

## Staging the Emotions in Giulio Camillo's Theatre: Syncretism, Embodied Cognition and the Arts of Memory

### Encenação das emoções no teatro de Giulio Camillo: sincretismo, cognição incorporada e as artes da memória

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**Abstract:** This paper examines a long-neglected aspect of Giulio Camillo's oeuvre: the role of the emotions and their systematic symbolisation via foot imagery in *L'Idée del Teatro* (1550) and *De l'humana deificatione* (c. 1542). A twofold hypothesis is suggested: on the one hand, Camillo's negative association of feet with the emotions stems from his syncretic reading of Kabbalah and Christian theology; on the other, this conceptual blending is supported by the embodied cognitive dynamics intrinsic to the arts of memory's *imagines agentes* in the tradition of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

**Keywords:** Giulio Camillo; Kabbalah; Arts of Memory; Emotion; Embodied Cognition; *Imagines agentes*.

In this paper, I will examine a long-neglected aspect of Giulio Camillo's oeuvre<sup>2</sup>: the role of the emotions and their systematic symbolisation via foot imagery in his *magnum opus*, *L'Idée del Teatro* (1550; hereafter *L'Idée*), and a short epistolary treatise, *De l'humana deificatione* (c. 1542; hereafter *Deificatione*), where the Friulian presents an abridged version of the doctrinal underpinnings of the former<sup>3</sup>. Hence, I will focus on the doctrine of soul of *L'Idée*, highlighting its underlying ethics of deification as presented in *Deificatione*.

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<sup>3</sup> I am following CAMILLO (2015) and (1984) for *L'Idée* and *Deificatione* respectively. Camillo has received wide scholarly attention since the late 1950's in the wake of ROSSI (1960) and YATES (1999[1966]). His work and influence have been most notably and extensively studied by BOLZONI (1992/2001/2011/2015/2017/2017b/2018), as well as by VASOLI (1984), BOLOGNA (1992), WEST (1997), PETERS (2004), ROBINSON (2006) or MATUSSEK (2012/2019), to name but only a few.

In so doing, I will use one of Camillo's minor works as a companion to *L'Idea*, in the wake of Bolzoni's observation that the former often "ci danno una chiave importante per penetrare i segreti del Teatro"<sup>4</sup>. The results will provide us with novel insight into how Camillo conceptualised and represented the emotions in a cognitively embodied manner, warranted by the Classical arts of memory, to support his syncretic doctrine of soul in the context of Italy's early modern Hermetic and Kabbalistic circles.

Camillo (Friuli c.1480–Milan 1544) was the epitome of the early modern polymath: humanist, philosopher, rhetorician and poet, well-versed in the Classical tradition, Christian theology, Kabbalah, Hermeticism, Neoplatonism, Ficinian magic and alchemy. He cultivated the friendship of Bembo, Titian, Lotto, Salviati and Serlio, but also the enmity of Erasmus and his circle<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, Camillo was dismissed by the Erasmists as a charlatan because he designed a magico-epistemic Vitruvian theatre, built upon the mnemonic system *per locos et imagines*, with the goal of unlocking total knowledge and the secrets of the universe through the exploration of man's mental and spiritual microcosm, bearing witness to his divine nature and unlimited creativity<sup>6</sup>. In the following pages, I will examine the role and the staging of the emotions in the theatre's central section, devoted to the doctrine of human soul, from two complementary perspectives: one focused on the sources of Camillo's discourse and another on the embodied dynamics of the images whereby the Friulian conveys it.

### Sources and Syncretism

In *L'Idea's* proem, Camillo depicts an ascension from a forest to slope to a hilltop, desiring to fathom the forest. He explains that

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<sup>4</sup> BOLZONI (2015) 65.

<sup>5</sup> BOLZONI (2017) 66–67.

<sup>6</sup> Most scholars accept the reconstruction of the theatre proposed by YATES (1999) as a Vitruvian edifice where the user of the theatre would contemplate from the stage the images placed in the *cavea*. However, there are some voices of dissent: BARBIERI (1980), for instance, advances the counterhypothesis that the images would be in a combinatory, octagonal machine placed at the centre of the stage—see TORRE (2000) for a commentary on these opposing views. For an overview of the role and spaces of magic in the Renaissance, see COULIANO (1987) and GHEZZANI (2022) in this volume.

