lydia, and Jealousy. In this sense, Basile conveys a myth within a myth, a kind of frame story like the one he utilizes in *Lo cunto de li cunti*.⁹⁸ The final maxim, eerily suggestive of the conclusion to the fairy tale “The Cockroach, the Mouse, and the Cricket,” reinforces this connection and points to the literary interplay occupying Basile in these writings.⁹⁹

In *Venere*, then, Basile established his first experiment with the genre of pastoral *favola in musica*, albeit in an ironic tone that often contradicts the suspension of verisimilitude characteristic of many early operas. Juxtaposing the classical language of court entertainment with bawdy, bloody references to everyday life, Basile breaks with convention and establishes a unique voice for himself within the early opera repertoire. Indeed, the pastoral characters of Arcadia were meant to ennoble the virtues of love, faithfulness, and fortitude, not belittle them as Basile does quite blatantly.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the choice of the Venus and Adonis myth would have been unconventional, even obscene at the time. Reminiscent of the subversion of operatic precedent observed by Harness in the librettos of Jacopo Cicognini, Basile inverts the gender norms of the lament, for “it is the male character who is left weeping, and like his female counterparts, his laments are unsuccessful.”¹⁰¹ In his own subversion of courtly decorum through the Venus and Adonis story, Basile reveals as much as he conceals, and as Stein writes, “the delightfully erotic sheds its elitist, mythological mantle and its veil of metaphor and travels

⁹⁸ Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 253.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 24.

¹⁰¹ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 78.

to a world of urban streets and taverns in a social landscape riddled with the unsavory or the licentious in which the everyday becomes exotic.”¹⁰²

While the lack of evidence makes speculation about *Venere*’s performing forces or musical content difficult, Basile clearly provided performers ample opportunities to engage actively with the text and express their own emotive Neapolitan identities. As Harness argues, poets like Basile “produced what was often the only lasting record of a work.”¹⁰³ Though music and the visual arts certainly shaped a performance’s overall meaning, the words “were often concretized through print and circulated to individuals not present at the performance.”¹⁰⁴ Even so, Smith emphasizes that such early modern texts mediated “between sound-in-the-body and sound-on-the-page,” providing somatic tools for the readers (re-memberers) of text.¹⁰⁵ Given the immediacy of Basile’s writing and the contradictions of his characters, most likely both artistic forces were at play.

The liminal space of performance and the place of the pastoral offered a site of negotiation, where artists of the viceregal court might have shared senses of performativity and subversions of precedent.¹⁰⁶ *Venere* raises additional questions about the relationship between the court artist and the ruler-sponsor on the one hand and the poet and the performer on the other, many of which remain unanswered here. The carnivalesque world of Basile’s fairy tale seeps through the boundaries of class and rank, blending fluidly with what Muir classifies as the “mannered” rules of courtly etiquette.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the work blurs distinctions between public

¹⁰² Stein, “Eros, Erato, and Terpsíchor,” 658.

¹⁰³ Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices*, 4.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 121.

¹⁰⁶ Turner, *Ritual Process*, 134.

¹⁰⁷ Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 252.

and private political discourse, as the sounds of the festival permeate the world of the spectacle.¹⁰⁸ In *Venere*, then, Basile continued his project of expressing and negotiating Neapolitan identity, creating a space for others to do the same. In the spectacles that followed, even more “inverted images of happiness” elaborate these opening gestures, continuing to open up the contact zone of Naples.¹⁰⁹

Delizie di Posilipo: Giving Voice to the Landscape

On March 1, 1620, a Neapolitan *festa a ballo*, entitled *Delizie di Posilipo Boscarecce, e Maritime* was performed at the Real Sala in the viceregal Palazzo Reale, in celebration of “the happiness occasioned by the return to health of His Catholic Majesty, Philip III of Austria, King of the Spains.”¹¹⁰ In the absence of Philip, the viceroy at the time, Don Pedro Giron, presided over the elaborate event, which was scheduled on a pre-Lenten Carnival Sunday.¹¹¹ Appropriate to such a festive occasion, the action occurs in the nearby location of Posillipo, the beachfront property associated with the wild parties of the nobility that took place in the summer months.¹¹² Giron was especially known for his generous sponsorship of court spectacles, compelling one chronicler to note that “goodwill toward the viceroy increased in every quarter due to the many festivals, banquets, jousts, dance spectacles, tourneys, and equestrian shows he continually commanded and sponsored at his own expense. So magnificent were they that they equaled, not

¹⁰⁸ Dillon, *Sense of Sound*, 82; Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 98.

¹⁰⁹ De Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, 19.

¹¹⁰ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 186.

¹¹¹ Roland Jackson, “Preface,” in *A Neapolitan Festa a Ballo: Delizie di Posilipo di Boscarecce, e Maritime and Selected Instrumental Ensemble Pieces from Naples Conservatory Ms. 4.6.3*, edited by Roland Jackson (Madison: A-R Editions, 1978), vii.

¹¹² Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 8.

to say surpassed, that of the ancient Romans.”¹¹³ Simultaneously an extension of Carnival festivities, a celebration of an event in the life of the absentee ruler, and a commemoration of the viceroy, *Delizie* demonstrates the interweaving of public and private spheres of entertainment, further challenging Aercke’s pronouncements regarding their separation.¹¹⁴

In this regard, I argue that *Delizie* was a complex public ritual requiring participants to adopt practices of negotiation and tactics of making do that could perform and adapt the myth of Naples in light of new challenges. In the uneasy political situation surrounding the work’s performance, the sovereignty of the absent king, the preeminence of the viceroy, and the proper place of Neapolitans within this system—indeed, the structures such spectacles usually reinforced—were being placed under incredible scrutiny. The unconventional world of Basile’s writing provided an ideal medium for performing *napolitanità*, where voices blended with the sounds of the landscape itself to present a representation of Naples as an ensounded meshwork.¹¹⁵ Thus, while *Delizie* ritualized the myth of Naples and the social system supported within, the spectacle also became an exercise of transformative ritual in which Neapolitans could collaboratively participate in the self-fashioning of the city, potentially altering its existing structures. Like *Venere*, in *Delizie* Basile places Neapolitan identities *in mezzo*, where they could be negotiated and transformed.

Published shortly after its performance by printer Costantino Vitale, the *Breve Racconto della Festa a Ballo* [A Brief Account of the Dance Festival], by an anonymous chronicler, relays much of the performance’s content and context. The source’s contents are incredibly valuable, preserving the libretto text, a substantial portion of the music performed with the names of

¹¹³ Quoted in Jackson, “Preface,” viii.

¹¹⁴ Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 91.

¹¹⁵ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 185; Ingold, *Being Alive*, 47.

attributed composers, the stage directions, and even a series of dance diagrams used in several of the scenes.¹¹⁶ The list of those involved reads like a who's who of 1620s Naples: under the direction of the castellan of the Castel Nuovo Alvaro di Mendoza, *Delizie* featured set designs by Bartolomeo Cartaro (engineer of the kingdom's castles and son of cartographer Mario Cartaro); songs by Giovanni Maria Trabaci (*maestro di cappella* of the Real Cappella), Francesco Lambardi (the viceroy's organist), and Pietro Antonio Giramo (composer of popular *villanelle*); and ballet music by Andrea Ansalone and Giacomo Spiardo, with Spiardo also providing choreography.¹¹⁷ The musical and dramatic forces included a cast of professional singers playing mythological characters, an ensemble of around forty instruments of various kinds, a group of at least twenty-four dancers (none of who are named) and another twenty-four *cavalieri* played by real noblemen.¹¹⁸ Unsurprisingly, these noblemen, likely chosen for their loyalty to the viceroy, are all listed at the front of the publication, separate from the rest of the cast, which reinforced their status and protected them from potentially being feminized as performers.¹¹⁹ Ironically, the librettist to this otherwise well-preserved source remains unattributed.

However, circumstances suggest that Basile authored the libretto text as a viceregal commission. At the time, he was employed in Avellino at the noble court of Marino Caracciolo, and the previous year he had written and dedicated a pastoral idyll for him entitled *Aretusa* [Arethusa].¹²⁰ In 1620, Basile returned to Naples, where his sister Adriana was visiting to

¹¹⁶ Jackson, "Preface," vii.

¹¹⁷ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 187.

¹¹⁸ Jackson, "Preface," viii.

¹¹⁹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 186.

¹²⁰ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 43.

perform his musical drama *Il guerriero amante* [The Lover Warrior].¹²¹ Clearly, writing for the stage preoccupied Basile during the years following the performance and publication of *Venere addolorata*. Furthermore, the presence of his sister, who had journeyed from Mantua specifically to perform his work, placed him in the public spotlight and made him a desirable court poet for the viceroy; indeed, his closeness to Adriana and the frequency of their collaboration would have been a useful ploy to get a singer of Adriana's caliber to perform at the Palazzo Reale. Furthermore, the spectacle is set in Posillipo, which was not only the location of Basile's hometown, but also a frequent subject of his writing, such as in the marine pastoral *Le avventurose disavventure* [The Disadventurous Adventures] of 1610.¹²² Juxtapositions of the real and the fantastic, the grotesque and the beautiful, permeate *Delizie*, pointing to the *in mezzo* style that Basile pioneered in seventeenth-century Naples. As an extension of his expressive use of Neapolitan identity in *Venere*, *Delizie* offers further opportunities for subversion and negotiation through its grandiosity, number of participants, and fluid overlap between the realms of Arcadia and the real world of Naples.

