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Early Modern Mixtures in England, Spain, and the New World (1500s–1600s)

A. England’s Renaissance and Religious Conflicts, TIMELINE

- 1534, King Henry VIII (ruling 1509–47) created the Church of England, rebelling against the Pope by marrying Anne Boleyn and divorcing his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, hoping for a male heir (and dissolving the monasteries, taking their wealth)
- 1547–53, a Regency Council (and Lord Protector) ruled during the reign of the boy king, Edward VI, with Protestant reforms: clerical marriage, masses in English instead of Latin, “superstitious” images removed from churches (paintings, sculptures, and stained glass windows, along with altars, bells, and vestments), the ending of masses sung for the dead, and the Bible made accessible to all, not just priests
- 1553–58, England switched back to Catholic rule under “Bloody” Queen Mary (daughter of Henry’s initial Spanish wife), especially when she married King Philip II of Spain in 1554, making him co-ruler of England for several years, with hundreds of English Protestants burned at the stake for heresy, but Mary died of an illness at age 42, after a 5-year rule
- 1558–1603, Henry’s Protestant daughter, Elizabeth (daughter of Anne Boleyn), returned the country to Anglican rule and triumphed over the Spanish Armada, which tried to invade in 1588, 1596, and 1597

(during Philip's Catholic rule in Spain), while increasing the power of the English monarchy and the development of secular theatre with a ban on religious drama and the Catholic mass in the "Elizabethan" period

- 1568, Elizabeth's Catholic cousin, Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, was forced to surrender the throne to her one-year-old son, James, and fled to England for sanctuary, but was executed there 18 years later for conspiring to kill Elizabeth and take her throne
- 1585, an English colony was established, with a charter granted to Sir Walter Raleigh by Queen Elizabeth, on the "remote, heathen and barbarous lands" of Roanoke Island (North Carolina), "to have, hold, occupy, and enjoy," but it was abandoned or "lost" after three years
- 1586, Sir Francis Drake, an English pirate sanctioned and funded by Queen Elizabeth, attacked the Spanish town of St. Augustine (Florida), plundered its wealth, and burned it, but it was later rebuilt
- 1603–25, James ruled Scotland first and then England also, in the "Jacobean" period, as a Protestant (Anglican) king, authorizing the King James Bible (1611), after publishing an earlier manual on witch-hunting (*Daemonologie*, 1597), but conflicts between Catholics, Anglicans, and Calvinist Puritans continued during his reign
- 1605, the "Gunpowder Plot" (or "Jesuit Treason") was discovered through an anonymous letter and 36 barrels of gunpowder found, with Guy Fawkes guarding it, under the House of Lords, the night before King James would have given a speech there, in a foiled attempt by a group of Catholics to assassinate him and other Anglican legislators
- 1607, the colony of Jamestown (Virginia) was established and survived
- 1609, the Sea Venture, flagship of a supply fleet sailing from England, was wrecked in a hurricane off the Bermuda Islands, but its survivors took two of its small boats to Jamestown (where the population had dropped from 600 to 70 due to famine)—and one of them, James Strachey, wrote a "true reportory" that influenced Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest* (1611)
- 1620, the colony of Puritans in Plymouth (Massachusetts) was established and survived
- 1625–49, James's son, Charles, ruled during the "Caroline" period, but that ended with a series of civil wars (1642–51) between the Parliamentarians and Royalists, the beheading of Charles (1649), and the banning of theatre (1642–1660) by the Puritan-dominated Parliament

