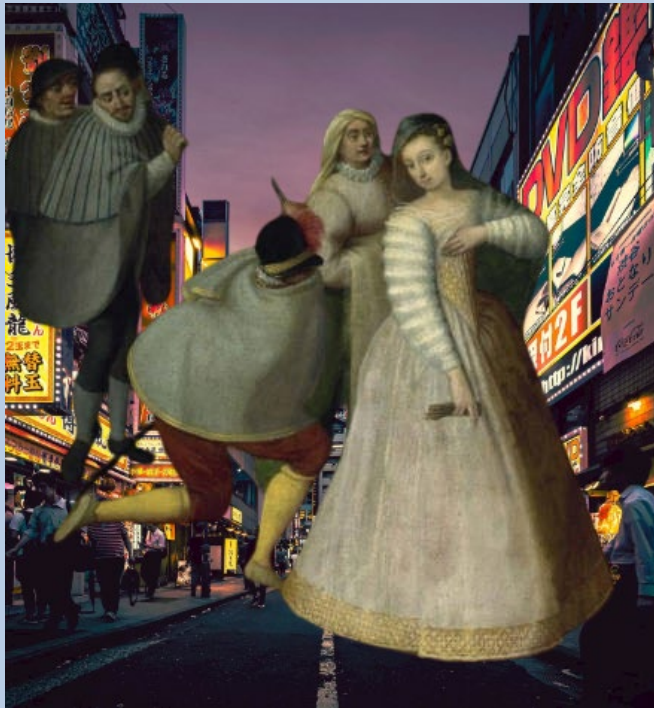


LA COMEDIA ENTRE MUNDOS:  
intersecciones críticas en el teatro de la temprana  
modernidad

THE *COMEDIA* BETWEEN WORLDS:  
Critical Intersections in Early Modern Theatre



Erin A. Cowling - Esther Fernández  
Glenda Y. Nieto-Cuebas - Susán Paún de García

Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo





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Esther Fernández (Rice University)

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INTERSECCIONES CRÍTICAS EN EL TEATRO  
DE LA TEMPRANA MODERNIDAD

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**Tania de Miguel Magro** is Professor at West Virginia University. She specializes in early modern Spanish theater and is the author of *Staging Violence: Gender and Social Control in Jácaras and Entremeses* (Routledge 2021). She has prepared critical editions of *El príncipe inocente* by Lope de Vega as well as Agustín Moreto's *Los engaños de un engaño* and *La misma conciencia acusa*. She writes on how theater portrays, questions, and/or supports social, political, religious, and gender conventions.

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**Alexander Samson** is Professor of Early Modern Studies at University College London (UCL). His recent publications include *Mary and Philip: the Marriage of Tudor England and Habsburg Spain* (Manchester University Press, 2020) and *Philip IV and the World of Spain's Rey Planeta* (Tamesis, 2023) co-edited with Stephen Hart. He directs UCL's Centre for Early Modern Exchanges and the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters.

**Robert L. Turner III** is Professor of Spanish and Department chair at the University of South Dakota. His research focuses on the theater of Tirso de Molina, particularly representations of disguise, cross-dressing, power, and identity. His recent publications have looked at how Tirso uses parallel structures in his plays as part of his thematic arguments. He is currently working on a book length project examining the use of writing in Tirso's work.

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## INTRODUCCIÓN. LA COMEDIA ENTRE MUNDOS O LOS MUNDOS DE LA COMEDIA

Erin A. Cowling, Esther Fernández, Glenda  
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Quizás hoy más que nunca, con el auge—muy necesario de los estudios postcoloniales—y una mirada urgente hacia lo multicultural, lo interseccional y lo interdisciplinario, cueste para muchos estudiosos considerar la comedia como un género vital y en constante regeneración dentro de los estudios hispánicos actuales. Sin embargo, de no hacerlo, corremos el riesgo de relegar a un segundo plano una tradición dramática única y de singular riqueza que dejó una marca permanente en la sociedad de la época a nivel artístico y sociocultural. En efecto, la España del siglo XVII bebió de las tablas tanto en sus momentos álgidos como en las crisis sociales más agudas. El teatro cortesano y los espectáculos parateatrales fueron el centro de homenajes que dejaron su huella en esa Historia con H mayúscula de corte nacionalista y exclusivista. Pero, por otro lado, el teatro del Siglo de Oro estuvo también al servicio de otras miles de historias de hombres y mujeres que se refugiaron en este entretenimiento de los males que les acechaban en su día a día.

La época globalizada en la que vivimos nos invita a reflexionar en cómo este teatro también era global para su época por lo mucho que llegó abarcar a nivel temático y la influencia que tuvo fuera de las fronteras de la Península. Una prueba de ello es que, incluso hoy en día, la comedia no ha dejado de reinventarse y renovarse para apelar a distin-

tas causas. Por esta razón, como editoras de este volumen hemos decidido reivindicar los distintos mundos que engloba el teatro barroco y que posicionan a dicho género más allá de un teatro museístico. En su lugar, los estudios que siguen, contribuyen a definir la comedia como un acto vital en constante cambio regenerativo.