*Il bosco è questo nostro mondo inferiore, la erta sono i cieli, et il colle il sopraceleste mondo. Et a voler bene intender queste cose inferiori, è necessario di ascendere alle superiori, et di alto in giù guardando, di queste potremo haver più certa cognitione<sup>7</sup>.*

This allegory signals the theatre's purpose: "col pensiero ci dobbiamo inalzare a questa altezza donde sono discese le anime nostre [...], ché questa è la vera via del conoscere et dell'intendere"<sup>8</sup>. This process structures Camillo's doctrinal thought, thus providing a crucial key to analyse the theatre<sup>9</sup>.

Camillo baptises this process in *Deificatione* as deification, "cioè fatte divine, anzi unite con Dio"<sup>10</sup>, thereby foregrounding *L'Idea's* underlying ethico-theological programme: by a gradual, ascetic detachment from the world, man can reattain his divine nature in direct communion with God<sup>11</sup>. Camillo weaves his uphill mystical roadmap around Kabbalah's tripartite division of the soul, drawn from the *Zohar* and replicated at the Gorgons' level of *L'Idea* and again in *Deificatione*<sup>12</sup>. The tree souls of man are *Nephes*, "la più bassa et vicina et compagna del corpo nostro"; *Ruach*, "L'anima di mezzo, che è la rationale"; and *Nessamah*, "che è tutta divina". Deification is therefore conceived as an upward pull: when *Ruach*, enabled by ascetic detachment and inward meditation, interacts with the *Nessamah*, man's soul "passa nella natura dell' angelo et conseguentemente si trasmuta in Dio"<sup>13</sup>.

That said, deification is not foolproof and can be precluded by *Nephes* —the lowest, terrestrial, animal soul, the seat of "le passioni del corpo"<sup>14</sup>. For Camillo, who draws on Platonic, Stoic and Augustinian thought, the bodily passions risk derailing the whole process: "se per divina permissione [the rational soul, the *Ruach*] s'inchina a far unione con la *Nephes*, la *Nephes* si unisce con la carne, et la carne col demonio, et il tutto fa transito et transmute-

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<sup>7</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 151.

<sup>8</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 152.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>10</sup> CAMILLO (1984) 199.

<sup>11</sup> VASOLI (1984) 195-196.

<sup>12</sup> VASOLI (1984) 194, BOLZONI (2011) 22; cf. ZORATTO (2017). For a description of the theatre's different levels, see YATES (1999).

<sup>13</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 206-207.

<sup>14</sup> CAMILLO (1984) 208. Camillo, like many early modern thinkers, uses the terms *passioni* and *affetti* interchangeably —see KNUUTTILA (2014) 494.

tionem in diavolo”<sup>15</sup>. However, unlike his sources, Camillo considers that no emotion or affect can ever be positive, since they are the weak link in the process of deification precisely because the Devil can hijack the *Nephes* amidst “li venti et le tempeste de le passioni”<sup>16</sup>.

Indeed, this doctrine of soul is crucial to understanding Camillo’s thought and his broader project, where the bodily emotions play a pivotal part, although a negative one: their value resides either in their subordination to or effective suppression by the rational soul. Camillo subscribes to a rather radical dualist position germane to the Church Fathers and the *Zohar*: the body is the prison of the soul<sup>17</sup>. And yet, the Friulian cannot simply dispense with the body. At the *Pasiphe* level of the theatre, he rehearses the Platonic idea that “cosa non si muove se non per mezzo del corpo”<sup>18</sup>, meaning that the divine operations of the human soul must be carried out by bodily activities, either natural or artificial<sup>19</sup>. Otherwise, the holistic claim of the theatre would be anything but, since it would ignore the material manifestation of the universe within man’s microcosm and his environment—incidentally the subject of more than half of *L’Idea*. That said, even if also committed to a material exploration of reality and man, Camillo will always rule against the grip of the emotions.

Camillo represents them at the Gorgons level of the theatre. Under Venus’s door, “Euridice punta nel piede dal serpe” signifies “i nostri affetti governate dalla nostra volontà” and “contenerà questa ancor la Nephes”. Camillo emphasizes his point with further images: on the one hand, “Christo, volendo dir che i nostri affetti et la nostra volontà stesse castigate et monda [...] lavò i piedi nel suo partir, cioè gli affetti a gli Apostoli”; on the other, “Achille fanciullo per essere stato immerso nelle acque stegie, esser divenuto in tutte le parti invulnerabile, salvo che ne i piedi [...] che significa che tanto huomo in tutte le parti poteva essere costante, pur che non fosse tocco ne gli affetti”.

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<sup>15</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 207.