Several circumstances of performance mark *Delizie* as presenting opportunities to negotiate Neapolitan identity and to expose a contact zone in which Basile's voice might resound. Regarding its historical circumstances, in 1620, the viceroy Giron found himself in a politically dire situation. Appointed viceroy of Naples in 1616, Giron quickly gained a reputation for extravagant living and unmitigated political gall. For example, he apparently frequented brothels, spent obscene fees on public festivals and artworks, and revitalized Naples' public

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid., 41.

theatres.¹²³ At the same time, in what Giron presented as an attempt to “appeal to the king” (although this is questionable), he built up his own private military force and indulged in military pursuits against Venice, possibly in collaboration with the Turks.¹²⁴ Three months after the performance of *Delizie*, Giron would be ousted by the Spanish authorities and end up dying in a prison in Madrid.¹²⁵ To be sure, Giron’s precarious situation provided Basile and his performing colleagues ample material for ironic parody. However, as discussed by Harness, the fashioning of a ruler constituted a collaborative effort, and the complex relationship between the viceroy and his subjects necessitated negotiation to allow for the continuity of Neapolitan mythology.¹²⁶ In *Delizie*, the performing forces of Neapolitans speak directly to the viceroy, and in a communal cry of lament, express the profound sense of cultural loss conveyed at Sannazaro’s conclusion of *Arcadia*.¹²⁷

In addition, the work’s very form subverts conventional genres used in the Spanish viceregal court.¹²⁸ The *festa a ballo* was a rare form in Italy, and though its dramatic content had much in common with *intermedi* and masques, its emphasis on dance gave it strong ties to the French *ballet de cour*.¹²⁹ As France was Spain’s greatest enemy at the time, the general emphasis at the viceregal court, indeed, in all of Naples, was to adhere to the Spanish model of Madrid—

¹²³ Clifford Bartlett, “Sylvan and Oceanic Delights of Posilipo,” liner notes for *The Sylvan and Oceanic Delights of Posilipo*, New London Consort, Philip Pickett (Decca CD 425610-2, 1990), 8.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices*, 4; Gabriel Guarino, *Representing the King’s Splendour: Communication and Reception of Symbolic Forms of Power in Viceregal Naples* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), 43.

¹²⁷ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 26.

¹²⁸ Fabris, “Musical Festivals in Spanish Naples,” 273.

¹²⁹ Bartlett, “Sylvan and Oceanic Delights,” 8.

never Paris.¹³⁰ Furthermore, *Delizie*'s dances of the *cavalieri* reference the increasingly popular genre of the horse ballet, whose choreographed movements to music were meant to demonstrate the new emphasis of the courtier on elegance, grace, and maneuvering, rather than force and dexterity.¹³¹ This use of French forms may well have been the viceroy Giron's conscious choice, perhaps meant to rebel against his Spanish overlords through its parody of combat.¹³² At the same time, the *festa a ballo* could also have offered an opportunity for Neapolitans like Basile to express their own ambivalences about foreign rule, a practice of making do with a previously forbidden musical form. As Marino states, in the space of the court, "theater and dance, two transformative performances of simulation and vertigo par excellence, are formalized and ritualized."¹³³

As in *Venere*, *Delizie* translated these conflicts into performative acts, as texts compelled bodily responses.¹³⁴ *Delizie*'s loose dramatic scheme revolves around themes of the sylvan and the oceanic, two imaginary realms that become intertwined in the spectacle and whose characters increasingly interact as the drama progresses. From the sylvan, or forest, emerge Pan and his accompanying satyrs, apes, and shepherds, all representative of the grotesque, comical, and profane.¹³⁵ The oceanic creatures, serene and graceful, include Venus, Cupid, swans, and sirens, also associated with charm and seduction.¹³⁶ Moving freely between these realms, the master of ceremonies Sebeto (representative of the mythical river that flows under Naples into Lake

¹³⁰ Guarino, "Spanish Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples," 36.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Harness argues that equestrian ballets were meant to express military power in mid-seventeenth-century Florence. See Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 146-47.

¹³³ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 184.

¹³⁴ Smith, *Acoustic World of Early Modern England*, 109.

¹³⁵ Jackson, "Preface," vii.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Avernus and the entrance to the underworld), the goddesses Fortune, Time, Fame, and Envy, and the twenty-four *cavalieri*, often occupy transitional scenes that offer commentary on the relationship between the interior world of the spectacle and the exterior world it mimics.¹³⁷

The prologue opens on a panoramic view of the mountain of Posillipo, which provides the center of dramatic activity for the duration of the performance.¹³⁸ Three nymphs and a shepherd descend from the ledge and sing the song “Festa, riso, gioco, e gioia” [Festive, laughing, playing, and joyful], praising the beauty of the physical setting and the divine providence that has been granted to the city. Sebeto relays a lengthy dedicatory poem that praises Giron, likening him to the sun god Phoebus, and reveals the locale as Posillipo, likening it to Parnassus. Fortune, Time, and Envy arrive on a barque and sing a song of praise to Giron. Following their exit, the twenty-four *cavalieri* descend from the mountain, dancing to an instrumental piece. Next, three sirens appear, singing praises to the “Hero” (Giron) who has made Sebeto and the Sirens happy. The *cavalieri* exit and Pan and his creatures comically follow close behind. Next, the twenty-four shepherds enter, arranging themselves around stage grottos while a musical number plays. Pan disappears, after which Venus rises from the sea in a shell suggestive of Botticelli’s *Venus*; she sings an aria to the ladies of the court advocating them to observe the lovely dance of the swans. The swans arrive soon after, but are immediately chased by Pan’s satyrs and apes; meanwhile the *cavalieri* encircle Venus. The swans dance in view of Venus and those around her, after which Pan and his sylvan creatures sing about Posillipo from the ledge on which they are perched. There is an even more fantastic dance from the satyrs and the apes, which gives Pan and Venus time to make their way center stage to dance together in what the chronicler regards as “that

¹³⁷ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 186.

¹³⁸ This plot summary draws from Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xiv-v.

which makes the festival most worth seeing.”¹³⁹ Cupid finally appears out of Venus’s shell, where he has been hiding, to praise his mother and the *cavalieri*, “these loving gentlemen celebrating the lovely ladies, the sole support of my reign.”¹⁴⁰ Finally, the *cavalieri* descend from the stage into the dance hall, and “execute a graceful solemn dance, of many lovely and artful formation; and the spectacle there ends.”¹⁴¹

The following image of an eighteenth-century *fiesta di ballo* provides a sense of what such an array of bodies would look like in the space of the Real Sala (Figure 4.2).¹⁴² Here, we see rows of musicians on the stage, stacked vertically in an almost impossible arrangement. The dramatic action appears to be occurring in the middle of the room, with dancers, actors and musicians occupying the entirety of the space.¹⁴³ In such a context, passive spectatorship does not appear as an option. Indeed, it would have been essential for courtiers and nobility to actively assert their place within the performance at any time. Similar to the role of dance at the court of Louis XIV, the *fiesta a ballo* meant to reinforce social hierarchies and promote harmony between the ruler and his subjects.¹⁴⁴ In this space, lines between the real world of the viceregal theatre and the illusion of the spectacle were evidently blurred, and the space was just as contested as the exterior festivals that the event was meant to mirror and model.¹⁴⁵

In *Delizie*’s somewhat convoluted series of scenes, Basile draws on common tropes of Neapolitan court spectacles that would glorify the viceroy, praise the nobility, and celebrate the

¹³⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, xviii.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, xvix.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴² Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 54.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Aercke, *Gods of Play*, 166.

¹⁴⁵ Fabris, “Music Festivals in Spanish Naples,” 274.

myth of Naples.¹⁴⁶ The setting of Posillipo alone suggests an adherence to social precedent, as the simultaneous Carnival festivities in March served as a precursor to the summer festivals of the *spassi di Posilipo*.¹⁴⁷ In addition, repeated praises of Don Giron and the inclusion of the *cavalieri* into the drama ritually reinforced social hierarchies.¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the separation of scenes denoting the dual spheres of the oceanic and the sylvan corresponded well to the separation of social spheres that viceregal authorities sought to achieve. Yet as we have seen, realities of daily life in Naples made these distinctions difficult to maintain. Since the courtly spectacle extended the discourse of the public festival, the voices of those outside the Palazzo Reale could not be so easily suppressed. Basile's dynamic intertwining of the realms of the sylvan and the oceanic, the public and the private, and the courtly and the popular, most vividly display and give voice to those residing in the contact zone.