Este volumen salió en parte de la conferencia de “La comedia entre dos mundos” que organizaron tres de las editoras como miembros ejecutivas de la Association for Hispanic Classical Theater en colaboración con el Festival Internacional de Teatro Clásico de Almagro en el verano del 2022. Muchos de los capítulos son revisiones de trabajos presentados allí, mientras otros nos llegaron debido al interés que el tema generó y todavía genera por la amplitud de miras que invoca los estudios de la comedia. Los “mundos” que invocamos en el título del presente libro vienen a representar justamente esa infinidad de posibilidades críticas que nos abren nuevas vías para acercarnos a un género que lleva a sus espaldas una compleja carga ideológica. Con esos “mundos” nos referimos no solo a localizaciones literalmente geográficas sino también a idearios mucho más amplios y abstractos que abarcan momentos históricos, problemáticas sociales, tendencias culturales, creencias religiosas o acercamientos teóricos y estéticos.

La primera parte del volumen “Identidades en escena / Identities on Stage” junta cinco capítulos que exploran la concepción de la identidad desde varias perspectivas. Desde las teorías de raza, género, teología y nacionalidad, los autores de esta parte abarcan distintos “mundos” que demuestran la adaptabilidad de la comedia a distintos conceptos, temporalidades y culturas.

Tania de Miguel Magro en “Murallas y la construcción de la identidad nacional en *La Numancia* de Cervantes” [Walls and the Construction of a National Identity in *La Numancia* by Cervantes] utiliza el valor metafórico de los dos lados de una muralla para crear una identidad hispana en oposición a un Otro peligroso, pero a la vez tan semejante al ser español. La propia fracción que se siente Cervantes como ciudadano a la vez celebrado y rechazado se hace palpante según la lectura de de Miguel Magro.

En “Disidencia e identidad en una comedia marrana: *La prudente Abigail* de Antonio Enríquez Gómez” [Disidence and Identity in a *Comedia marrana: La prudente Abigail* by Antonio Enríquez Gómez]

Conxita Domènech lee una comedia bíblica a través del punto de vista del marrano. Vista por ese lente, *La prudente Abigaíl* se convierte en una comedia que promueve la tolerancia religiosa y la justicia social, triunfando la protagonista frente a la intolerancia y avaricia de los que impondrían su poder.

Shifra Armon en “Casting Race in Antonio de Zamora’s *El hechizado por fuerza* (1697)” [Raza en el elenco: *El hechizado por fuera* de Antonio de Zamora (1697)] explora las posibilidades de incluir a una esclava racializada en el rol más potente de la comedia tardía de Zamora. En vez de las señas normales de alteridad en la comedia, Armon utiliza las reacciones de los protagonistas hacia la criada para demostrar su probable origen americano. Su procedencia del Nuevo Mundo añade un punto importante al análisis de la obra y su popularidad con las audiencias del siglo XVIII.

Laura Muñoz en “Thinking Through Embodiment, Gender, and Adaptation in *Fuerza de la costumbre* and its Reimaginings” [Pensando materialización, género y adaptación en *La fuerza de la costumbre* y sus refundiciones] delinea las adaptaciones de *La fuerza de la costumbre* desde sus primeros años con la versión anglosajona *Love’s Cure, or the Martial Maid* (1612-13), hasta el hoy en día con dos traducciones nuevas puestas en escena en 2022, *The Forces of Nature* and *The Force of Habit*. Enfocado en el personaje masculino, Muñoz considera las diferentes adaptaciones y sus reconstrucciones de Félix según el entendimiento de la fluidez de género en su época respectiva.

Con “Reconstructing Relationships of Desire: Homosexuality in Spanish Golden Age Theater” [La reconstrucción del deseo: la homosexualidad en el teatro del Siglo de Oro], Eduardo Paredes Ocampo recrea la performance del gracioso *La vengadora de las mujeres* a través de documentos de archivo de la Inquisición española y los diccionarios contemporáneos para mostrar las posibilidades de una representación de homosexualidad en el escenario del siglo XVII. Su lectura de este personaje demuestra que los personajes queer no sólo existían teóricamente, sino que las acotaciones y direcciones indirectas de las obras inscriben su presencia claramente en los textos en sí.

La segunda parte del libro “Empeños transatlánticos / Transatlantic Endeavors” agrupa cuatro capítulos que tienen las Américas como escenario ideológico privilegiado. Todas las autoras y los autores que intervienen en esta sección estudian la existencia de

conexiones transatlánticas innatas a la comedia desde el siglo XVII hasta nuestros días.

Mikkel-Theis Paulsen en “Pues que no estás en el oro, o contento, ¿dónde estás?": Gold and Melancholy in Spanish and English New World Drama” [“Pues que no estás en el oro, o contento, ¿dónde estás?": oro y melancolía en el teatro español e inglés sobre el Nuevo Mundo] explora cómo la comedia y el drama isabelino inglés interrogan la colonización en *El Nuevo Mundo* de Lope de Vega y *Midas* de John Lyly. Paulsen ahonda en la interrelación entre el oro, la melancolía y el imperio para demostrar que la melancolía facilita una reflexión crítica y redentora sobre la historia, aunque en circunstancias políticas muy distintas, ya que el imperio Habsburgo atravesaba su decadencia, mientras que el inglés estaba *in statu nascendi*. A partir de este análisis, Paulsen revela las conexiones transculturales entre las historias literarias españolas e inglesas y la compleja dialéctica del imperio en las tablas y en el discurso político renacentista.

Elena Nicole Casey en “Notable melancolía’: Writing American Illness from Imperial Spain in Calderón’s *La aurora en Copacabana*” [“Notable melancolía’: escribiendo la enfermedad americana desde la España imperial en *La aurora en Copacabana* de Calderón] analiza también el ‘modo melancólico’ pero esta vez tomando como foco un personaje de ficción, la sacerdotisa incaica Guacolda en *La aurora en Copacabana*. Las imágenes astrológicas de la obra asocian la condición de Guacolda con la decadencia espiritual de su nación. Casey sostiene que el simbolismo mariano de Guacolda y su identidad indígena han afectado a que su melancolía no reciba la suficiente atención crítica en comparación con otras protagonistas calderonianas análogas.