B. English Renaissance Theatre

1. Interludes were performed at court and at nobles' homes, starting in the late 1400s, as short sketches during banquets, sometimes with allegorical characters as in medieval morality plays.
2. Jousting tournaments were also popular with the elite. King Henry VIII was hit in the head in 1524 and knocked off his horse in 1536. The latter time, the armored horse also fell on him, badly injuring his leg and causing him pain for the rest of his life, along with further possible brain damage.
3. In the early 1500s, platform stages were set up at one end of *inn yards* for performances, with viewers standing nearby or watching from galleries along the sides.
4. Secular school dramas, written in English, were performed at *universities* in the 1500s, drawing upon ancient models, such as Roman comedies, and using boys for all roles.
5. Boys' acting companies developed from school dramas to court entertainments and then to public performances in 1575 (in Blackfriars Hall), with major dramatists writing for them.
6. Such writers included those known today as the "university wits," who went to Cambridge and Oxford universities. But that group did not include Shakespeare—and the phrase came from a later historian, George Saintsbury, in the 1800s.
[How are young actors and school shows valued today, like and unlike in Renaissance England?]
7. Starting in 1574, the Master of Revels (Edmund Tilney), serving the Lord Chamberlain, the chief officer of the royal household, censored dramas that were deemed too religious or political—especially after Queen Elizabeth banned the performance of biblical plays in 1581.
8. English Renaissance dramatists, influenced by the ancient Roman tragedies of Seneca, the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and their own medieval tradition, specialized in revenge plots with supernatural characters and violence onstage, or romantic comedies, with "episodic" leaps in time and place. Most playwrights did *not* follow the neoclassical unities, as they went beyond 24 hours and adjacent locations, with intertwining main and subplots (rather than writing a linear, cause-and-effect, "crisis drama," valued by Aristotle). They also mixed genres in tragicomedies, sometimes with historical and pastoral scenes, and used *asides* and *soliloquies* (criticized by Italian neoclassicists as unrealistic).

[Why do characters sometimes address the audience directly, through asides and soliloquies onstage in the Renaissance or voice-overs onscreen today? What roles do spectators play then, regarding characters' inner theatres?]

9. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1599–1602) makes fun of this mixing of genres (while exemplifying it as a tragedy with comical scenes) when Polonius describes the Players visiting the court: “The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light” (2.2.1477–82).

[Which plot types do you prefer in theatre, film, and television today—like or unlike those in Elizabethan England?]

10. English dramatists wrote in blank verse (rhymeless poetic lines), except for a pair of rhyming lines at the end of some scenes, perhaps as a signal for actors to leave the stage. This involved iambic pentameter rhythm: five pairs of unstressed then stressed syllables per line.

[How is rhyming used and rhythm stressed in popular media today—and how is that like/unlike Renaissance blank verse?]

11. Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1587) was very popular with audiences for a decade. Like Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, it exemplified the English taste for supernatural characters onstage, inspired by Seneca's vengeful ghosts, along with medieval legends.
12. Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1589–92) focuses on a scholar, a potential Renaissance humanist (or Machiavellian prince), whose greed for knowledge and power draws him into a pact with Lucifer, through a devil named Mephistopheles. After conflicting advice from his Good and Evil Angels, Faustus signs the contract with his blood, giving up his eternal soul to get 24 years of supernatural powers—including playing tricks on the Pope in Rome and impressing Emperor Charles V by conjuring Alexander the Great. He also meets Lucifer, who lures Faustus into the deal by entertaining him (and the theatre audience) with an allegorical display of the Seven Deadly Sins, as actors portray Pride, Covetousness, Envy, Wrath, Gluttony, Sloth, and Lechery.
13. In 1632, the Puritan William Prynne reported, in his attack on theatre (*Histriomastix*), that a “visible apparition of the Devill” had appeared onstage during *Doctor Faustus*, amazing the actors and spectators, as a “fearful sight,” driving them to distraction or madness (qtd. in Macdonald). Yet, this play was very popular when staged by the Lord Admiral's Men, 1594–97.

14. Christopher Marlowe (1564–93) studied at Cambridge University where he learned the legal skill of arguing from different perspectives. He was famous for his “mighty lines” of powerful poetic imagery, as when Faustus conjures the ancient Helen, an ideal beauty, taken by the Trojans and causing the Greeks to sail to Troy (Ilium) for a ten-year war: “Was this the face that launched a thousand ships, / And burnt the topless towers of Ilium? / Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss. / Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies. / Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again. / Here will I dwell for heaven is in those lips” (5.1.97–102). This exemplifies how male actors would interact homo-erotically onstage, with a boy, as apprentice actor, in the role of Helen—even as the scene showed masculine and feminine ideals.
15. After he wrote *Doctor Faustus*, Marlowe was given an arrest warrant, probably an accusation of religious blasphemy. Less than two weeks later, he was accidentally killed in a bar fight or assassinated (stabbed above the eye) at age 29.
16. In 1597, the staging of *The Isle of Dogs*, by Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe, probably satirizing the queen (though the play is lost today), provoked the authorities to jail those involved and temporarily close all London theatres.
17. Jonson also satirized the plays of John Marston and Thomas Dekker, and they satirized his in return, during the “War of the Theatres” (1599–1601).
18. Theatres were closed due to plague (the Black Death returning) in 1593–94, 1603, and 1608.
19. Public theatres were built *outside* the city limits of London to avoid complaints by authorities. For example, the Lord Mayor complained in 1597: (1) they corrupt the Youth with “lascivious devices” and ungodly practices, (2) they draw “thieves, horse dealers, whoremongers, ... [and] contrivers of treason ... to the great displeasure of Almightye God & the hurt & annoyance of Her Maiesties people,” (3) they draw apprentices and servants from their work and all sorts of people away from sermons on Sundays, and (4) they invite people with sickness and open sores to recreate by hearing a play whereby “others are infected” (qtd. in Nagler 115–16).
20. Jonson was jailed again in 1605, along with George Chapman and John Marston, for their play, *Eastward Ho*, with its satirical depiction of the Scottish court (during the reign of James in England, who was also King of Scotland).