During the course of *Delizie*, Basile deploys two parallel dramatic processes: distinctions between the sylvan and the oceanic gradually break down, and the mythical landscape of the two realms is revealed to be the real landscape of Naples. As a result, the voices of the Arcadian creatures increasingly expose themselves to be the voices of Neapolitans, and the meshwork of the landscape itself resounds through their embodied voices.¹⁴⁹ For example, in the opening chorus, "Festa, riso, gioco, e gioia," nymphs and shepherds rejoice that on the mountain of Posillipo, there "is no sorrow, grief, or misfortune."¹⁵⁰ Here, the sounds of the landscape, the birds, the breezes, and the festive sounds of its inhabitants, "resound from from mountain to

¹⁴⁶ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 53.

¹⁴⁷ Fabris, *Music in Seventeenth-Century Naples*, 19.

¹⁴⁸ Gabriel Guarino, "Public Festivals in Spanish Naples," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 290.

¹⁴⁹ Ingold, *Being Alive*, 47.

¹⁵⁰ Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xiii.

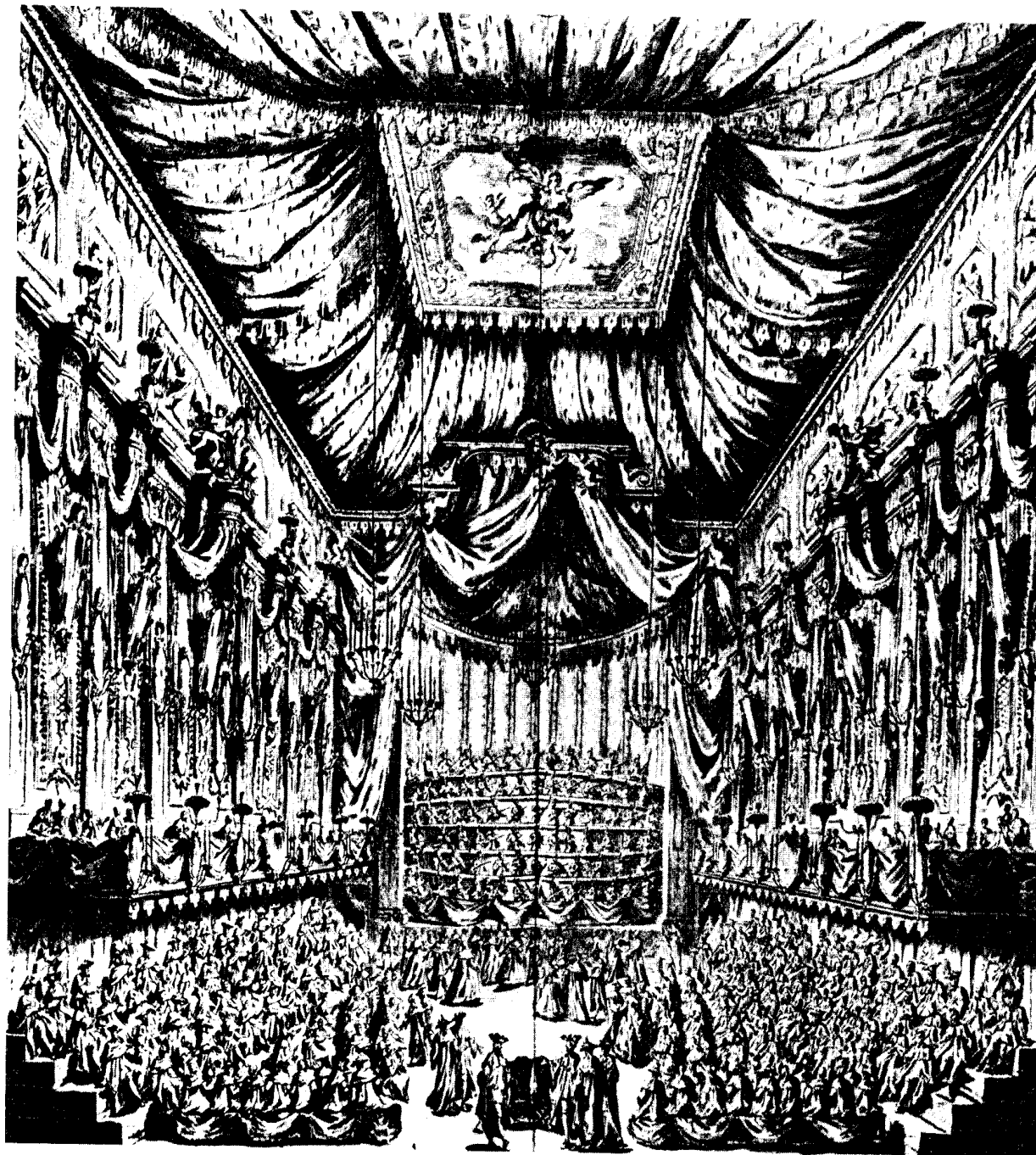


Figure 4.2 *Festa a Ballo* in the Real Sala¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ Source: Vincenzo Re, "Sala del Palazzo Reale apparata per la Festa di Ballo in Maschera...1748," in Mancini, *Feste ed apparati*, 55.

sea.”¹⁵² Pietro Giramo’s music for this song is a lively dance in a triple meter, and the sylvan characters likely danced along to the sounds of shawms, trumpets, and a variety of string instruments (Figure 4.3)¹⁵³ “Festa, riso” is the first of two songs that the sylvan creatures sing, within which little might be construed as protest. In their generic praise of the beauty of Posillipo, they give thanks to the forces of “nature and heaven” that have poured out their treasures so generously.¹⁵⁴ Similarly, the songs of the oceanic creatures extol the virtues of the ruling prince, such as the aria of the three Sirens that compares Giron to Ulysses and Phoebus.¹⁵⁵ In many ways, *Delizie* continues the tradition of Spanish spectacle dating back to Charles V, whose great compilations included “gods and goddesses, rivers and peoples, and subject continents,” together creating an imperial mythology of the Spanish ruler.¹⁵⁶ However, as de Certeau states regarding the discourse of the city, when it comes to spectacle, “what can be most seen” often designates what is most lacking.¹⁵⁷ With their festive dance meters and playful texts, the joyful musical settings evident in the existing score offer incomplete visual representations of complex multi-sensory events. Within these, performers may very well have displayed emotions of joy appropriate to the occasion. Yet as shown in *Venere*, Basile’s texts enabled emotive deportments often difficult to read, capable of suggesting both heartfelt expression and ironic ambivalence in the same performative action. As Treadwell argues, techniques of *meraviglia* could potentially fail, or even subvert rulers’ intentions.¹⁵⁸ By the same

¹⁵² Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xiii.

¹⁵³ Jackson, “Preface,” iv.

¹⁵⁴ Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xiv.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., xv.

¹⁵⁶ Strong, *Art and Power*, 76.

¹⁵⁷ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 108.

¹⁵⁸ Treadwell, *Music and Wonder at the Medici Court*, 5.

[1. Festa riso]

Pietro Antonio Giramo

1. Fes- ta ri- so gio- co, e gio- ia Son ques-
2. Quì dal mon- te al mar so- no- ro Fan gli au-

-t'onde e ques- to mon- te, Son A ques- t'onde e
- gel- li e ter- no can- to, A cui van dan-

Figure 4.3 “Festa, riso, gioco, e gioia!”¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Source: Pietro Antonio Giramo, “Festa, riso, gioco, e gioia,” opening in Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, 1.

token, silence could be a powerful tool to a culture where noise was constantly present.¹⁶⁰ As the drama of *Delizie* progresses, it becomes clear that some of the most profoundly political statements occur within the dances and movements that occupy the spaces in between scenes, a kind of unspoken practice of subversion whose power lay in the expressive gestures of performers.

The exits and entrances (many of which are accompanied by dance) of the *cavalieri*, the sylvan creatures of Pan, and Venus's oceanic forces, are carefully choreographed to convey particular messages. Like the rebellious singing of the *popolo* during the procession of San Giovanni, in court spectacles Neapolitans made do with existing structures of power and voiced their identities accordingly. For example, following a grand descent of the twenty-four *cavalieri* (who represent the greatest of the Neapolitan nobility) from the mountain, the god Pan follows close behind, accompanied by apes, satyrs, and nymphs.¹⁶¹ As a parodic antimasque, the parallel movement of the sylvan creatures opens up Basile's fairy tale world, where such entities coexist alongside the wealthiest of nobles.¹⁶² However, the following entrance of twenty-four shepherds reinforces its status as a political act, for Basile is suggesting the two groups are indeed equals.¹⁶³ Similarly, Venus's entrance propels the *cavalieri* to take their place in a circle around her, and in her accompanying aria she sings the praises of these "fine gentlemen." As her Swans descend to the grotto, they are chased by the apes and satyrs, whose disruption of the serene oceanic characters signals the first significant encounter between the two realms. Following a dance of

¹⁶⁰ Fabris, "Music Festivals in Spanish Naples," 273.

¹⁶¹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 72.

¹⁶² Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 85.

¹⁶³ The following description draws from Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xvii.

the Swans, Pan and his sylvan creatures step out from atop the ledge on which they have been hiding, a dramatic gesture that is followed by their second sylvan song.