<sup>16</sup> CAMILLO (1984) 222. On the role of the emotions in the aforesaid traditions, see WILBERDING (2012), BYERS (2012) 62-69 and KNUUTTILA (2014) 467-68.

<sup>17</sup> RADCLIFF-UMSTEAD (1972) 54; TISHBY and GOLDSTEIN (1989) 683; OSMOND (1990) 11.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 219; cf. PLAT. *Phaedrus* 245c-e.

<sup>19</sup> BOLZONI (2015) 22.

Under Mars, “una fanciulla con un piede scalzo et con la vesta scinta” means “la deliberatione, overo proposito fermo et nato subito” —an interpretation provided by Virgil’s description of Dido as *unum exuta pedem vinclis, in veste recincta* amidst her suicidal outburst<sup>20</sup>. Under Jove, “una gru, che vola verso il cielo portando nel becco un caduceo, et lasciandosi cader da’ piedi una pharetra”: the upward flight means “l’animo vigilante”, the “pharetra” stand for “le cure di questo mondo”. Finally, under Saturn, “Hercule, il qual leva Antheo sopra il petto”, an image which bears witness to Camillo’s dualism: the former is “l’humano spirito”, the latter “il corpo”. This image is allegorically interpreted to mean the victory of the spirit over the body: Antaeus’s lifted “piedi, cioè gli affetti”, prevent him from gaining strength, and thus he dies. Camillo concludes by noting that “se l’ corpo nostro non muore della morte degli affetti, non si può fare spirituale, né farsi uno in Christo”<sup>21</sup>.

There is a single thread that links all these images together: all of them are semiotically focused on feet to convey Camillo’s censure of the passions. This, however, posits the question of why feet are the passions’ seat: although the negative association between them is clear, Camillo does not substantiate this conceptual cluster either theologically or philosophically. The link is better contoured in *Deificatione*, where the soles of the feet stand for “appetito”; however, Camillo once again does not elaborate on the reasons why nor provides any source<sup>22</sup>. Although the term “appetito” refers back to Plato, Camillo’s spatialisation of the passions is anything but Platonic, given that the Athenian philosopher locates the appetitive soul in the stomach<sup>23</sup>. Nor is it Neoplatonic, since Plotinus considers that the soul is indivisible and incorporeal, and thus Plato’s tripartite corporealization merely signposts where the soul’s activities take place<sup>24</sup>. An answer must be found elsewhere.

Could Kabbalah provide the key, being moreover the explicit framework of Camillo’s discourse on the emotions? As noted above, Camillo draws important parts of his conceptual arsenal from Platonic thought and com-

<sup>20</sup> VIRGIL *Aen.* 4.518.

<sup>21</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 214-216.

<sup>22</sup> CAMILLO (1984) 209.

<sup>23</sup> PLAT. *Ti.* 70d-e; see BRICKHOUSE and SMITH (2010) 134, OSMOND (1990) 5.

<sup>24</sup> PLOT. *Enn.* 4., 3.23; TIELEMAN (1998) 323.

bines them with Kabbalah's doctrine of soul. This is sanctioned by Kabbalah authors, who sustained a close dialogue with (Neo)Platonic philosophy and considered that the appetitive soul was the counterpart of *Nephes*<sup>25</sup>. However, this posits a potential problem: traditional Kabbalah literature, no doubt imbued with Neoplatonism, often identified the liver as the physical seat of the *Nephes*<sup>26</sup>. That said, the problem can be solved by considering some crucial innovations of early modern Kabbalah: overlapping with an increasing suspicion of the flesh among Catholic thinkers leading up to Trent, for Italy's early modern Kabbalists "the body had become an arena reflecting the main issues of religious-pietistic activity, mostly the increasing occupation with sin, guilt and penitence", which resulted in a "quantitative and qualitative leap of verbalization about erotic issues and sexual morality" throughout the *Cinquecento*, with an emphasis on "sexual sins — in acts and in thoughts" as "the incarnations of sin and religious deviation in general"<sup>27</sup>.