21. Ben Jonson (1572–1637) developed a new subgenre, the “comedy of humours,” with four caricatures of extreme temperaments—sanguine, melancholic, choleric, and phlegmatic—caused by an excess of certain bodily fluids (“humours” in the original sense), according to ancient medicine. Jonson partially followed the neoclassical unities in *Volpone* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610).
[How do political satires with comical characters, onstage and onscreen today, show the imbalance of power structures and personal “humours” akin to Jonson’s caricatures?]
22. Influenced by Marlowe’s tragic lines and John Lyly’s witty romantic comedies, William Shakespeare (1564–1616) appealed to both popular and elite audiences with his youthful plays of the early 1590s (such as *The Comedy of Errors*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Richard III*), more complex works of 1595–1601 (*The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *As You Like It*), fitful tragedies and tragicomedies of 1601–08 (*Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Measure for Measure*), and stronger, sweeter plays of 1608–13 (*Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale*, and *The Tempest*).
[If you have read one of Shakespeare’s plays, how do its characters and their interactions reflect the inner theatre elements of your brain, in the struggle of Self to be valued by others or the Other?]
23. Edward Arden, an ardent Catholic and second cousin of William Shakespeare’s mother (Mary Arden), was convicted of treason in 1583—after Arden’s son-in-law, John Somerville, was arrested for planning to assassinate Queen Elizabeth and implicated him, then strangled himself in jail. Edward Arden was partially hanged, then drawn and quartered (disemboweled and dismembered), with his decapitated head put on London Bridge.
24. Hamnet Shakespeare, the only son of William and his wife Anne Hathaway, died at age 11 in 1596, possibly of the Black Death (bubonic plague). His fraternal twin, Judith, survived, along with an older daughter of William and Anne, Susanna, who was born just 6 months after their marriage in 1582. William’s father, John (1531–1601), may have been a covert Catholic. William’s younger brother, Edmund (the name of a character in his play, *King Lear*, 1606) followed him to London as an actor, but died in 1607, at age 27, four months after his son died.

25. William Shakespeare was both a writer and an actor, as a shareholder in The Lord Chamberlain's Men during the reign of Elizabeth, which then became The King's Men with James as their patron. Richard Burbage played many of the serious leads in Shakespeare's plays, with Will Kempe and then Robert Armin playing the main comical roles as shareholders in his company.
26. "Hirelings" played smaller roles, with a temporary salary, and boys acted most of the female roles, even though they were apprentices, learning the craft.
27. The custom of cross-dressing for female roles got an extra twist in some of Shakespeare's plays, such as *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, with a boy playing a female character who dresses in disguise as a boy—and spectators aware of the irony.
[When performers cross-dress today, does that raise awareness about stereotypes with ironic twists evoking disgust, fear, or laughter—as in Shakespeare's plays?]
28. Actors received "sides," not the entire script, to learn their lines and cues, with "plots" posted backstage to help them recall when to go onstage. They had brief rehearsal periods and revivals of plays at short notice. Doubling or tripling of roles was common. Mostly contemporary costumes were used, sometimes with anachronistic elements and donations of expensive clothes from patrons.
29. Philip Henslowe (1550–1616), manager of the Lord Admiral's Men, kept a diary of props and set pieces, which now provides key evidence of Elizabethan staging practices.
30. Shakespeare's company performed in the Theatre (on the north edge of London) and then, after 1599, in the newly built Globe, south of the Thames River, which was rebuilt in 1614 after a fire (Fig. 7.1). These were open-air, "public" theatres. But his company also performed for nobility at court. Starting in 1609, they performed, during winter, in the second Blackfriars Theatre, an indoor, "private" theatre (meaning more expensive seats), built in the former dining room of a Dominican monastery and rooms below it, reconstructed, within the city of London.
31. Outdoor public theatres had a pit or "yard" where spectators stood near the stage as "groundlings" (originally meaning bottom-feeding fish). There were galleries around and above them, which had undivided benches as seats, plus private boxes with cushions or "lords' rooms," sometimes rented by prostitutes. Apples, nuts, water, and ale were sold before and during performances. The only toilets were buckets or the river.