At this moment, the myth of Naples becomes vividly displayed in a picaresque portrait that highlights its most fantastical components. Surrounding the mountain of Posillipo, Venus, the Swans, and the Sirens collectively represent the city's emergence from a maritime tradition of myths that dated back to the Greeks.¹⁶⁴ Flanking them are the *cavalieri*, representative of the Neapolitan nobility that served as defenders of this myth, caretakers of Neapolitan exceptionalism.¹⁶⁵ However, the sylvan creatures of Pan also stand watch atop the mountain, peering down upon the spectacle below them. Like the *popolo* they model, they provide a foundation that supports the social structures on display.¹⁶⁶ Given their place in *Delizie* as exotic comic relief, the Spanish song that Pan and his companions sing in this moment is all the more striking, worth quoting at length to deliver the full breadth of its performative meaning:

The rocks and plants of this mountain are like tongues,
Which, in praising your beauties, sing of miracles.
The waves and flowers of these shores are like tongues
That sing of love, although they conceal indiscretions.
The more the mountain feels these things, the more it suffers and grieves,
Because the mountains feel the cares of love,
For if the mountain praises beauties, it is well that it feels,
For although they [the beauties] are infinite, they are [still too] few tongues.

O Posillipo, that adores so much beauty, try to make it
Known that your beauty even enamors the mountains.
But however much the sun paints and gilds in its verdant foothills,
It loses its beauty if it vies to portray you,

If it expends on these summits its flowers, tongues that sing of love.
They are unmannerly if they do not admit,
That although they are infinite, they are [still too] few tongues.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 32.

¹⁶⁵ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 171.

¹⁶⁶ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 94.

¹⁶⁷ Text and translation in Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xviii.

[Lenguas son deste monte piedras, y plantas
 Que alabando hermosuras Milagros cantan.
 Lenguas son destas playas ondas, y flores
 Que si occultan deleos cantan amores.
 Mas siente el monte,
 Mas sienta, y pene.
 Que cuydados de amores montes los sienten,
 Que si alaba hermosuras, es bien que sienta,
 Que aunque son ynfinitas, son pocas lenguas.]

Oy Pauxillipo, que adora
 Tanta hermosura procura
 Publicar, que la hermosura
 Aun los montes enamora.
 Pero quanto pinta, y dora
 El sol en su falda verde,
 Veldad pierde;
 Si compitiendo os retrata,
 Si dilata
 Por estas cumbras sus flores,
 Lenguas, que cantan amores,
 Rusticas son si no cuentan,
 Que aunque son yfinitas,
 Son pocas lenguas.]

This song presents vast implications for the expression of *napolitanità*. At this moment, performers mirrored and modeled the myth of Naples, and the viceroy would have had the performers' full attention. Furthermore, the fact that they are singing in Spanish, and that this is the only song to use the language, indicates that Basile intended its message specifically for the viceroy. On the precipice of political ruin, Giron likely exhibited a variety of responses to the controversial song—shock, anger, ambivalence, humor—all of which characterize Basile's writing style.¹⁶⁸ Its blatant disdain for Spanish rule sent waves that could shake the meshwork of the myth of Naples, fully exposing the contact zone and revealing to us Neapolitan voices of alterity residing *in mezzo*.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 84.

¹⁶⁹ Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge, and Description* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 47; Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone," 36.

More than a transgressive political statement, “Lenguas son” constituted the heart of *Delizie*’s ritual process, both for Basile and for those performing his work. Positioned at the center of *Delizie*, the song arrives at a point when sylvan and oceanic realms coalesce together to give voice to the landscape of Naples, both “the rocks and plants” (i.e., the sylvan) and “the waves and flowers” (i.e., the oceanic).¹⁷⁰ Though these “tongues” of Naples sing of “love” and “miracles,” they also “conceal indiscretions,” the conflict of which causes the mountain to “suffer and grieve” under the cares of love.¹⁷¹ Even so, it is better for the mountain to feel these things, “for although its beauties are infinite, they are [still too] few tongues.”¹⁷² In this case, the conflict between “love” and “concealed indiscretions” might be interpreted as one between an illusory image of Neapolitan complacency and a voice of blatant protest, or even between a mythologized notion of *napolitanità* based on present social structures and a sense of *napolitanità* that could topple such structures.¹⁷³ However, for Neapolitans, making do required working within these structures, necessitating constant negotiation. As a transient courtier, these were issues all too familiar to Basile, whose writing consistently demonstrates unstable fluctuations between the carnivalesque and the mannered, and thus between multiple Neapolitan identities.¹⁷⁴ As a cry of lament that mirrors the end of *Arcadia*, “Lenguas son” references the same sense of cultural loss and condition of *in mezzo*, albeit conveyed with characteristic Basilian ambivalence.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xviii.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., xviii.

¹⁷³ Turner, *Ritual Process*, 93.

¹⁷⁴ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 43; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 253.

¹⁷⁵ Canepa, “Literary Culture in Naples,” 329.

When embodied in song, the performers of “Lenguas son” extended and exaggerated this lament, transforming it into a liminal site that gave voice to multiple contested Neapolitan identities.¹⁷⁶ Yet this is expressed with some apprehension, as the song praises the beauty of the landscape while simultaneously lamenting its voicelessness.¹⁷⁷ Francesco Lambardi’s evocative setting reinforces these textual ambiguities, freely alternating strophic declamatory sections in a popular *villanelle* style with solo lines that highlight particularly emotive texts through chromatically inflected melodic lines (Figure 4.4). For example, in the first lines, the “tongues” of the mountain and the sea join together in a homophonic G minor sonority (mm. 1-12), breaking into a short polyphonic section in a fluid text depiction of the phrase “the waves and flowers of these shores are like tongues” (mm. 11-23) and returning to homophony upon discussion of the “concealed indiscretions” that the mountain hides (mm. 24-29).¹⁷⁸ Immediately following, we hear the voice of the mountain clearly in the solo phrases “The more the mountain feels these things / the more it suffers and grieves,” which both convey grief through expressive descending lines (mm. 30-36).¹⁷⁹ Following a section of voice pairings (mm. 44-53), the stanza’s refrain, “for although they (the beauties) are infinite, they are (still too) few tongues,” returns to the opening G minor in a homophonic lament (mm. 53-59). Interestingly, though the text speaks of infinite voices, Lambardi (and likely Basile) intended the strict declamatory style to allow the singers a unified voice, one that could speak directly to the viceroy.¹⁸⁰

By giving voice to the landscape of Naples, the Neapolitans performing *Delizie* acknowledged their role as inhabitants of its mythical meshwork. Within this complex ritual of

¹⁷⁶ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 22.

¹⁷⁷ Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, xviii.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁸⁰ Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 83.

spectacle, Neapolitans found themselves capable of supporting the socio-political structures of the myth, while simultaneously finding ways to use spectacle practice to subvert social norms. By extending the public discourse of the festival to the private realm of the spectacle, and by blending the courtly and the carnivalesque, Basile's writing offered an ideal medium for the performative embodiment of *napolitanità*. The lament of "Lenguas son" became symbolic of a systemic problem facing Neapolitans: the constant need to balance spheres of the sacred and the profane, pleasure and penitence, the ironic and the sincere, and of course, the terrifying and the delightful.¹⁸¹ As a result, the contact zone became increasingly visible, shattering distinctions between verisimilitude and illusion, between myth and reality. As we will see in the final spectacle, by the middle of the seventeenth century, dire political circumstances at the viceregal court demanded negotiative performances of *napolitanità* in an increasingly contested environment. Basile, like many Neapolitans, again found himself caught *in mezzo*.

Mascarata, Monte Parnaso: Donning a New Mask

Upon the visit of Maria of Austria, the sister of Philip IV, to Naples in July 1630, the entire city erupted in preparation for the first visit of a Spanish royal since the time of Charles V.¹⁸² The occasion warranted unprecedented spectacle, such that at the end of his life, historian Giulio Cesare Capaccio published a panegyric on Maria, declaring that she was "one of the blood of our most serene Padroni, and a Queen of such grandeur such that nothing greater had been seen for such a long time."¹⁸³ However, despite the exterior celebratory displays, the queen's visit propelled interior quarrels between the nobility, viceroy, and *popolo* that threatened to break

¹⁸¹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 167.

¹⁸² Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 59.

¹⁸³ Giulio Cesare Capaccio, quoted in Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 98.

Figure 4.4 “Lenguas son”

[13. Lenguas son]

Francesco Lambardi

The musical score is written for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The lyrics are in Spanish. The score is divided into three systems, each with a measure number (5, 10, 15) at the beginning.

System 1 (Measures 5-8):

Measures 5-8: Len- guas son de- ste mon- te pie- dras, y plan- tas, Que al- a-

System 2 (Measures 9-12):

Measures 9-12: -ban- do her-mo- su- ras mi- la- - gros can- tan.

System 3 (Measures 13-15):

Measures 13-15: Len- guas son de- stas pla- yas, on- yas, Len- guas son de- stas

Figure 4.4 (continued)¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Source: Francesco Lambardi, "Lenguas son," in Jackson, *Festa a Ballo*, 25.