Alejandro Fielbaum en “Vino la comedia: lecturas decimonónicas del teatro barroco en Argentina y Chile” [The *Comedia* Arrived: Nineteenth-Century Readings of the Baroque Theater in Argentina and Chile] traza un amplio panorama de la recepción crítica ambivalente de la comedia en el siglo XIX en Argentina y Chile. Durante el proceso independentista, autores republicanos identifican el teatro barroco con un orden colonial que debe ser superado. Posteriormente, escritores más cercanos al liberalismo consideran el género como innecesario para la nueva historia americana. Finalmente, críticos del carácter conservador de ese liberalismo, ven en la comedia una expresión de libertad que puede guiar la construcción de un



nuevo orden político, cuya crisis a finales del siglo XX permite a Raúl Ruiz articular una mirada más lúdica del barroco español.

El último artículo de esta sección a cargo del equipo de Translation Lab, “Calderón Onstage in Spanish La Florida: Text, Context, and Reconstruction” [Calderón en la escena de La Florida: texto, contexto y reconstrucción] comparte con el lector el proyecto pionero de traducir y montar la comedia de *Amigo, amante y leal* en el 2025, con motivo del 250 aniversario de la Guerra de Independencia de los Estados Unidos. En 1789, la localidad de San Agustín en La Florida fue testigo de una representación de *Amigo, amante y leal* que resultó ser la atracción de mayor éxito entre los actos conmemorativos por la coronación de Carlos IV. La actual iniciativa comunitaria, llevada a cabo por el Translation Lab y el colectivo Theater with a Mission, tiene como objetivo difundir el teatro barroco e instruir sobre el papel que tuvo La Florida como única colonia leal a Gran Bretaña en la Revolución Americana.

La tercera parte, “Políticas de la representación / Politics of Performance”, reúne cinco ensayos que examinan las posibles divisiones que resultan de mundos en conflicto, sean por una política nacional, internacional, social o personal. Últimamente, se trata de cuestiones de poder: de actividades, de representaciones (o performances) destinadas a mejorar el estatus, influencia o poder de alguien dentro de una organización, dentro de una sociedad, o en nuestro caso, dentro de un mundo.

En “American Sueño” [Sueño americano], Bruce Burningham observa como *Sueño* (1990) de Jose Rivera logra resituar *La vida es sueño* de Calderón en otro mundo, en otra época y con otro desenlace para eliminar fronteras de tiempo entre la comedia y un público estadounidense poscolonial. Rivera no hace una adaptación en el sentido tradicional, sino que crea una obra con otra noción central de “sueño”; el “sueño americano” reemplaza el elemento teológico calderoniano con una especie de “evangelio de prosperidad” con el cual el héroe asciende a la cumbre de su sociedad.

Beatriz Salamanca en “Be my Guest: The World of Home and the Political Sphere in Lope de Vega’s *El villano en su rincón*” [Sea mi invitado: el mundo del hogar y la esfera política en *El villano en su rincón* de Lope de Vega] ofrece una lectura enriquecida por filosofía, teoría crítica e historia que explora el hogar —el rincón— como un

espacio de resistencia al poder real, resaltando su dimensión política, en conexión con sus connotaciones éticas como lugar de hospitalidad y negociación.

En “Recursive Theater: Performance and Captivity in Miguel de Cervantes’ *El trato de Argel* (1582)” [Teatro recursivo: performance y cautiverio en *El trato de Argel* (1582) de Miguel de Cervantes] Mina García explora cómo Cervantes hace uso recursivo y metateatral de fragmentos de representaciones o performances en *El trato de Argel* para conseguir dos fines: permitirse confrontar los dolores de su propia experiencia como esclavo y avisar al público en España acerca de la situación de los esclavos cristianos encarcelados en el norte de África, canalizando así una experiencia traumática colectiva para el beneficio político contemporáneo, que así se transporta a otro mundo.

Emmy Herland en “Ghosts Across Borders: Don Juan de Castro and his Grateful Dead” [Fantasmas a través de las fronteras: Don Juan de Castro y los muertos agradecidos] estudia dos versiones teatrales del cuento popular del Muerto Agradecido: *El mejor amigo el muerto* (coescrito por Luis Belmonte Bermúdez, Francisco de Rojas y Pedro Calderón de la Barca) y *Don Juan de Castro* (de Lope de Vega). Al dramatizar una historia de un español que naufraga en Inglaterra, los encuentros de diferentes mundos-- vivos con muertos y españoles con ingleses--exponen actitudes hacia las fronteras y lo que pasa cuando hay contactos entre mundos opuestos.

En “Inside or outside?: Freedom vs security in *Por el sótano y el torno*” [¿Dentro o fuera?: libertad vs seguridad en *Por el sótano y el torno*] Robert L. Turner III estudia cómo la sociedad española de la temprana modernidad limitaba a las mujeres a un mundo aparte: socialmente, económicamente y físicamente. A través de una metáfora central de la casa como la representación física de una serie de contradicciones evidentes en los mundos en competencia, Tirso expresa los conflictos de ideas, acciones y símbolos enclavados en la política de la sociedad española.

La cuarta y última parte de este volumen, titulada “Stages without Limits / Escenarios sin límites” agrupa cuatro ensayos. Los mismos trazan conexiones entre la comedia, la música, la pedagogía y la religión. Además, brindan recursos teóricos y prácticos que permitirán estudiar el teatro desde otros puntos de vista y llevarlo a nuevos contextos y audiencias más allá del ámbito académico.