Fig. 7.1 The recently rebuilt (1997) Globe Theatre in London (photo: Mark Pizzato)

32. The public theatre stage usually involved a thrust, with spectators on three sides, trapdoors, columns, and a roof, painted underneath as “the heavens.” There was a “tiring house” behind it, for costume changes, props, and minimal scenic pieces to be brought on or off. There was also an open platform above the stage for balcony scenes, musicians, and sound effects, such as rolling a cannonball and bending a metal sheet for thunder (Fig. 7.2).
33. Certain plays (such as Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, 1610–11) suggest a reveal space with characters suddenly “discovered.” So there were probably curtains at the back wall of the set, maybe with a pavilion extending from it, or curtains hung across open doors in the tiring house, which could also be used to imagine exteriors of buildings and interior rooms. **[How was the discovery space in London’s public theatres like or unlike “the reveal” in cinematic realms today?]**
34. Since minimal scenery was used, plays sometimes had “spoken décor,” with characters describing the scene and evoking it in viewers’ imaginations.
35. Bear-baiting arenas were also popular, with chained bears attacked by dogs as a spectator sport. These were similar in structure to the public theatres, as were cockfight-watching “cockpits,” two of which were converted into theatres, including one at court. **[Is there a kinship between animals’ predatory or male-rivalry drive and human violence, as displayed today—like/unlike in the English Renaissance?]**



Fig. 7.2 The Globe's yard, stage, tiring house, "heavens," and galleries (photo: Mark Pizzato)

36. Only boys' companies appeared in private theatres until 1608 when the King's Men (Shakespeare's company) started performing in the second Blackfriars Theatre.
37. Holding 600–750 viewers (unlike the Globe, which held 1500–3000), indoor, candlelit, private theatres had a pit with backless benches on one side of the stage. They also had galleries and boxes on three sides. Spectators sometimes sat onstage, too.
38. During the Jacobean and Caroline eras (the reigns of James I and Charles I), Jonson wrote court "masques," mythical dance-dramas involving professionals and court members. Sometimes these started with an "antimasque," a disordered display of lower-class characters, which the king's presence in the masque brought to order.
39. Designer Inigo Jones (1573–1652) brought Italian scenic devices to the English court masques, including a proscenium frame, angled wings with painted perspective, and back shutters shifted on grooves.
40. Shakespeare included a masque-like scene in his play, *The Tempest*.

[What are the parallels between today's musicals, or other spectacles, and Jonson's masques and antimasques, displaying powerful figures that restore order in society while offering pleasure to the audience, as it submits to the stage or screen?]

41. John Webster (c.1580–1634) wrote darkly tragic and grotesquely comic, Jacobean melodramas, such as *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613), with its purely evil brothers, who torture and kill their sister (the duchess) and her children.
42. Thomas Middleton (1580–1627) was one of the most successful playwrights of the Jacobean period. He was equally popular for his comedies and tragedies, such as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (c.1613, among the best Jacobean comedies), *The Changeling* (1622, written with William Rowley), and *Women Beware Women* (probably 1623–24, one of the bloodiest Jacobean tragedies). He also wrote masques and pageants. But his career ended with *A Game of Chess* (1624), a popular allegory with characters named and dressed as chess pieces, white (English Protestant) and black (Spanish Catholic), satirizing current political figures. The play was initially approved by the Master of Revels, but then banned after nine performances by the King's Men in the Globe Theatre, as it mocked a proposed marriage between an English prince and Spanish princess.
43. John Ford (1586–c.1639) wrote the tragedy, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629–33), about Annabella, who becomes pregnant through incest with her brother, Giovanni. He kills her and displays her heart on his dagger, at her husband's birthday banquet, admitting their sin and killing her husband, before being killed by others.
44. Jacobean/Caroline dramatist, Philip Massinger (1583–1640) wrote carefully plotted, realistic and satirical plays, such as *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625) with its central, cold-hearted, realistic villain, Sir Giles Over-reach, who became popular in the 1800s. Massinger's *The Roman Actor* (1626) shows a performer seduced by the wife of the ancient emperor Domitian and then killed by him onstage. *The City Madam* (1632) is a comedy of manners with Sir John Frugal posing as a devil-worshipping Indian.