20

das, y flo- res Que si oc- cul- tan de-
 flo- res on- das, y flo- res Que si oc- cul- tan de-
 pla- yas, on- das, y flo- res Que si oc- cul- tan de-
 pla- yas, on- das, y flo- res Que si oc- cul- tan de-

25 30

-sle- os can- tan, can- tan a- mo- res.
 -sle- os can- tan, can- tan a- mo- res. Mas sien- te el
 -sle- os can- tan, can- tan a- mo- res.
 -sle- os can- tan, can- tan a- mo- res. Mas sien- te el

35

mon- te, Que cuy- da- dos de a-
 mon- te, Que cuy- da- dos de a-
 mon- te, Que cuy- da- dos de a-
 Mas sien- ta y pe- ne.

Figure 4.4 (continued)¹⁸⁵¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

40 45

-mo- res mon- tes los sien- ten, Que si a- la-

-mo- res mon- tes los sien- ten, Que si a- la-

-mo- res mon- tes los sien- ten, Que si a-

Que si a-

50

- ba her- mo- su- ras, es bien que sien- ta,

-la- ba her- mo- su- ras, es bien que sien- ta,

-la- ba her- mo- su- ras, es bien que sien- ta,

-la- ba her- mo- su- ras, es bien que sien- ta,

55

Que aun- que son yn- fi- ni- tas, son po- cas len- guas. Que aun-

Que aun- que son yn- fi- ni- tas, son po- cas len- guas.

Que aun- que son yn- fi- ni- tas, son po- cas len- guas.

Que aun- que son yn- fi- ni- tas, son po- cas len- guas.

Figure 4.4 (continued)¹⁸⁶¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 27.

down the harmonious concord between them and disrupt the siren's song.¹⁸⁷ During her extended visit (August 8 to December 16 1630), multiple social precedents were broken, creating a crisis in the representation of Neapolitan identity.¹⁸⁸

Performed at the viceregal Real Sala on October 17 of that year, *Mascarata, Monte Parnaso* occupied a prominent place in the festivities, and provides a valuable glimpse into how Neapolitans actively negotiated their identities during such a precarious time.¹⁸⁹ Written by Giambattista Basile during his tenure as theater director at the viceregal court, the work was his last to be published before his death in 1632, representing the culmination of a life spent climbing the social ladder.¹⁹⁰ Even so, Basile exhibits a unique style that gives voice to the social climate of Naples in 1630, and as his final performance as a courtier, he continued to express the negotiative nature of *napolitanità*. Furthermore, among the three spectacles, *Monte Parnaso* demonstrates the most explicit collaboration between Basile and his viceregal patron. As a result, in *Monte Parnaso*, the negotiation between multiple social spheres that characterized *Delizie* appears to significantly decrease; rather, the interests of the viceroy were served. The *cavalieri*, who in *Delizie* played a crucial role in the drama, in *Monte Parnaso* were relegated to a final dance at the end of the spectacle.¹⁹¹ Basile's text seems to neglect the proper chain of command emphasizing the direct praise of the visiting Spanish royal rather than the viceroy or the nobility.¹⁹² Finally, the drama's physical setting centers around the mythical Mount Parnassus, bearing striking resemblances to Mount Vesuvius. These shifts in style, setting, and song

¹⁸⁷ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 96.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 87.

¹⁹⁰ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 44.

¹⁹¹ Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 108.

¹⁹² Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 86.

deliberately attempt a performance of Neapolitan identity for the visiting monarchess, reassembling the myth of Naples to meet new political needs.¹⁹³

In the published *racconto* for *Monte Parnaso*, Basile's title page dedicates the work "to the most serene Maria, Queen of Austria," and indicates its patrons—in this case the noble *cavalieri*, claiming that "in every time, and in every opportunity that presents itself, they (the nobility) will serve the wandering Partenope as a humble sign of their own nobility and great souls."¹⁹⁴ Interestingly, in this passage Basile positions Maria as Partenope herself, suggesting a direct correlation between her royal body and the city's identity, a notion I later address.

Unfortunately, *Monte Parnaso*'s music does not survive, and little is known about the composer Jacinto Lombardo, who was brother to the court organist Francesco involved in *Delizie*.¹⁹⁵ From descriptions of the music as "most excellent, with rare artifices of dance, curious *apparati* and machines," we can deduce it possessed semi-operatic qualities of spectacle similar to the previous two works.¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, characters likely sung in *stilo rappresentarsi*, given the *versi sciolti* poetic form of seven and eleven lines also used in *Venere*.¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, though this through-composed music would have suited an opera, *Monte Parnaso*'s pastiche of scenes suggests a drama more akin to that of *Delizie*. Basile separates the spectacle into three distinct sections, each with its own series of choruses and dances: the first centers around a cave, the second takes place on Mount Parnassus, and the third is a group dance by the *cavalieri* set in the Elysian Fields.¹⁹⁸ The characters—Night, Fame, Apollo and the Nine Muses, and dancers of

¹⁹³ Guarino, *Representing the King's Spendour*, 61.

¹⁹⁴ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 85. Translation mine.

¹⁹⁵ Larson, "Unaccompanied Madrigal," 620; Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 85.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

Cyclopes, nymphs, satyrs, and Swans—are familiar to us, both from the previous two spectacles and from the fairy tale world of *Lo cunto*.¹⁹⁹

The political situation of Naples in 1630 deserves further elaboration to understand how relationships between the viceroy, the nobility, and the *popolo* grew tense upon Maria's visit, becoming more difficult as the seventeenth century progressed. By this point, Spanish taxation of Neapolitans reached an all-time high, the social prestige of the nobility lost value due to the selling of landed titles, and the *popolo* became a more prominent political force through their integration into the *togati* of the Spanish bureaucracy.²⁰⁰ In the countryside, which the nobility had abandoned for the city, thieves and bandits swarmed, and the starving *plebe* grew more desperate and uncontrollable.²⁰¹

In 1630, the Duke of Alcalá replaced the Duke of Alba as viceroy. Furious at his loss of position, Alba devised an elaborate plan to undermine Alcalá's authority upon Maria of Austria's visit during the summer of that year.²⁰² On the day of her grand entry to the city by boat, the queen appeared alongside both Alba and Alcalá, whose simultaneous presence confused spectators.²⁰³ Furthermore, the noble "mayor" who was supposed to occupy Alba's spot became furious and did not appear at any other events, taking with him many of the city's noble representatives and figureheads.²⁰⁴ This slight change of precedent set off a chain of events that resulted in much of the nobility abstaining from interaction with the queen, for which Alcalá was held responsible and his house brought to ruin (his wife apparently died in a cell in nearby

¹⁹⁹ Canepa, "Literary Culture in Naples," 245.

²⁰⁰ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 48.

²⁰¹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 163.

²⁰² Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 59.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 61.

Caserta).²⁰⁵ In particular, the ladies of the nobility expressed disdain for the queen, who apparently did little to acknowledge their noble position when she arrived in Posillipo in the summer.²⁰⁶

Faced with political ruin, Alcalá scrambled to bolster the reputation of the queen and reassert his authority over the nobility, likely calling upon Basile to aid in this task. *Monte Parnaso*, organized for the celebration of the birth of the Crown Prince of Spain, was partially an attempt to arrange for interaction between Maria and the ladies of the nobility.²⁰⁷ Employed by the viceroy at the time as both the Governor of Anversa (a prestigious administrative position) and the director of dramatic activities, Basile apparently wrote the work on short notice, claiming in the dedication that he “had risen above himself” to complete it.²⁰⁸ While this was a common excuse for courtiers working under tight schedules, as Harness argues, by stressing the work’s lack of preparation, the sponsor sought to avoid any implication that the work was intended as commentary on the present political situation, placing the blunt of the blame on the poet.²⁰⁹ More than other producers of spectacle, poets like Basile needed to be especially cognizant of the needs of their immediate patrons, as well as attentive to the needs of potential patrons.²¹⁰

Basile rose to the task of creating a work that could meet the political needs of the viceroy, as well as serve his own ambitions towards the visiting queen. Having already written two works intended for musical setting, Basile recycled much of his prior material. For example, the dancers called for include swans, nymphs, satyrs, and *cavalieri* (all used in previous dramatic

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 98.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 99.

²⁰⁸ Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 86.

²⁰⁹ Harness, *Echoes of Women’s Voices*, 1.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

situations) and the goddess Fame, who made a cameo appearance in *Delizie*.²¹¹ Perhaps the most original features were the inclusions of Apollo and the nine muses (Polinnia, Tersichore, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Talia, Calliope, Urania, and Clio), who occupy the action of the second section.²¹² However, even these had a precedent in Basile's writing, as they are the subject of his posthumously published dialect work *Le muse napoletane* (1634).²¹³ A collection of nine dialogues, each of the Muses comically performs characteristics of popular Neapolitan culture, taking on names associated with either stock characters or activities, like Erato the Young Husband, Talia the Cerriglio Tavern, and Urania the Pomp.²¹⁴ Intended to convey the full expressive capacity of Neapolitan speech, *Le muse* served to "gather up all the forms of Neapolitan, which will serve the purpose of preserving the fine old things of Naples."²¹⁵

In *Monte Parnaso*, then, Basile attempted to display his project of collecting Neapolitan culture within a spectacle designated by the viceroy for Maria of Austria herself. Combining multiple elements of the myth of Naples with the everyday actions of Neapolitans, Basile expands the world of his lifetime oeuvre, presenting to a member of the royal family the full gamut of Neapolitan culture.²¹⁶ By making do with "all the forms of Neapolitan," Basile services the viceroy and adapts *napolitanità* to conform to his intended political discourse. At the same time, Basile renders Neapolitan culture as an exotic other to be fetishized and stigmatized.²¹⁷ However, these negotiations proved crucial to the continual performances of *napolitanità*

²¹¹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 63.