Alexander McNair, en “Behind the Veil: Antonio Enríquez Gómez, Kabbalah, and the Immaculate Conception” [Detrás del velo: Antonio Enríquez Gómez, cábala y la Inmaculada Concepción] teoriza la doble interpretación cristiana y judeoconversa de *La escala de la gracia* por Fernando de Zárata (conocido seudónimo de Enríquez Gómez). Según esta lectura bifurcada, la obra mantiene un mensaje religioso y sagrado para los cristianos, mientras a la vez ofrece una alegoría para los conversos viviendo clandestinamente en la España del siglo XVII.

En “Marcar el tiempo: Enmarcar la comedia del siglo XVI al XXI” [Marking Time: Framing the comedia between the 16th and 21st Centuries] Alexander Samson se enfoca en una lectura crítica de “Los mirones,” donde propone que los temas controvertidos de texto siguen incomodando en la actualidad debido a la relevancia que siguen teniendo en nuestra contemporaneidad. El artículo está dividido en dos partes: primero, se discute la verdadera autoría del texto y se discuten teorías renacentistas sobre el humor y la comedia; segundo, explica cómo la dramatización de “Los mirones” ayuda a entender la obra como una pieza escrita para ser leída y no necesariamente dramatizada. Samson anima al lector a cuestionarse qué le causa risa y por qué, a modo de cuestionar y reflexionar sobre los valores sociales, o la falta de ellos, que resaltan en la pieza atribuida a Barbadillo.

En “La comedia entre mundos: La música en las producciones de Luís Vélez de Guevara’s *La serrana de la Vera* por la INAEM/CNTC” [The Comedia Between Worlds: Music in the INAEM/CNTC Production of Luís Vélez de Guevara’s *La serrana de la Vera*] J. Yuri Porras analiza como José Nieto incorpora la música en *La serrana de la Vera*. El ensayo detalla cómo el repertorio musical anacrónico utilizado por Nieto logra comunicar efectivamente varios aspectos performativos e ideológicos de la obra. Se enfoca en ciertas particularidades musicales para explicar, por ejemplo, como la música enfatiza cambios psicológicos del personaje principal, Gila, o para crear suspenso antes de que ésta sea ejecutada. Al final, demuestra cómo la música es un componente esencial de la puesta en escena y cómo la composición musical de Nieto nunca se aparta del tono y final trágico de la obra.

El último artículo de este volumen, “El Siglo de Oro en Tik-Tok” [The Golden Age on Tik-Tok] por Ana Yunuén Castillo Colín, parte

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de la pedagogía crítica influenciada por Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux y Peter McLaren, para explicar cómo textos del siglo de oro se pueden usar en el aula para reflexionar sobre problemas múltiples sociales. La autora describe un proyecto pedagógico conducido en una escuela secundaria en Iztapalapa, comunidad de alto riesgo en Ciudad de México, en el cual se incorporan textos del siglo de oro para discutir temas que aquejan a esa comunidad, como: la violencia de género, el acoso, el abuso sexual y el feminicidio. Además, este ensayo aporta iniciativas concretas que permiten al lector entender cómo enseñar los clásicos para fomentar la conciencia social de los estudiantes y aportar al cambio social dentro de comunidades vulnerables.

IDENTIDADES EN ESCENA /  
IDENTITIES ON STAGE



## LA MURALLA Y EL FOSO EN LA NUMANCIA DE CERVANTES: UNA MIRADA A LA HUMANIDAD DEL OTRO

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**Resumen:** Pocas acciones reflejan el deseo de separar dos mundos como la construcción de un muro. Las murallas son la respuesta al miedo a una invasión no necesariamente militar, sino sobre todo cultural. En el presente ensayo analizo el valor metafórico de la muralla en el drama cervantino *La Numancia*. La omnipresencia de la muralla y el foso que la rodea sirve para describir la identidad hispana a partir de la oposición a un otro, mientras que los continuos intentos de burlar el cerco remarcan la imposibilidad de concebir la nación como una unidad monolítica e inquebrantable. La obra está plagada de cruces literales y simbólicos de fronteras culturales, naturales y artificiales. Mientras unos personajes se afanan por mantener la integridad física del muro, otros luchan por hacerlo permeable. El amor, la fama, la fe o el simple deseo de supervivencia hacen mella en la muralla numantina, el símbolo del excepcionalismo de la nación española. Cervantes mira a los dos lados del muro y dibuja dos mundos que se nos antojan a ratos radicalmente opuestos y a ratos peligrosamente indistinguibles. Desde el muro, Cervantes divisa la otredad, pero también se siente enajenado ante su propia cultura.

**Abstract:** Few actions reflect the desire to separate two worlds as the building of a wall. Walls are the answer to the fear

of not necessarily a military invasion, but mainly a cultural one. In this essay I analyze the metaphorical value of the wall in the Cervantine drama *La Numancia*. The omnipresence of the wall and the moat that surrounds it serve to describe Spanish identity as the result of an opposition to an Other, while at the same time the continuous attempts to escape the siege highlight the impossibility of understanding the nation as a monolithic, unbreakable unity. The play is full of literal and symbolic crossings of cultural, natural and artificial borders. While some characters toil to keep the physical integrity of the wall, others fight to make it permeable. Love, reputation, faith, or the basic need for survival take their toll on the wall of Numancia, the symbol of the exceptionalism of the Spanish nation. Cervantes looks to the two sides of the wall and draws two worlds that at times seem radically different and at times dangerously similar. From atop the wall, Cervantes sights otherness, but also feels alienated from his own culture.