[How do screen media celebrate the melodramatic cruelty of purely evil villains or confirm comical stereotypes?]

C. The Iberian “Reconquest” and American Conquests, TIMELINE

- 711, Islamic “Moors” (Berbers and Arabs) from northwest Africa crossed the Mediterranean Sea and started expanding across the Iberian Peninsula (al-Andalus), taking it from medieval Visigoths, who had taken it from the ancient Romans—and introducing new technologies, such as the astrolabe, while building 17 universities and 70 public libraries
- from the 700s to the 1400s, Spanish and Portuguese Christian forces, aided by other crusaders, gradually retook the territory of the Islamic Caliphate, in the “Reconquest” (*Reconquista*) of the Iberian Peninsula from north to south and west to east
- 718–1035, the Christian Kingdoms of Asturias/León, Castile, and Pamplona/Navarre/Aragon were founded during the Reconquest
- 1139, Portugal became an independent kingdom under Alfonso I
- 1212–38, Spanish Christians completed the Reconquest, except for the Emirate of Granada
- 1469, the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile united those kingdoms
- 1478, the Spanish Inquisition started enforcing Catholic orthodoxy, eventually through public rituals, *autos de fe* (“acts/performances of faith”) with a procession, mass, and reading of judgments for heretics and false converts—leading to the execution of thousands
- 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella finished the *Reconquista*, conquering the Emirate of Granada and expelling the Moors; they also ordered all Jews in Spain to convert to Catholicism or be expelled; and they funded Christopher Columbus in his attempt to reach India in the East by sailing West, leading to his discovery of the “West Indies” (Caribbean Islands)
- 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas divided the known world outside of Europe between Spain and Portugal
- 1500, Pedro Álvares Cabral discovered what is now Brazil, claiming it for Portugal
- 1502, the Spanish royalty ordered all Muslims to convert to Catholicism or be expelled (violating an earlier treaty)
- 1519–56, Charles I of Spain, grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella, and son of Philip I in the Habsburg line, ruled the vast Spanish Empire, where the “sun never set,” plus most of Europe, as the “Holy Roman Emperor” Charles V (who was raised in the Netherlands, but spent much of his life in Spain)

- 1521, the Spanish Conquistadors, commanded by Hernán Cortés (whom some Aztec saw as their god, Quetzalcoatl, returning as predicted), with local Tlaxcalans, Totonacs, Texcocans, and other local allies providing most of the warriors, conquered Tenochtitlan, the center of the Aztec Mexica Empire—as the Conquistadors also brought diseases that eventually killed about 90% of the indigenous population and melted much of the Aztec artwork, taking the gold back to Spain, partly for their Baroque cathedrals
- 1533, Spanish Conquistadors, commanded by Francisco Pizarro, conquered the Inca Empire, creating “Peru” (western South America)—with similar results in disease and destruction
- by 1535, the Viceroyalty of New Spain was formed in what is now Mexico, later extending to Central America, Florida, the central and southwestern US, and the Philippines
- 1556–98, Philip II, son of Charles, ruled the Spanish Empire and also England during his marriage to Mary (1554–58)
- 1565, Spanish colonists founded St. Augustine (Florida), as the first settlement by Europeans in what is now the US—and were initially helped by Native Americans to survive
- 1566, the Spanish established St. Elena (on Parris Island, South Carolina), which later became the capital of Spanish Florida, with further settlements extending to the Appalachian Mountains, but faced resistance from Native Americans and eventually retreated to St. Augustine
- 1570, the Spanish Inquisition created tribunals in New Spain (Mexico) and Peru
- 1570s–80s, Spanish priests established about 70 missions in Florida and 20 in what is now Georgia, but most were destroyed by the early 1700s (with the British Governor of Carolina, James Moore, attacking Spanish settlements)
- 1598–1621, Philip III ruled Spain as part of the Habsburg Dynasty
- 1621–65, Philip IV continued the Habsburg rule and “Golden Age” of art, literature, and theatre in Spain
- 1665–1700, Charles II continued both