Incidentally, feet had strong sexual connotations in Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah as a symbol for the phallus, and sometimes for sexual relations. It is not outlandish to hypothesise that Camillo, who was fully immersed in these traditions to the point of being suspect of heresy, was acutely aware of both the Italian Kabbalah's new sexual politics — pertinently characterised by the anxiety for providing instructions "regarding emotions and bodily control"<sup>28</sup> — and the feet's sexual symbolism in the *Zohar*, the Kabbalistic text that Camillo was best acquainted with<sup>29</sup>. In this sense, the relocation of the appetites and the *Nephes* in the feet could have been further motivated by *Zohar* 3.143a, where "it is stated that within each person are comprised the ten holy emanations (*sefirot*) and the ten demonic powers; the former are said to be represented by the fingers of the hands and the latter by the toes"<sup>30</sup>. Taking the whole for the part, the feet, re-cast as the passions' symbol, become the new site of *Nephes*. In so doing, Camillo effectively illustrates how

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<sup>25</sup> TISHBY and GOLDSTEIN (1989) 690-91.

<sup>26</sup> WEINSTEIN (2009) 39.

<sup>27</sup> WEINSTEIN (2009) 22-25; cf. FINE (1992) 131.

<sup>28</sup> WEINSTEIN (2009) 25.

<sup>29</sup> WOLFSON (1992) 164-65; BOLZONI (2011) 21-24.

<sup>30</sup> WOLFSON (1992) 163; cf. MATT (2014) 443-44.

early modern Kabbalah popularized its tenets “via new images and ideas about the body”<sup>31</sup>.

This is a possible explanation for the representation of the passions in Camillo's work, but there is more to be said on this matter. We must bear in mind that Camillo was also an avid reader of Hermetic authors who represented “la cabala Cristiana”, and who exerted a tangible influence on his thought, such as Pico, Ficino or Giorgi<sup>32</sup>. Giorgi is especially important, given that he prefigures Camillo's belief that “Cabala could prove, or rather had already proved, the truth of Christianity”<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, Camillo's understanding of Kabbalah's tripartition of the soul does not merely stem from his acquaintance with the sources but is also shaped by his reading of Giorgi's *De harmonia mundi* (1525)<sup>34</sup>.

In *De harmonia mundi* 3.5.3, Giorgi lays out the Zohar's doctrine of soul—man has three souls: *Nephes*, *Ruach* and *Nessamah*, etc. What is particularly relevant for the present argument is his description of *Nephes*:

*peccato et errori remurmurat. Infimum in malo et concupiscentia semper immergitur, iuxta id quod ait apostolus: Video aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et ducere me captivatum in legem peccati.*

Giorgi explicitly re-elaborates *Nephes* in Christian terms by ascribing man's drive towards sin to it, aided by *Romans* 7:23. It seems very plausible that he is rehearsing Aquinas's well-known argument in *Summa Theologica* 1.2<sup>a</sup>, 91 a.6, whose gist is that “the flesh still gives rise to inclinations that are contrary to reason, since grace does not heal the flesh, and thus Paul can state in 7:23 that he is still “captive” to the law of sin in the members (i.e. movements of concupiscence (*motus concupiscentia*))”<sup>35</sup>.

It is not difficult to imagine why Camillo would have found both Aquinas's and Giorgi's accounts highly suggestive. Kabbalah already provided him with specific associations between feet, sin and the passions; *Romans* 7:23 sanctions them by linking concupiscence with *lex in membris*, and the

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<sup>31</sup> WEINSTEIN (2009) 22.

<sup>32</sup> ROSSI (1960) 101.

<sup>33</sup> YATES (2001) 34.

<sup>34</sup> VASOLI (1984) 193-94, BOLZONI (2011) 21-22.

<sup>35</sup> RATH (2014) 153.

connection would have been further supported by Giorgi's identification of such law with *Nephes* and by Aquinas's observations on the concupiscible pre-disposition of the flesh. Although the transition from the more generic *membrum* to the feet requires a metonymical conceptual jump, there is proof in the text that suggests that this is indeed Camillo's reasoning, who buttresses the association with an anatomical observation: "habbiamo a saper che gli anatomisti dicono dal talone ai lombi essere una tal corrispondenza di alcuni nervi, la qual fa che le scritte alcuna volta pigliano l'un per l'altro". Henceforth, the conceptual spatialisation of the emotions in the feet provides a perfect example of how Camillo re-elaborated "for his own purposes a scholarly tradition that sought to reconcile the Kabbalah with Christianity"<sup>36</sup>.

These are the plausible sources that explain the cluster feet-emotions: Camillo reunites different intellectual traditions and recasts them into a symbol which moreover supports his ascetic programme. That said, it is important to remember that Camillo is also operating within the framework of the arts of memory. This means that there must be a quick, inferential way of grasping at a glance the overall logic of his censure of the emotions and its particular instantiations in each of the theatre's *imagines agentes*<sup>37</sup>, since this will in turn enable their memorisation by creating an *inductio* (*Rhet. Her.* 3.28), a mental heuristic of inferential associations similar to a syllogism<sup>38</sup>. Camillo conceived the theatre only for a chosen, initiated few who could unpack the overwhelming volumes of information stored in it; and yet, for the theatre to function as Camillo intended, a different, faster process is needed to intuitively and visually apprehend the doctrinal premises coded in its images —one that is cognitively embodied and properly mnemonic.