**Palabras Clave / Keywords:** Miguel de Cervantes, Numancia, imperio, muralla, identidad nacional / Miguel de Cervantes, Numancia, empire, wall, national identity

Pocas acciones reflejan el deseo de separar dos mundos como la construcción de un muro. *La Numancia* de Miguel de Cervantes es un drama que se mueve entre dos mundos, dos realidades que a priori se nos presentan como claramente opuestas: por un lado el fuerte ejército romano liderado por un estratega consumado que ansía acrecentar su fama, por el otro todo un pueblo—con sus mujeres, sus niños y sus ancianos—minado por años de guerra y abocado a perecer. Entre ellos se levanta una muralla cuya constante presencia (sobre el escenario y en los versos de los personajes) es muestra palpable de su antagonismo. Este trabajo analiza el valor simbólico de la muralla que rodea a Numancia y el foso que hace cavar Escipión a su alrededor. Partiendo de la premisa de que *La Numancia*, como sostiene Carroll B. Johnson, “se trata de una obra cuya característica principal es la ambigüedad” (310), propongo que ambas construcciones reflejan la complicada interacción entre dos culturas enemigas y su incapacidad de comunicarse. En lugar



de mostrar una oposición maniquea entre buenos y malos, vencedores y vencidos, Cervantes mira a los dos lados del muro y dibuja dos mundos que se nos antojan a ratos radicalmente opuestos y a ratos peligrosamente indistinguibles.

Cuando uno se acerca a la bibliografía referente a *La Numancia*, percibe un interés en tratar de dilucidar la intención última del autor. Durante décadas, vino sosteniéndose que Cervantes concibió *La Numancia* como un texto patriótico en defensa de Felipe II y el catolicismo que conecta el heroísmo y sacrificio de los numantinos con la superioridad moral y militar de la nación española. A partir de los años 80 del pasado siglo, sin embargo, varios críticos pusieron en duda las lecturas tradicionales alegando que la obra revelaba un recelo de la política imperial hispana. Dejando al lado esta controversia, propongo fijar la atención en el drama humano y la interacción entre los dos pueblos, pues, siguiendo la estela de Shifra Armon, considero que “the telos of Cervantes’s play lies neither with Rome nor Numancia, but rather with the circumstance that bound both camps together in time and space, that is, the circumstance of the cerco itself” (17). La crudeza de los hechos presentados y los continuos paralelismos con el presente del autor nos llevan a considerar los efectos de una guerra injusta que se ceba en la población civil, más allá de las circunstancias históricas del específico episodio narrado.

En *La Numancia*, numantinos y romanos se ven a sí mismos como antagonistas y, en su ansia de imponerse frente al enemigo, aumentan su distanciamiento y alienación construyendo dos ingenios militares—el muro y el foso—que, irónicamente, acaban condenando a ambos a no lograr sus sueños. El espectador, que ve lo que ocurre a ambos lados de la muralla, reconoce una semejanza entre ambos pueblos que sus líderes son incapaces de aceptar. Esta semejanza proviene no tanto, aunque también, de elementos culturales compartidos, sino más bien de la percepción humanista y cristiana que Cervantes tiene del hombre. Romanos y numantinos tienen similares sueños, virtudes y pecados. Los romanos, con Escipión a la cabeza, están cegados por su sentimiento de superioridad y son incapaces de reconocer la humanidad de los numantinos, a quienes tratan como bestias encerradas. Los numantinos, por su parte, llegan a un grado tal de desesperación que optan por exter-

minarse a sí mismos. Pese a la separación física y anímica entre los dos pueblos, en los pocos momentos en los que algún personaje traspasa la frontera y confronta cara a cara la realidad del enemigo, éste es capaz de reconocer la humanidad y virtud del otro. Lamentablemente, este reconocimiento llega siempre tarde.

El drama se emplaza en 133 a.C.; Numancia lleva años sufriendo los ataques romanos y cuenta ya con una muralla para su protección. Esta, como cualquier otra muralla defensiva, se concibió con la intención original de vigilar el flujo de viajeros y de proteger a los habitantes de un asedio enemigo. La muralla buscaba, por tanto, establecer una separación física entre aquellos que pertenecían a la ciudad y un otro potencialmente peligroso. Pese a la larga ofensiva romana, Numancia seguía contando con cierto control sobre la ciudad, la muralla y el movimiento de sus ciudadanos. Esta limitada agencia se ve completamente coartada con la llegada de Escipión el Africano (185 a. C.–129 a. C.).<sup>1</sup> Tras una impresionante victoria en Cartago, Escipión recibe el encargo de tomar la plaza celtíbera de Numancia, que tantos quebraderos de cabeza había causado a sus predecesores. Escipión planea echar abajo el muro para tomar la ciudad por la fuerza y terminar lo antes posible con “guerra de curso tan extraño y larga, / y que tantos romanos ha costado” (1007).