D. Spanish Golden Age Theatre

1. Italian commedia troupes toured Spain in the 1570s and 1580s, influencing Spanish drama.
2. The *zarzuela* developed as a short, stylized musical drama based on mythology with ornate scenic effects—a unique type of Spanish court entertainment, influenced by Italian operas and intermezzi.

3. Medieval Catholic dramas started in the 1500s in Spain, due to Islamic rulers, later than elsewhere in Europe, and continued longer (until a ban in 1765), featuring allegorical characters like the English morality plays. Each religious play, as *auto sacramentale* (sacramental act), was staged by a trade guild initially and then organized by the city council with professional actors.
4. Religious dramas were performed in theatres and on street wagons during festival processions, such as Corpus Christi (“Body of Christ”) when the transubstantiated bread, believed to be Jesus in the flesh, traveled through the city and back to the church. Thus, a processional wagon (*carro*) was used as both platform stage and scene house for scenery, special effects, and costume changes.

[What kinds of performances occur during processions today, religious or civic, with identity needs, simulations, and social values like/unlike those in early modern Spain?]

5. All secular plays were called *comedias*, mixing serious and comic elements (without following neoclassical rules). These were the major types: daredevil, romantic “cape and sword” (*capa y espada*), exotic “theatre” (*teatro*), “corpse” (*cuero*), and “noise” (*ruido*) with legendary saints or rulers.
6. *Comedias* often involved stock characters, such as the *barba* (old man), *gracioso* (comic servant), and Moor (as villain).
7. *Pasos* (short satires) were also presented between the acts of *comedias*.
8. Lope de Rueda (1510–65) was the most popular actor of the early Golden Age and an author-manager (*autor*) of his own troupe in the mid-1500s.
9. Tirso de Molina (1570–1648), a Catholic monk, created the first literary version of the folk hero and serial seducer, Don Juan, in *The Trickster of Seville*, perhaps staged as early as 1616, but published in 1630. Tirso also excited his audience by scripting a leading “breeches” role in *Love the Doctor* (*El amor médico*, 1620): a young woman wearing pants, thus showing her legs, while posing illegally as a male doctor.
10. Lope de Vega (1562–1635) wrote about a thousand episodic *comedias*, 470 of which survive. These included *Fuente Ovejuna* (1614) and *The King, the Greatest Mayor* (1620), plus a treatise about how drama should please the public. He was also embroiled in many love affairs and was widowed twice, but became a priest later in life, which did not affect his womanizing.
11. *Fuente Ovejuna* (*The Sheep Well*) presents an entire village as heroic, with the peasants killing a military commander who nearly raped a village girl, after they are shamed by her into getting revenge. They

continue to claim that they *all* did the deed, despite torture, and eventually the king intercedes—as the play moves from the commander’s headquarters, to a public square, to the offices of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, to the open countryside, to the town square, to the commander’s house.

12. Calderón de la Barca (1600–81) wrote over 100 secular comedias, often about the conflict between love and honor, involving violent family situations and human responsibility for actions, as in *Life Is a Dream* (1636), plus 70 religious dramas as well. In the mid-1600s, Calderón became a priest and wrote all the religious drama produced in Madrid for the next 30 years.
13. *Life Is a Dream* shows Prince Segismundo in Poland who is locked in a tower because his father, the king, got a prophecy that the prince would kill him and cause disaster to the country. But the king relents and releases his son, who then becomes enraged, and so the king imprisons him again, telling him it was just a dream. There is also a subplot with a female hero in breeches (pants).
14. Spanish *corrales* were theatres for *comedias*, created from the preexisting courtyard of adjoining buildings, with rooms and gridded windows (*rejas*) on several sides. The *corral* involved a platform stage, built at one end of the courtyard, with traps, reveals, and doorways in the facade of the one to three story scene house, plus awnings over the courtyard for shade (Fig. 7.3).