### Embodied Cognition & The Arts of Memory

In the last two decades, there has been an increasing multidisciplinary dialogue between literary critics, linguists and cognitive scientists to explore

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<sup>36</sup> BOLZONI (2011) 19.

<sup>37</sup> On *imagines agentes*, see MERINO (2007), BOLZONI (2017b) and IGLESIAS-CRESPO (2022).

<sup>38</sup> MERINO (2007) 51-52, CARRUTHERS (2008) 80.



the cognitive dynamics that string together embodiment and language<sup>39</sup>. One of the main pillars of this endeavour is the role of perceptual simulations in communication. An ever-growing body of empirical evidence in cognitive psychology and linguistics suggests that those parts of the brain responsible for perception and motricity are pre-reflectively activated when we process, make sense of, and retrieve conceptual information of actions verbs, descriptions of movements, or active metaphors during both oral and written communication. This activation triggers “multimodal perceptual simulations that rely on and provide sensory, motor and introspective information”<sup>40</sup>. This entails that our understanding of a sentence such as “tie the laces of your shoe” is informed by the perceptual simulation of the manual movements required to perform the action, the haptic feeling of the laces, the tensive qualities of a knot, the appropriate postural orientation, and so on. Even when we communicate these actions in face-to-face contexts, we tend to pre-reflectively resort to gestures to ostensibly convey what we mean<sup>41</sup>.

On these grounds, Guillemette Bolens postulates that any narrative “conveys a specific way of thinking the body and this particular conceptualization of corporeality has an impact in the shaping of the narrative”. Accordingly, she continues, “[i]n cases where a literary narrative makes room for kinesic particulars instead of simply referring to an unqualified handshake, these very nuances and details become narratorial utterances, as they are deliberately and effectively communicated to the reader”, thereby impacting his or her experience and engagement with the text —especially when the pre-reflective outcomes of simulation are foregrounded upon conscious reflection or in defamiliarization<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> See GIBBS and MACEDO (2010), SANTANA and DE VEGA (2011), BOLENS (2012/2018/2018b/2021), GALLESE and WOJCIEHOWSKI (2011), DIJKSTRA *et alii* (2014), WEBB (2016), CAVE (2016), GIBBS (2017), OSTAREK and VIGLIOCCO (2017), ARMSTRONG (2020) or IGLESIAS-CRESPO (2021), among others.

<sup>40</sup> IGLESIAS-CRESPO (2021) 284. Cf. BOLENS (2012/2021), GIBBS (2017), BARSALOU (2008).

<sup>41</sup> BOLENS (2018b) 83-84; cf. HOSTETTER and BONCODDO (2017).

<sup>42</sup> BOLENS (2012) 25-28. Responding to the advances in embodied cognition, Bolens has developed a methodology known as “kinesic analysis”, which “focuses on the exact means —narratological, lexical, syntactic, grammatical, rhetorical, figural, and so forth— used in a text to construct meaning referring to bodily movement and by triggering

Pertinently to the present study, these recent developments in embodied cognition and cognitive literary studies resonate with early modern ideas about embodiment, cognition and communication — in the domain of the plastic arts as well as in rhetoric and the arts of memory<sup>43</sup>. It was a common assumption of the early modern period that “[b]odily gestures and comportment in general were deemed to reflect [...] the inner intentions and motions of the soul”<sup>44</sup>. Indeed, influential *Quattrocento* art theorists such as Leon Battista Alberti prescribed that “the motions of the mind are known from movements of the body”, and thus it was imperative that “the movements of the body are well known to the painter”<sup>45</sup>. These maxims were closely observed in the arts of memory of the sixteenth century, since one had to be “like a painter who needs to master the semantics of gestures in order to make the emotions visible” when composing *imagines agentes*<sup>46</sup>.