El que la muralla permanezca en pie tras tantos años de ofensiva es, para Escipión, una lacra vergonzosa y así se lo hace saber a sus soldados:

De esta ciudad los muros son testigos  
—que aún hoy están cual bien fundada roca—  
de vuestras perezosas fuerzas vanas. (1011)

La fortaleza del muro representa para Escipión la debilidad de sus predecesores en el cargo y la decadencia del ejército romano. Escipión admira el arrojo de los numantinos, porque, siendo “tan pocos españoles y encerrados” (1012), habían sido capaces de “haber vencido con feroces manos / millares de millares de romanos” (1013) durante dieciséis años. Sin embargo, Escipión, como buen

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<sup>1</sup> Aunque la edición de *La Numancia* que uso para las citas emplea el nombre Cipión para el general romano, he optado por referirme a él siempre como Escipión, la variante más común en español para Scipio.

romano, nunca les vio como iguales. Para él los numantinos son bárbaros y por ende culturalmente inferiores. De hecho, considera que el ejército romano no ha sido capaz de aniquilarlos antes porque sus soldados se han entregado a la pereza, el vicio y los placeres propios de bárbaros y afeminados. Escipión da por seguro que, una vez recuperadas las virtudes romanas, sus hombres podrán doblegar a cualquier enemigo:

Estoy con todo esto, tan seguro  
de que al fin mostraréis que sois romanos  
que tengo en nada el defendido muro  
de estos rebeldes bárbaros hispanos. (1014)

En consecuencia, arenga a sus soldados para que se aparten del vicio y así poder lograr la difícil tarea de echar abajo la muralla:

¿Pensáis que solo atierra la muralla  
el ariete de ferrada punta,  
y que solo atropella la batalla  
la multitud de gente y armas junta?  
Si el esfuerzo y cordura no se halla  
.....  
poco aprovechan muchos escuadrones. (1012)

Escipión, no obstante, abandona el plan inicial de derribar el muro y tomar la ciudad por la fuerza tras el primer cruce de la muralla, el de los embajadores numantinos. Con este cambio de opinión, Escipión ignora el valor simbólico que él mismo había atribuido a la muralla y, consecuentemente, rechaza la posibilidad de lograr lo que más ansía: acrecentar su fama.

Cansados de años de contienda y conocedores de la reputación de Escipión y su superioridad militar, los numantinos están dispuestos a firmar la paz y envían dos embajadores a hablar con el general romano. Los numantinos tratan a Escipión con respeto y muestran admiración por su “virtud y valor” (1019). Proponen una solución diplomática que otorgaría a Escipión lo que quería: una resolución rápida y sin más víctimas y la incorporación de Numancia al imperio romano. Los numantinos están dispuestos a aceptar a Escipión como su “señor y amigo” (1019). Escipión, que en un principio

se había mostrado interesado en escuchar a los embajadores y en terminar cuanto antes con una guerra, se deja llevar por sus orgullo y antepone sus deseos personales (aumentar su fama) a su obligación patriótico-militar (anexionar Numancia rápido y con el menor número de bajas posibles). Las buenas intenciones del adversario le enfurecen. Toma la decisión de alargar la contienda hasta aplastar a los numantinos para demostrar su fuerza y rehúsa cualquier negociación futura. Escipión deja claro que no habrá una salida pacífica porque: “no quiero por amigos aceptaros / ni lo seré jamás de vuestra tierra” (1020). Escipión da a entender a los numantinos que seguirán luchando:

De nuevo ejercitad la fuerte diestra  
 .....  
 Seguid la guerra, renovad los daños,  
 salgan de nuevos las valientes haces. (1020)

No obstante, tan pronto como los embajadores cruzan la muralla de vuelta a su hogar, Escipión les traiciona. En realidad no quiere enfrentarse de nuevo en el campo de batalla—“yo pienso hacer que el numantino / nunca a las manos con nosotros venga” (1020)—sino vencer del modo “que más a [su] provecho se convenga” (1020), que no es sino aislar completamente a los numantinos cavando un “hondo foso” (1020) para que no puedan salir a pedir ayuda o abastecerse, y que con ello sucumban “por hambre insufrible” (1021). A partir de ese instante, se produce un cambio sustancial en la percepción que Escipión tiene de los numantinos. Deja de verlos como dignos adversarios para pasar a despreciarlos como animales encerrados.

Romanos y numantinos, pues, se enfrentan a esta nueva fase de la contienda rodeados por un doble círculo de fronteras artificiales que ambos han contribuido a construir y que inhabilitan el contacto y diálogo entre ellos. Plenamente aislados del resto del mundo, los numantinos entran en un proceso de deshumanización que se aprecia en el tratamiento que reciben de Escipión y en su entrega voluntaria a la muerte. Escipión se distancia anímicamente de su adversario. Antes de cavar el foso se refiere a los numantinos con el marbete que cualquier general romano hubiera empleado, “bárbaros,” mas sin embargo, tan pronto renuncia a dialogar con ellos, pasa a tildar-

los de animales. Les espeta así, por ejemplo, “Bestias sois, y por tales encerrados / os tengo donde habéis de ser domados” (1055).

Durante el resto de la obra, Escipión justifica el daño que el sitio está provocando en la población civil, deshumanizando a los numantinos, que ya no son más que fieras descontroladas que necesitan ser sometidas al raciocinio romano:

¡Indómitos, al fin seréis domados,  
porque contra el furor vuestro violento  
se tiene de poner la industria nuestra. (1077)

En consonancia con la animalización que hace del enemigo, Escipión empieza a referirse a la doble circunvalación de la ciudad como una jaula. Se traslada así la culpabilidad de la situación a los numantinos y se les priva de agencia (de libre albedrío, si se quiere). Ya no están voluntariamente recogidos dentro de la muralla para defenderse, sino enjaulados por ser fieras peligrosas. Escipión se apropia también del muro que, una vez rodeado por el foso, pasa a favorecer los planes del ejército romano. A la vez que Escipión deja de tratar a los numantinos como seres humanos, ellos empiezan a interiorizar la animalización y a deshumanizarse. El hambre extrema y la enfermedad se cernen sobre ellos. Llegan a tal punto de desesperación que comenten tres actos imperdonables desde la perspectiva cristiana de Cervantes y su audiencia: el canibalismo, el asesinato de niños y el suicidio. La primera de estas transgresiones es tal tabú que apenas aparece mencionada de pasada.