²¹² Ibid., 87.

²¹³ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 79.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Giambattista Basile, from the dedication to *Le muse napoletane*, quoted in Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 78.

encountered throughout this thesis, and necessary to reside *in mezzo*, within the liminal space of the contact zone.

Consistent with Basile's interest in collecting various aspects of being Neapolitan, *Monte Parnaso* contains vivid expressions of the quotidian within the mythological. With an anthropological curiosity, he takes pleasure in the *varatio* of the everyday, an extension of the baroque poetics of the marvelous that many writers used to infuse new life into classical stories written for the courts.²¹⁸ For example, in the opening chorus to the piece, sylvan creatures celebrate the departure of Night:

Tell us, swans and songbirds,
New strengths and new honors.
With the departure of the haughty diva
Hesperia [Evening], a single name
Runs through the river like nectar,
The siren on the shore,
April is revived
Surrounding the tresses of new flowers,
Tell us, swans and songbirds
New strengths and new honors.²¹⁹

[Spiegate, Cigni, Canori
Nuovi Pregi e Nuovi Onori
Al venir d'altera Diva
Dell'Esperia unico Nume,
Corre Nettare il bel fiume,
Di Sirena in sulla riva,
April vago si ravviva
Cinto il crin di nuovi fiori;
Spiegate cigni Canori
Nuovi pregi e nuovi onori]

Here Basile depicts the coming of spring; Night having departed, the swans and songbirds tell of the new strengths within nature. For example, the cool-flowing water from the river, the tresses of new flowers, and the siren on the shore all work to convey the sights and sounds of the

²¹⁸ Mazzotta, "Giambattista Marino's Operatic Aesthetic," 253.

²¹⁹ Text from Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 108. Translation mine.

Neapolitan landscape. This metaphor both exhibits qualities of the everyday while also supporting the mythology of Naples. The siren here could very well be the mythical Partenope, just as well as it could be a beautiful woman on the beach of Posillipo. The river mentioned could be a normal stream, yet it could also be construed as the Sebeto of legend.²²⁰ Likely set to a popular *villanella* tune, the musical connotation of the genre with *napolitanità* would have worked with the poem to suggest such a multiplicity of meanings. Basile's skill lies in his ability to consistently present these qualities of *in mezzo*.

Later in the first section, the character of Fame appears in a richly embroidered robe sewn with a thousand ears and a thousands mouths, with wings on her shoulders and a trumpet in her right hand.²²¹ Fame's elaborate costume exhibits yet another juxtaposition of the mythological and the everyday. The many appendages attached to her were meant to demonstrate her simultaneous loquacity and willingness to listen, making her appear similar to a "nagging wife" character common in public theatres.²²² At the same time, the thousand ears and mouths are extremely reminiscent of Virgil's lines regarding the Sybil of Cumae, in which thousands of voices resound from the depths of her cave; the costume serves as a kind of physicalization of the myth.²²³ In her recitative that follows, she addresses Maria directly, lauding her with praise as the "Royal Mary."

You who temper the scorching heat
of Castaglia, hanker to the Sacred Source
Here is the distant Mount
Here are the lofty Banks
Haughty home of a chaste Diva
Quench the thirst while
Grim time steals them there to the Lethe

²²⁰ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 186.

²²¹ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 94.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 17.

But so much favor
Has the proud Royal Mary
Who, by her own merit expressed
Hippocrene rises and opens the beautiful pathway.²²⁴

[Voi che temprar l'arsura
Di Castaglia bramate al Sacro Fonte,
Ecco il lontano Monte,
Ecco le eccelse Rive,
Altero albergo delle caste Dive,
Spegnete pur la sete,
Per torvi al tempo ed involarvi a Lethe,
Ma di favor cotanto
A la Real Maria dovuto è il vanto,
Che, per suo metro espresso,
Sorge Ippocrene e s'apre il bel Permesso.]

The mythical fountain of Hippocrene bears striking resemblances to the most important water source for the Neapolitan populace: the Bolla, located on the slopes of Mount Vesuvius.²²⁵ The Bolla was more than just a water source, for it also provided the stream that flowed into the Sebeto, and through the underworld to Lake Avernus.²²⁶ By comparing her to Hippocrene, the sacred fountain from whence flows the water that gives life to Parnassus, Fame is not merely engaging Maria in allegorical gesture.²²⁷ She is indeed writing Maria into the fabric of the myth of Naples, suggesting that her royal body helps to sustain the city. Just as he did in the opening dedication to *Monte Parnaso*, Basile here directly invites Maria to partake in the wonders of Naples.

Perhaps the most blatant appeals to Maria, and the most exaggerated displays of *napolitanità*, come in the second section's lengthy series of songs by Apollo and the Muses.²²⁸

²²⁴ Text from Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 110. Translation mine.

²²⁵ Giovanni Muto, "Urban Structures and Population," in *A Companion to Early Modern Naples*, edited by Tommaso Astarita (Boston: Brill, 2013), 51.

²²⁶ Ibid., 53.

²²⁷ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 94.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Perched atop the peak of Parnassus, the ten characters are joined by a chorus and three groups of dancing sylvan creatures.²²⁹ Each Muse delivers her own unique praise to Maria, after which the chorus sings the refrain, “However soon ago her praises were sung / they were but a short drop in an infinite abyss,” followed by a dance song by the satyrs and nymphs.²³⁰ Erato holds flowers and fruits, accompanied by the “clavichord, the cithara, and the harp,” singing a song celebrating the arrival of spring: “Here is the spring / mother of flowers / new loves feel / novel affections in their hearts.”²³¹ Recalling the opening song of the first section, Erato reveals the reason for spring’s arrival—Maria has finally come to Naples.²³² The song of Talia continues this theme, praising “the sweet nectar / which points to Bacchus / makes us rejoice / for this placid life / joyously goes.”²³³ As conveyed by Fame’s recitative, Maria is a source of life for Naples, the fount of joy, or in this case, flowing wine.²³⁴ Within these songs, the Muses not only display their mythological attributes, they are displaying the natural abundances offered by Naples to the visiting ruler.

Basile’s obvious praises of Maria of Austria seem appropriately placed, given her precarious status at the noble courts of Naples in 1630 and the culpability of the viceroy.²³⁵ Indeed, by the time of *Monte Parnaso*’s performance, she had done little to better her situation,

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Croce, *I teatri di Napoli*, 110.

²³¹ “Ecco la Primavera / madre dei fiori / di nuovi Amori / novella affetto / sente nel petto” text from Ibid. Translation mine.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ “Il dolce Nettare / Che Bacco addita / gioir ne fa / per questo, placida / di noi la vita / gioconda va” text from Ibid. Translation mine.

²³⁴ Stalnaker, “Beginnings of Opera,” 90.

²³⁵ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 98.

confining herself to the company of Alba and the viceregal entourage.²³⁶ The decreased presence of nobility in this spectacle begs the question as to what Basile's intentions were. More importantly, what message was his viceroy employer Alcalá attempting to send, and how did performers convey those messages? Compared to the three dances and multiple entrances that characterized the use of *cavalieri* in *Delizie, Monte Parnaso* only includes one dance at the end of the spectacle.²³⁷ Basile replaces the *cavalieri*'s noble dances with those of satyrs, nymphs, and swans. Similar to the sylvan song "Lenguas son," Basile suggests here a triumph of his fairy tale world over the nobility.²³⁸ *Cavalieri* appear only in the final scene, doubling the number used in *Delizie*, a whopping total of 48 compared to 24. Furthermore, their dance takes place on the Elysian fields, the traditional Greek resting place of the dead and dying (see Table 4.1).²³⁹

For Basile, these derogatory references reflected the viceroy's disdain for the nobility's behavior toward Maria, as well as the decline of the nobility that characterized the course of the seventeenth century.²⁴⁰ Wealthy *popolo* increasingly purchased noble titles from the Spanish, leading to their decrease in social status and political influence.²⁴¹ In this context, Alcalá wished to punish the nobility for their offenses against him and the visiting queen. In his reduction of their dramatic role, as well as his subtle mockery through the doubling of *cavalieri*, Basile perhaps endorsed the viceroy's stance against the nobility.²⁴² In contrast, the placement of *cavalieri* in the Elysian fields likely represents Basile's own comedic gesture, no doubt an

²³⁶ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 56.

²³⁷ Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 89.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 59.

²⁴¹ Tommaso Astarita, *The Continuity of Feudal Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 19.