Fig. 7.3 Almagro *corral*, stage side with rolled up awning above (photo: Mark Pizzato)



Fig. 7.4 Almagro corral, back wall and balcony areas (photo: Mark Pizzato)

15. *Corrales* had benches near the stage and in the central patio for young male spectators known as “mosquitos” (*mosqueteros*), elevated benches (*gradas*) along the side walls, a refreshment stand (*alojera*) along the back wall for eating and drinking during the show, a *cazuela* (“stewpot”) above that for unmarried females, *apostentos* (second-floor boxes), and *desvanes* (“attics” on a third floor) for others (Fig. 7.4).
16. Corral de la Cruz in Madrid was the first of these courtyard theatres created in 1579.
17. The small Corral de Comedias in Almagro, created in 1628, is the only one still existing.
[How were Spanish corrales akin to English public theatres, or open-air theatres in ancient times and today?]
18. The Coliseo in Madrid was a court theatre, built in 1640, with the first proscenium frame in Spain.
19. Actresses were banned from the stage in 1596, though the ban was not always obeyed. Their performances were legalized in 1599, *if* wives or daughters of a company member, but breeches roles were banned. And yet, such roles continued in the 1600s.
20. Actors wore contemporary costumes, with some mythical and historical elements, often playing multiple roles and stock characters.

E. Aztec Mesoamerica and New Spain

1. In the 1400s to early 1500s, the Aztec empire, centered in Tenochtitlan (today's Mexico City), conducted "Flower Wars"—ritual battles arranged between city-states, to capture warriors (Pizzato). They would then be made lean by drinking brine, trained to play music, and costumed to perform as gods in the monthly festivals of each city (Fig. 7.5).
2. The god-actor (*teotl ixiptla*) marched throughout the city for crowds honoring him, wearing the god's insignia—playing a flute, for example, as Tezcatlipoca, god of the obsidian "Smoking Mirror" used for prophecy. He also appeared before the ruler, with further ornaments given him and four women to enjoy as his wives for 20 days. On the final day, the *ixiptla* went up the temple pyramid, smashing his musical instrument on the steps. At the top, he was laid across the sacrificial



Fig. 7.5 Aztec god-actor being costumed, in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, Book II, 1577 (photo: Mark Pizzato)



Fig. 7.6 Heart sacrifice, in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* (photo: Mark Pizzato)

- altar, with limbs held by priests. His heart was extracted, still beating, by another priest, who offered it to the sun as energy to rise from the earth each morning (Fig. 7.6).
3. For the festival of the maize-god Xipe Totec, after the heart sacrifice, the priests flayed the skin off the god-actor, wore it, and danced in it—also appearing as Xipe Totec, the “Flayed One,” before the ruler (Fig. 7.7).
 4. The Aztecs and other city-states performed further rituals and entertainments, such as the Totonac *voladores*, with four men “flying” off a turning, 30-meter (100-foot) pole. Tied to ropes, unwinding as the pole turned, they descended gradually from the top, hanging upside-down, while another man on top played a flute and drum—a performance that continues in Mexico today.



Fig. 7.7 Ruler with a priest as Xipe Totec, wearing the god-actor's skin (with extra hands and feet), in Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* (photo: Mark Pizzato)

5. After the Conquest in 1521, these and many other ritual performances were described, with pictures drawn, by Aztecs helping the Spanish missionaries Diego Durán and Bernardino de Sahagún record what happened, to prevent the sacrificial practices from continuing in "New Spain."
6. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–95), a Catholic nun and *criolla* (person of Spanish parentage born in New Spain), wrote an *auto*, *The Divine Narcissus* (1689). Its introductory *loa* shows the allegorical characters Zeal (a conquistador) and Religion (a Spanish lady) trying to persuade, by force or reason, Occident and America (an Aztec warrior and lady) to see in the new Catholic faith and its rituals something akin to, yet better than their own.

7. *Moros y Cristianos* festivals were exported to many of the former Spanish colonies, such as Mexico, Guatemala, Peru, Colombia, and the Philippines. Continuing there today, as well as in Spain, they reenact battles of Moors beaten by Christians, with parades, historical costumes, masks, weapons, horses, sets, gunfire, and fireworks (Harris). **[Which sacrificial dimensions do you see in today's cross-cultural performances, especially through the Web, akin to those in Aztec America or New Spain?]**

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