El plan de rodear todo el perímetro de la muralla con un foso es la concretización del delirio de grandeza de Escipión. El general emprende una obra desmesurada que es imposible de completar pues, como le explica Fabio, no puede construirse nada en la parte de la ciudad que está bañada por el Duero. Pese a que los romanos no pueden cerrar completamente el círculo, Escipión logra, como había planeado, debilitar a los numantinos, pero el foso le priva precisamente de aquello que desea, lograr la fama. Como explica Reed: “Cervantes’s play portrays the institutional victory of Rome as a personal defeat for Cipión, who is deprived of his desired fame by the hands of the indigenous people he attempts to conquer” (71). Ciertamente, Escipión no había contado con el suicidio colectivo que le impedirá llevar prisioneros a Roma que demuestren su vic-

toria. Aún cuando eso no hubiera ocurrido, su plan no le habría permitido alcanzar la gloria militar, ya que el foso veta el enfrentamiento bélico en el campo de batalla.

En la primera escena, Escipión había pedido a sus hombres que entregaran sus obligaciones militares con la promesa de que serían recompensados con honor y riqueza. Ellos cumplen con su parte del trato y su líder les traiciona. Les hace deponer sus armas y usar sus “manos / en romper y cavar la dura tierra” (1021). Ya no se verán cubiertos “de sangre de enemigos” (1021), como corresponde a un soldado, sino “de polvo de los amigos” (1021), como si de meros labradores se tratara. Francisco Vivar lee esta escena como una perturbación del orden natural: “Los numantinos se encuentran arriba en la colina, aislados y sin posibilidad de guerrear; los romanos, abajo en la llanura, socavando la tierra y destruyendo el orden de la naturaleza; es decir, allanando ‘al suelo las más altas sierras,’ como había anunciado Escipión al principio” (15).

Mientras que Escipión falla en reconocer que el foso mina sus opciones de obtener la fama que tanto ansía, los hombres numantinos comprenden que para ganar la gloria es necesario un enfrentamiento en el campo de batalla. Saben que el ejército romano es muy superior y que morirán, pero ansían traspasar las barreras que les separan y tomar las armas para conservar, si no la vida, al menos la dignidad. Un numantino afirma:

O sea por el foso o por la muerte  
de abrir tenemos paso a nuestra vida

.....

En la ciudad podrá muy bien quedarse  
quien gusta de cobarde dar las muestras;  
que yo mi gusto pongo en quedar muerto  
en el cerrado foso o campo abierto. (1032)

Otro urge a sus conciudadanos a morir luchando:

Muriendo excusaremos tanta afrenta;  
mas quien morir de hambre no desea  
arrójese conmigo al foso, y haga  
camino a su remedio con la daga. (1032)

Frente a la falta de concienciación sobre las nefastas consecuencias del sitio por parte de Escipión, los numantinos notan pronto que el muro que debía protegerlos es su cárcel y que ellos mismos han contribuido a su trágico destino.

Mientras conservan alguna esperanza, los hombres numantinos sopesan tres opciones que podrían llevar a la salvación de al menos parte de la población. Las tres requieren salir fuera del muro. La primera es pedir ayuda a otro pueblo hispano, aunque pronto se dan cuenta de que es imposible burlar la línea de defensa romana. La segunda es el duelo que rechazan los romanos, sobre el que volveré más adelante. Por último Teógenes propone derribar el muro a sabiendas de que esto no les permitirá vencer. Teógenes clama: “el enemigo muro sea desecho / salgamos a morir a la campaña” (1057), y su amigo Caravino concuerda con él entusiasmado: “Morir quiero rompiendo el fuerte muro / y deshacelle por mi mano todo” (1057). Nótese como el muro ha pasado de ser seña de la identidad numantina a un enemigo que conviene destruir completamente. Como ocurre con el plan de pedir ayuda, este tampoco llega a ponerse en práctica. En esta ocasión la causa es que los hombres numantinos saben que sus mujeres se lo impedirían, porque no quieren quedarse solas con sus hijos en la ciudad a merced de los soldados romanos.

Al procurar aislarse de o aislar a un otro, romanos y numantinos han forjado barreras artificiales y dañinas que coartan su libertad y que desembocan en una guerra total que se ceba en la población civil. El sufrimiento de los sitiados es extremo y la obra se recrea en la crudeza del daño que experimentan los más débiles. Asistimos a escenas terroríficas en que niños, mujeres y ancianos mueren. El sitio de Numancia, desde el momento en que Escipión se niega a luchar y se empeña en matar de hambre a la población, se convierte en una guerra injusta. La táctica de Escipión deslegitima su empresa.