The role of embodiment for conceptual representation is central to the functioning of Camillo’s theatre. In *L’Idea*’s proem, the Friulian asserts that the only possible way of gaining access to the secrets of the theatre is “per cenni et per similitudini, a fine che per lo mezo delle cose visibili sagliamo alle invisibile”<sup>47</sup>. This attention to gestures [*cenni*] as the communicative utterances of the theatre’s *imagines agentes* is indeed instrumental for the fast, inferential apprehension and subsequent memorization of Camillo’s postulates on the emotions — as recent research on embodied narratology and kinesis in literature suggests, the targeted interaction in a text between sensorimotor information and abstract concepts often leads to their correlative association, resulting in the figuration of the former as a marker for the latter<sup>48</sup>.

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sensorimotor perceptual simulations in the reader via linguistic and semantic codes” (ibid.) — see also BOLENS (2018/2018b/2021). For the relationship between perceptual simulation and defamiliarization, see IGLESIAS-CRESPO (2021).

<sup>43</sup> For a complementary take on the link between mnemonics and embodied cognition, see DELAINI (2022) in this volume.

<sup>44</sup> WEINSTEIN (2009) 28; cf. SIMONS (2016) 38.

<sup>45</sup> ALBERTI (2011) 61-62.

<sup>46</sup> BOLZONI (2001) 164-66.

<sup>47</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 147.

<sup>48</sup> See GALLESE and WOJCIEHOWSKI (2011), WEBB (2016) 35-36.

Considering this evidence, it is possible to advance that the mnemonic power of the *imagines agentes* is grounded in their capacity to marshal perceptual simulations for conceptual representation, warranted by their figurative combination of sensorimotor stimulation and introspective information with an encyclopaedic background. Crucially, this hypothesis retroactively buttresses and enriches the core principles of the classical and medieval arts of memory. Perceptual simulations are by definition “as-structures”. This means that they are not exact re-enactments, but echoic traces of past cognitive experiences that are instrumentally directed towards a cognitive goal different from themselves<sup>49</sup>. The arts of memory weaponize these as-structures in the constitution of memory images, which, according to their Aristotelian definition, are “as-structures” themselves: the memory image is a picture in and of itself, and yet it is a representation of and for something else than the image itself at the same time<sup>50</sup>. To represent something different from itself, the memory image always appealed to somatic and sensory experiences, which not only allowed to ground abstract concepts and imagined realities, but also to codify and recover specific emotional information in their recollection<sup>51</sup>. This was perhaps best epitomised by Aquinas, who prescribed for the memorisation of abstract, theological concepts that

*Ideo autem necessaria est huiusmodi similitudinum vel imaginum adinventio, quia intentiones simplices et spirituales facilius ex anima elabuntur nisi quibusdam similitudinibus corporalibus quasi alligentur, quia humana cognitio potentior est circa sensibilia*<sup>52</sup>.

When each of the theatre's images is analysed from this perspective, one can ascertain how the perceptual simulations that they trigger support the censure of the emotions in an intuitive, pre-reflective manner, and how Camillo foregrounds sensorimotor awareness with his subsequent allegorical exegeses of what each image stands for—explicitly reinforcing what starts as a cognitive resonance below our reflective radar. Take for instance the image

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<sup>49</sup> ARMSTRONG (2020) 119-120.

<sup>50</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Mem.* 450b 11-20. See CARRUTHERS (2008) 26-28, MERINO (2007) 45-46.

<sup>51</sup> CARRUTHERS (2008) 75.

<sup>52</sup> *Summa Theologiae* 2.2<sup>a</sup>, q. 49.1. For Aquinas's psychosomatics of memory, see CARRUTHERS (2008) 69-73.

of Eurydice being bitten by snake. When simulating what being bitten in a foot feels like, it is likely that we would pre-reflectively conjure the feeling of our flesh being pierced, the clamping pressure on our skin and bones, the subsequent potential muscular stiffness and numbness associated with it, as well as the introspective feeling of pain and discomfort. When Camillo explains that the aforesaid image signifies our rational will controlling our emotions, the physical rigidity and immobility inferable from the sensorimotor simulations of being bitten become reflectively salient to convey such control. This conceptual inference would be moreover buttressed by the contextual location of this image under Venus's door — suggesting the sexual, appetitive symbolism of the image.

Other images would be examples passed down by tradition and repurposed by Camillo. For instance, the image of Christ washing the apostles' feet gains its concrete signification in the theatre due to the fact that this *imago agens* conflates together the literal source of the image in the Gospels (*John* 13) with *L'Idea's* discourse on the emotions, partially drawn from *Romans* 7:23. Hence, the perceptual simulations associated with washing the feet — the rubbing of the soft palms against the skin, the warmness or coldness of the water, and so on — embodies the purgatory action of Christ, who delivers us from the sinful *lex in membris* linked to the emotions. It is likely that this would be further simulated as the feeling of dirt being washed away from the skin — a hypothesis supported by the findings of Zhong and Liljenquist, who provide empirical evidence for the “Macbeth effect”: we resort to terms referring to physical dirt or cleanliness, and even feel the compulsion to wash ourselves, when addressing moral virtues and transgressions<sup>53</sup>.