²⁴² Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 60.

additional insult. As Harness argues, court poets chose to inflect spectacle texts with genres and styles that would symbolize and reinforce the social statuses of those present.²⁴³ Cleverly, he chooses to insult the *cavalieri* within a setting appropriate to a courtly context. Having experienced life as a courtier to the nobility for most of his life, the performance of *Monte Parnaso* constituted an opportunity for him to express his disdain for the decadent nobility of Naples.²⁴⁴ Even at the end of a long career, Basile continued to possess a mastery of the art of making do.²⁴⁵

Within the performance of *Monte Parnaso*, however, Basile reveals another social process at work, one with equally wide implications for the course of Neapolitan life under

Table 4.1 Order of Dances in 1620 and 1620 Spectacles²⁴⁶

1620 <i>Delizie di Posilipo</i>	1630 <i>Monte Parnaso</i>
Dance of <i>Cavalieri</i>	Dance of Swans
Dance of Swans	Dance of Nymphs
Dance of the <i>Cavalieri</i>	Dance of Bacchantes/Satyrs
Dance of the Savages/Apes	Dance of Cyclopes/Dwarfs
Dance of <i>Cavalieri</i>	Dance of <i>Cavalieri</i>

²⁴³ Harness, *Echoes of Women's Voices*, 9.

²⁴⁴ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 44.

²⁴⁵ Pine, *Art of Making Do*, 11.

²⁴⁶ Source: reproduced from Stalnaker, "Beginnings of Opera," 102.

Spanish rule. Throughout the work, Basile references and celebrates *popolo* culture through depictions of everyday life that coincide with mythological figures from the myth of Naples. Furthermore, the fact that dances of the noble *cavalieri* are replaced with those by sylvan creatures (who, as we have seen in *Delizie*, symbolically refer to the *popolo*) suggests an alliance of *popolo* life with that of the viceregal court. As discussed in Chapter Two, the two had a traditional partnership in festivals like San Giovanni, one that is reinforced here.²⁴⁷ As Marino has studied extensively, during the political crises of the mid-seventeenth century, the viceroys used the *popolo* to alienate the nobility and assert their own dominance.²⁴⁸ Basile's plot devices reinforce the historical fact that in the seventeenth century, the *popolo* increasingly depended upon the viceroy, who provided a power check on the nobility.²⁴⁹ In the same way, *Monte Parnaso* emphasizes the necessary negotiation involved in performing *napolitanità*, and the precarious position of the *popolo*, who were caught *in mezzo*.

For Basile, *Monte Parnaso* served as a final ritual of liminality in his transition to a full employee of the viceregal court, a site where his contested Neapolitan identity might finally work itself out. While the work presented him with an opportunity to display "all the fine things of Naples" that he had collected over the course of his career, it is perhaps appropriately ironic that he did so under the viceroy's careful watch.²⁵⁰ It is ironic, too, that the elements of *popolo* culture that he collected so passionately were utilized in service of the same court to political ends.²⁵¹ However, such practices of making do coincide with the negotiative qualities of *napolitanità* that he utilized throughout his oeuvre, those that enabled his works to reside in the

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 89.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 236.

²⁴⁹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 199.

²⁵⁰ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 79.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 46.

expanse of the contact zone. Basile's own movements thus mirror and model those of the Neapolitans that he documented, and by dwelling *in mezzo* he crafted his spectacles into vivid autoethnographies of the interplay between mythology and daily life in Naples.²⁵² In his final performance of *napolitanità*, then, *Monte Parnaso* conveys the characteristic ambivalences and ambiguities needed to make do with being Neapolitan.

Becoming Neapolitan?

The title of John Marino's landmark monograph, *Becoming Neapolitan*, illustrates the pitfalls awaiting the scholar who attempts an interpretation of Neapolitan culture. Since the time of Croce, many historians have sought to explain the loosening of Spanish control as pointing to a "public awakening" that would come to a climax in the Masaniello Revolt of 1647.²⁵³ Such a view deems the seventeenth century as a time of transition, a liminal state where Neapolitans progressed from a condition of "not being Neapolitan" to one of "becoming Neapolitan." To be sure, in the years that followed these performances, the crises of the mid-seventeenth century signaled the beginning of the end for the Spanish viceroys.²⁵⁴ These spectacles document an increasingly strained relationship between the viceroy, the nobility, and the *popolo* as the seventeenth century progressed and the Spanish Crown's grip on the city grew tighter.²⁵⁵

However, these spectacles also challenge this teleological paradigm, pointing to a continuous negotiation of place, performance, and identity. In each of these events, Neapolitans of multiple social spheres raised their voices and attempted to assert their place in the contested

²⁵² Turner, *Ritual Process*, 92; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 12.

²⁵³ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 230.

²⁵⁴ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 180.

²⁵⁵ Gabriel Guarino, "Spanish Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 31.

space of the viceregal theatre. Under the pen of Giambattista Basile, tactics of making do testify to the negotiative qualities of these communal rituals, in which notions of *napolitanità* were collectively crafted. In *Venere*, disjunctive emotive performances worked to disrupt distinctions between the sacred and the profane, or in Canepa and Muir's terms, between the mannered world of the court and the carnivalesque world of the fairy tale forest.²⁵⁶ *Delizie* extended those disruptions by giving voice to the landscape itself, and within this spectacle we hear a bitterly disillusioned lament towards the viceroy for a Naples firmly rooted in a constructed myth of the past.²⁵⁷ Finally, *Monte Parnaso* displayed "all the fine things of Naples" directly to the visiting empress Maria of Austria, attempting to appeal to her royal authority to intervene in a city on the edge of disaster.²⁵⁸ During the course of these spectacles, the contact zone widens significantly, revealing that the status quo was not simply determined by those in power. Rather, Neapolitans of the seventeenth century actively engaged in shaping their identities, ensounding themselves in the place of Naples, *in mezzo*.

Just as well, in these works we encounter the incredibly vibrant voice of one Neapolitan, that of Giambattista Basile. Utilizing a transculturated language, these writings expose Basile's awareness of his own *napolitanità*, blurring the lines between the high and low, and between the real and imagined. As a series of personal rituals, for Basile they occupied a liminal state between the multivalent worlds he was subject to occupy. Thus, he acculturated multiple languages, converting them into what de Certeau terms "a song of resistance" that gave voice to "the struggles and inequalities hidden under the established order."²⁵⁹ As his spectacles increased

²⁵⁶ Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 13; Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, 6.

²⁵⁷ Gerbino, *Music and the Myth of Arcadia*, 24.

²⁵⁸ Guarino, *Representing the King's Splendour*, 54.

²⁵⁹ De Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, 18.

in scale, more opportunities became available to mask images of protest under the shadow of grandiosity, and to conceal voices of alterity among the sounds of celebration.²⁶⁰ As performative events, then, these spectacles enabled many Neapolitans to negotiate their own identities. As they embodied the colorful characters of Basile's creation, these events in turn became sites of communal ritual, where ways of making do allowed Neapolitans to thrive within the existing power structures of the myth of Naples.

I want to conclude with a counter-question to the notion of "becoming Neapolitan." What does it mean to *be* Neapolitan? What does it mean to *become* Neapolitan? Like the myth it modeled, *napolitanità* has always been inherently contested, subject to constant refashioning. As Marino argues, in the seventeenth century, "Neapolitan citizens were created de jure; they became Neapolitans de facto, through public ritual."²⁶¹ Yet in these conflicts, displayed vividly through spectacle, the violent sights and sounds of metamorphic ritual demonstrate the high stakes entailed in *becoming* Neapolitan. I would argue, then, that the fashioning of *napolitanità* has always been a process of negotiation, a practice of making do with the condition of *in mezzo*, the habitation of the contact zone. The continuous negotiation of place, performance, and identity evident in these spectacles suggests that to live in Naples, and to be Neapolitan, entails continuities of experience independent of time and space. Like those that had come before and would come after, the Neapolitan voices exposed in Giambattista Basile's works joined with those that had hailed the death of Arcadia, echoing from the cave of the Sybil, and coalescing into the sound of a Siren's song.

²⁶⁰ De Certeau, *Culture in the Plural*, 19.

²⁶¹ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 235.

EPILOGUE

The View from Vesuvius

The Flames of Change

On December 16, 1631, Mount Vesuvius erupted with a fury rivaled only by the cataclysm that had buried Herculaneum and Pompeii in 79 CE.¹ On that day, terror gripped the city, compelling crowds to join together in a procession calling on San Gennaro to save the people of Naples.² Contemporary historian Camillo Tutini documented the event vividly:

The air was dark and full of ash, and there was a great rain; on the appearance of the sacred relics at the main door of the Duomo suddenly a ray of sun appeared so clear and shining, eliminating that obscurity, that the people there gathered, full of joy, started crying to the heavens: “miracle, mercy!”³

The catastrophe killed over three thousand people and had long-term effects on the urban environment. An outbreak of flu followed shortly after, killing additional thousands, among which was Giambattista Basile.⁴ Interestingly, the previous year the current viceroy, Pedro Téllez-Girón, had attempted to suppress a number of feast days and festivals, which he considered flamboyant expenses.⁵ The outraged *popolo* partially blamed the viceroy for having upset God, and fearing the threat of violence, he soon reinstituted the full festival calendar.⁶ Religious devotion intensified (especially to San Gennaro) and civic fervor proceeded as usual, but the event clearly left its mark on the public consciousness. All was not well in Naples.