The image of the girl under Mars offers, on the other hand, an exemplary instantiation of an allusive poetic memory at work within the combinatory dynamics of the theatre. This “*fanciulla con un piede scalzo et con la vesta scinta*” possibly triggers the perceptual simulation of the feeling of the soil against the sole of a foot, as well as the friction of a disorderly textile fabric against our skin; Camillo weaponizes these feelings and associates it with the “*proposito fermo et nato subito*”. In order to seal the impression,

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<sup>53</sup> ZHONG and LILJENQUIST (2006).

Camillo confers a concrete resonance and mood to the image by his allusion to Dido's death in the *Aeneid*, and thus it becomes one of the images of the theatre which "gives unified form to something that has previously been deposited in the literary tradition"<sup>54</sup>. Once again, a foot signals a sinful passion: a wrathful determination to commit suicide, appropriately placed under warlike Mars.

The last image of Camillo's series recapitulates his argument so far in the Gorgons section: Hercules strangling Antaeus by holding him with his feet up in the air programmatically summarises the theatre's ethics of deification, as Camillo explicitly comments in *Deification*<sup>55</sup>. Here, the perceptual simulations triggered by the image have a well-defined target. The simulations of struggling against a weighty object, as well as that of being lifted with someone's arms seizing our hips, emphasises how "la carne resurge contra lo spirito", underlying Camillo's hostility towards the passions and his prescribed imperative to suppress them, to the point that "se 'l corpo non muore della morte degli affetti, non si può fare spirituale"<sup>56</sup>. This conceptual elaboration also highlights the tense fragility of the process via the aforesaid perceptual simulations: it takes a great physical strength in order to lift and hold a heavy weight up in the air without dropping it — which, in the case of the fight between the body and the soul, would prove fatal for the latter.

The perceptual simulations triggered by each of these images support Camillo's contempt for the emotions. However, it must be noted that each image only instantiates specific aspects of his discourse on this subject. Perceptual simulations are traces of past experiences, and thus they provide building blocks for higher-order reasoning, not a top-down, organisational principle that can justify the overall mnemonic logic behind the feet imagery itself. Consequently, although the interactions between pre-reflective simulations and conceptual content provide a powerful explanatory framework for the embodied dynamics behind each *imago agens*, it is necessary to look for the structuring principle that grounds their common mnemonic *inductio* elsewhere.

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<sup>54</sup> BOLZONI (2001) 205-206; cf. VIRGIL *Aen.* 4.518.

<sup>55</sup> CAMILLO (1984) 209.

<sup>56</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 216.

That said, the embodied dynamics inherent to perceptual simulations offer an important clue to this purpose: simulation requires a concrete spatial orientation<sup>57</sup>. In the case of the feet imagery, the spatial orientation is structured along the vertical axis with a downward focus. This suggests that Camillo's discourse on the emotions and their symbolisation responds to one of the embodied structures of thought first unearthed by Lakoff and Johnson —the orientational metaphor “rational is up, emotional is down”, which is grounded in the “unique ability to reason that places human beings above other animals and gives them this control”<sup>58</sup>. Not only has the embodiment behind this and other orientational thought structures been successfully tested in cognitive psychology and linguistics<sup>59</sup>, but the adduced cultural explanation for the concrete binomial reason/emotion was also the predominant paradigm in early modern conceptions of human rationality against animal irrationality<sup>60</sup>. Case in point: Camillo considers that *Nephes*, “percioché in lei capeno tutte le nostre passioni, la habbiamo noi commune con le bestie [sic]”<sup>61</sup>. Pertinently, its opposite in the theatre, the rational deification of man, is ostensibly conceptualised as an upward movement along the vertical axis, as the ascending crane which drops the emotions down or Hercules's “rational” lifting of Antaeus eloquently demonstrate.