¹ Tommaso Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005), 146.

² Helen Hills, “Through a Glass Darkly: Material Holiness and the Treasury Chapel of San Gennaro in Naples,” in *New Approaches to Naples, c. 1500-1800*, edited by Helen Hills and Melissa Calaresu (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 49.

³ Camillo Tutini, quoted in Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 147.

⁴ Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), 45.

⁵ John Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan: Citizen Culture in Baroque Naples* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 236.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Vesuvius's eruption provides a fitting metaphor to the end of this account of spectacle life in the early seventeenth century. By 1631, socio-political tensions between the competing social spheres of Naples reached a climax, causing a build-up of pressure that could only be alleviated by a purging from the mythical landscape itself—the fires of Vesuvius washed over the urban landscape, simultaneously punishing and purifying the city from its iniquities.⁷ Unfortunately, in the years that followed, things would only get worse, as the Revolt of Masaniello in 1647 and the Plague of 1656 provided additional catastrophes that upset the balance of power and threatened to unravel the social fabric of Naples.⁸ The Spanish viceroyalty finally collapsed in 1713, and the Bourbon dynasty seized control of the city, holding it until the unification of Italy in 1860.⁹

In the centuries that came between, Neapolitans continued to adapt and adjust the myth of the city to meet these new challenges. Spectacles such as those studied here continued to be performed at the viceregal court and the Bourbon court that replaced it, acquiring elaborations that made them comparable to those of absolutist courts of Louis XIV and Elizabeth I.¹⁰ Festivals, too, continued to define seasonal cycles of urban life, reinforcing the power of the ruler and integrating the disparate topographies of sound that made up its geography.¹¹ For Neapolitans, these were more than performances for those in power. Rather, they were essential

⁷ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 111.

⁸ Marino, *Becoming Neapolitan*, 238.

⁹ Jonathan Morris, "Challenging Meridianilismo—Constructing a New History for Southern Italy," in *The New History of the Italian South*, edited by Robert Lumley and Jonathan Morris (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), 13.

¹⁰ Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 103.

¹¹ Dinko Fabris, "Musical Festivals at a Capital Without a Court: Spanish Naples from Charles V to Philip V," in *Court Festivals of the European Renaissance: Art, Politics and Performance*, edited by J.R. Mulryne and Elizabeth Goldring (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2002), 234.

to remain in the good graces of heaven, to receive protection from the forces of famine, plague, and volcanic catastrophe, indeed, to keep the city alive.¹²

Returning to an Ethnomusicological Past

In the present day city, Neapolitans continue to perform themselves in ways akin to the seventeenth century. The festivals of San Gennaro and San Giovanni remain important markers of the annual calendar, attracting tourists from throughout Europe.¹³ The city's streets remain packed with shops, traffic, street performers, and trash that barrage the senses in the same ways that travelers of the seventeenth century described them.¹⁴ As documented by Jason Pine, a thriving popular music scene called *neomelodica* permeates public life today.¹⁵ Performing to crowded streets and for private events, singers compete in flamboyant displays of emotion through songs that melodically emphasize "Mediterranean" and "peasant" vocal techniques that Neapolitans consider extensions of the *canzone classica* tradition of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁶ Eerily similar to Basile's self-conscious references to his own *popolo* roots, many of these songs express feelings of alienation, of marginalization, and of otherness. The chorus to *neomelodica* singer Ricciardi's "Cuore Nero" [black heart] illustrates this vividly:

The slave markets
Damned rhythm of chains
We are all African
We Neapolitans.¹⁷

¹² Gabriel Guarino, "Spanish Celebrations in Seventeenth-Century Naples," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 254.

¹³ Hills, "Through a Glass Darkly," 49.

¹⁴ Jason Pine, *The Art of Making Do in Naples* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 113.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 102.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Clearly, in many ways the contact zone continues to define the structures of social life in Naples. While no longer subject to foreign rulers, the city's government remains plagued by corruption from the crime syndicate the *Camorra*, an economy that continues to lag behind its northern Italian sister cities, and frequent natural disasters.¹⁸ According to Astarita, a 1971 census "found that 47 percent of dwellings in Naples had no shower or bath."¹⁹ Only two years later, a cholera epidemic in Naples shocked a developed world that believed the disease to be eradicated.²⁰ As recent as January 2014, journalist Jim Yardley published an article in the New York Times documenting the millions of tons of toxic waste that have been buried only a few miles north of Naples, a conspiracy whose veins run deep in the Italian government.²¹ Any "grand tour" taken of Italy today usually avoids crime-ridden Naples for the "historically important" cities: Rome, Florence, and Venice. The harsh realities of life in Naples result in a variety of feelings for Italians—disdain, shame, embarrassment, disillusionment—feelings that seem firmly rooted in a Basilian language of ambivalence.

In his work on Jewish Bergenland, Philip Bohlman describes a similar situation, in which the sounded voices of a culture's past become resonant within those occupying its present.²² This ethnomusicological past constitutes "a discursive space of boundaries, not boundaries between

¹⁸ Ibid., 24.

¹⁹ Astarita, *Between Salt Water and Holy Water*, 215.

²⁰ Ibid., 316.

²¹ Jim Yardley, "A Mafia Legacy Taints the Earth in Southern Italy," *The New York Times*, January 29, 2014, under "Europe," http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/30/world/europe/beneath-southern-italy-a-deadly-mob-legacy.html?_r=0 (accessed March 14, 2015), 3.

²² Philip Bohlman, "Returning to the Ethnomusicological Past," in *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*, edited by Gregory Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, 2nd edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 248.

cultures, instead a space within which cultures locate themselves.”²³ As a liminal space, a culture’s musical history necessarily “exists as a web of seamless everyday practices” that engage in *bricolage* with the actions of “musical and ritual specialists,” making its own process of self-fashioning contested.²⁴ By studying this exchange, the (ethno) musicologist must acknowledge her own contested role among these forces, engaging in the creation of an Other while experiencing the self within that Other.²⁵ Any interpretation of a cultural identity, then, is inherently subject to the perspective of the interpreter, making the recognition of these modalities of difference crucial.²⁶

In this study of seventeenth-century Neapolitan music and spectacle, I have attempted to account for these ethnographic pitfalls, which can easily distort the identities of those under study to meet the needs of a researcher’s romantic conception of the past. In Chapter One, I demonstrated that these kinds of problems have often damaged previous studies of Neapolitan music and resolved to undertake an interdisciplinary study that would attend to the many cultural contexts of the seventeenth century. Through my focus on the life, works, and milieu of Giambattista Basile, I positioned his spectacles of 1613, 1620, and 1630 as autoethnographic texts that reveal ideologies of Neapolitan identity in early seventeenth-century Naples. In Chapter Two, I demonstrated that the exceptionality of the city and the beliefs of its people relied heavily on an intertwining of myth and history into the fabric of the landscape itself. The many festivals and public spectacles of Naples made for a contested space where many voices vied for the same spaces, yet remained collectively interested in maintaining the integrity of the myth of

²³ Ibid., 249.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 257.

²⁶ Ibid., 256.

Naples. Chapter Three focused on the life and literary career of one voice within this complex web of interactions and purported a practice of making do that applied to all walks of life in Naples. Through a virtuosic blending of the carnivalesque and the courtly, the high and the low, Basile crafted a transculturated language that gave voice to his condition of *in mezzo*. Chapter Four demonstrated that Basile's spectacles served to mirror and model both his own subject position as well as those of the Neapolitan performers who embodied his texts. Drawing from both his own literary world and the pervading soundscape of public festivals, Basile implemented practices of making do in the viceregal theatre, allowing voices of protest to reside within celebrations of Spanish power. In this regard, Basile's spectacles functioned as participatory rituals where communal notions of *napolitanità* were negotiated to adapt to increasingly dire socio-political circumstances as the seventeenth century progressed.

To be sure, this study presents limits. By focusing on a particular vivisection of the city's musical life, at a particular moment through a particular individual's life, I have relied on selective materials that present a limited interpretation of Neapolitan identity, a mere cross-section in a dense historical tapestry. However, as Bohlman demonstrates, cultural memories themselves are inherently selective, subject to a field of play that makes any audibility of past voices incomplete.²⁷ Thus, in the spirit of Giambattista Basile, and those Neapolitans that have carried on his tradition, I too have learned how to make do with Naples. Much work remains to be done if musicologists are to reckon with the effects of nationalism and colonialism on trans-historical reception and perception of Neapolitan musics. Those scholars, too, will have to reckon with the many contradictions, ironies, and differences that the city presents. Yet it is in the rhythms of this contact zone that we encounter the most vibrant and pronounced voices of

²⁷ Ibid.

Neapolitans. They speak to us across time, attempting to demonstrate that things in Naples have a rhyme and reason that is often just beneath the surface. While it often seems to be what Bourdain referred to as *contrasenso* [against sense], in the seventeenth century, music, spectacle, and identity worked to express the deepest values of the city's people and the contested nature of Neapolitan identities. Neapolitans ensounded themselves within a mythological meshwork of their own fashioning, making do with both the delights of Posillipo and the terrors of Vesuvius.

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