Henceforth, embodied cognition and mnemonics come together in the underlying *inductio* behind Camillo's images. Of man's three souls, *Nephes* is the terrestrial and animal one, “la più bassa et vicina et compagna del corpo nostro”<sup>62</sup>. The passions properly belong to the sphere of *Nephes*. The earthly nature of the passions is moreover symbolized at the lower end of the body's vertical axis —a representation conditioned by the negative connotations of “emotional is down”—, as evinced by all the aforesaid *imagines agentes*. At this lower end, the feet not only have strong sinful and sexual connotations in the traditions that Camillo draws on, but are also the only part of the

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<sup>57</sup> See GIBBS (2017) 223; BOLENS (2012) 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> LAKOFF and JOHNSON (1980) 17.

<sup>59</sup> See SANTANA and DE VEGA (2011), DIJKSTRA *et alii* (2014) and GIBBS (2017).

<sup>60</sup> See BOWD and COCKRAM (2017) 183, CELLAMARE (2017) 87-88.

<sup>61</sup> CAMILLO (2015) 206.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. CAMILLO (1984) 222.

human body always in contact with the earth. Therefore, the logical outcome of this mnemonic reasoning is that the feet are the seat of the passions, and thus of *Nephes*. Consequently, all the images which deal with the passions and *Nephes* must semiotically focus on feet, and the perceptual simulations triggered by their gestures and bodily movements must be the communicative utterances that convey in a memorable manner Camillo's censure of the passions, supported by their implicit doctrinal premises and their explicit conceptual exegeses.

### Conclusion

In sum, Camillo pays very careful and purposeful attention to the role and representation of the emotions in his works. His dualist convictions, his syncretic philosophical and theological beliefs, and his own ethics of deification are all coded into the feet of his theatre's *imagines agentes* and are supported by their embodied, cognitive dynamics. His particular association between feet and the passions, motivated by his acquaintance with Kabbalah and *De harmonia mundi*, is idiosyncratic and original; in this sense, he is following standard mnemonic practice as prescribed by the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (3.38): every *memoriosus* must create their own images to their own convenience when applying the art of memory. And yet, his attention to the body is symptomatic of a time when the body was routinely treated as a locus of knowledge, somesthetic experiences, religious and political thought, and emotive self-fashioning—with especial urgency in the heterodox intellectual ecosystem inhabited by Camillo, where the body and its affects mark the difference between a life of sin, guilt, and condemnation on the one hand, and deification and the rational apprehension of the cosmos on the other. The stakes could not have been higher.

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**Resumo:** Este artigo examina um aspeto muito negligenciado da obra de Giulio Camillo: o papel das emoções e sua simbolização sistemática através da imagem dos pés em *L' Idea del Theatro* (1550) e *De l'humana deificatione* (c. 1542). Uma dupla hipótese é sugerida: por um lado, a associação negativa dos pés feita por Camillo com as emoções decorre de sua leitura sincrética da Cabala e da teologia cristã; por outro lado, essa mistura conceitual é sustentada pela dinâmica cognitiva incorporada intrínseca às *imagines agentes* das artes da memória, na tradição da *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

**Palavras-chave:** Giulio Camillo; Cabala; artes da memória; emoção; cognição incorporada; *imagines agentes*.

**Resumen:** Este artículo examina un aspecto relegado de la obra de Giulio Camillo: el papel de las emociones y su simbolización sistemática a través de la imagen de los pies en *L' Idea del Theatro* (1550) y *De l'humana deificatione* (c. 1542). Se sugiere una doble hipótesis: por un lado, la asociación negativa de los pies hecha por Camilo con las emociones proviene de su lectura sincrética de la Cábala y la teología cristiana; por otro lado, esta mezcla conceptual se apoya en la dinámica cognitiva incorporada intrínseca a las *imagines agentes* de las artes de la memoria, en la tradición de la *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

**Palabras clave:** Giulio Camillo; Cábala; Artes de la memoria; Emoción; Cognición incorporada; *Imagines agentes*.

**Résumé :** Cet article examine un aspect longtemps négligé de l'œuvre de Giulio Camillo : le rôle des émotions et leur symbolisation systématique au moyen de l'imagerie des pieds dans *L' Idea del Theatro* (1550) et *De l'humana deificatione* (c. 1542). Une double hypothèse est proposée : d'une part, l'association négative des pieds aux émotions par G. Camillo découle de sa lecture sincrétique de la Kabbale et de la théologie chrétienne et, d'autre part, ce mélange conceptuel s'adosse à la dynamique cognitive incarnée, intrinsèque aux *imagines agentes* des arts de la mémoire dans la tradition de la *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

**Mots-clés :** Giulio Camillo ; Kabbale ; Arts de la mémoire ; Émotion ; Cognition incarnée ; *Imagines agentes*.