La cuestión sobre la legitimidad de la guerra es una que había venido tratándose desde antiguo. En la Europa cristiana, continuamente envuelta en enfrentamientos bélicos internacionales, resultaba imprescindible encontrar la fórmula que conjugara el sexto mandamiento de la ley de Dios, “No matarás,” con la necesidad que los estados tenían de llevar a sus hombres a la guerra. Se desarrolló así la teoría de la *bellum iustum*. El texto más influyente a este respecto fue la *Ciudad de Dios* de San Agustín. El filósofo parte de

la premisa de que la guerra es intrínsecamente negativa y que, por ende el hombre debe aspirar a la paz, pero comprende que debido al pecado original, la paz eterna es imposible en la tierra y que, por tanto, lo mejor que se puede hacer es evitar las guerras injustas. No entraré aquí en cuáles considera San Agustín causas justas para declarar una guerra, pues no viene demasiado al caso.<sup>2</sup> Me detendré sin embargo en la afirmación de que cualquier guerra se torna injusta si no tiene equidad y moderación. San Agustín presta especial atención al daño que la guerra inflige en las víctimas civiles (libro I, cap. 5). Desde esta perspectiva, el acto de encerrar a toda la población y someterla al hambre y la enfermedad cuando existía la posibilidad de solventar la guerra mediante acciones diplomáticas es desproporcionada y por tanto deslegítima la empresa romana. Escipión hace del enfrentamiento con Numancia una cuestión personal. Lo único que le importa es ganar fama y destrozarse al adversario. El mandato del Senado romano pasa a ser para él secundario. Michael Armstrong-Roche ya demostró que el deseo de fama de Escipión (189) es lo que torna la contienda en una guerra injusta. Armstrong-Roche afirma que Escipión es un “cautionary counter-example” (189) y “a parable for the collapse of an idealistic humanist discourse sacrificed for the pursuit of worldly glory” (189).

En esta ocasión, como de costumbre, Cervantes mantiene una posición ambigua sobre el debate de si existe o no la guerra justa, o de cuáles son los límites que marcan la distinción. De lo que no deja ninguna duda es de que las circunstancias específicas del tipo de sitio que se nos presenta sobre el escenario son extremas e innecesariamente crueles. La tercera y cuarta jornada se detienen en detalles horribles que se acumulan uno tras otro para crear una sensación apocalíptica. Cervantes quiere que el espectador se sienta incómodo. No hay, desde una perspectiva cristiana, justificación posible para el horror que se nos presenta.

Asistimos a un drama humano que no es simplemente la historia de Numancia, sino el drama de los ciudadanos más débiles en una situación de sitio. Existe una clara expectativa de que el espectador extrapole lo que ve sobre el escenario a otros conflictos similares. Prueba de ello es la incorporación de las figuras alegóricas

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<sup>2</sup> Para un estudio detallado sobre el concepto de la guerra justa en San Agustín, véase Kakarieka Siliute.



de Hambre, Enfermedad y Guerra, que no se limitan a comentar el evento histórico concreto, sino que generalizan sus opiniones sobre el sufrimiento humano en circunstancias de opresión extrema.

Esto ha llevado a varios críticos a considerar la posibilidad de que *La Numancia* sea en realidad una metáfora de hechos contemporáneos, es decir, que el enfrentamiento entre numantinos y romanos refleje alguno de los frentes bélicos en los que España estaba envuelta en época de Cervantes. Willard F. King fue uno de los primeros en establecer una relación entre *La Numancia* y acontecimientos contemporáneos. King ve en la obra una crítica a las acciones del Duque de Alba en Flandes o la represión de los araucanos en Chile. Siguiendo la estela de King, Johnson arguye que Cervantes tendría en mente la guerra en Flandes y eventos cercanos tales como los cercos de Haarlem (1572–1573) y Leiden (1574) o el saqueo de Amberes (1576) (1980, 88). Alfredo Hermenegildo, por su parte, considera que existe un paralelismo con la cruel represión de los moriscos de Granada (1568–1570). Otros críticos apuntan a la posibilidad de que más que centrarse en comentar una instancia concreta, Cervantes estaría comentando la política imperialista española en general. En esta vena se encuentra Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce, quien defiende que podemos ver la obra como una justificación y ensalzamiento del imperialismo hispano. Aaron Kahn mantiene una postura diametralmente opuesta, la de que el drama es una condena generalizada a las prácticas imperiales españolas (573).

Si bien es cierto que, desde el marco moral del humanismo cristiano, el tipo de guerra que Escipión impone es deplorable, también debemos aceptar que son igualmente problemáticas varias de las resoluciones adoptadas por los numantinos. También ellos cometen los más atroces crímenes y pecados (canibalismo, suicidio, asesinato de bebés, profanación de cadáveres). El drama humano al que se ven sometidos los numantinos parte de la hamartia de Escipión,<sup>3</sup> se ve amplificado por su propia resolución a morir. Los numantinos podrían haber salvado la vida (y desde una perspectiva cristiana el alma) de haberse rendido, pero sus líderes decretan una masacre colectiva que, como indica Armstrong-Roche, se ceba en la población civil más vulnerable: “Rather than give quarter especially to women,

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<sup>3</sup> Sobre el tema de la hamartia en la tragedia, véanse los trabajos de Jane Tar y Frederick de Armas.

children, and the elderly, the senate singles them out for murder” (217). Encerrados en su propio muro, los numantinos dirigen su rabia contra sus compatriotas.

El hecho de que los numantinos no solo se suiciden sino que además maten a aquellos que no pueden (o no quieren) suicidarse, sumado a la razón por la que deciden morir, resta heroicidad a la situación. En este punto disiento de lecturas como la de Francisco Vivar quien considera que “los actos de los numantinos y su arte de morir son análogos a la muerte del mártir cristiano y tienen su modelo en la crucifixión de Jesucristo y su resurrección que triunfa sobre la muerte.” (20). Los numantinos no se autoinmolan en defensa de su fe o en busca de la salvación eterna. No son mártires. Los numantinos se sacrifican en aras de lograr la fama terrenal y de mantener su independencia. Al igual que Escipión, cometen actos atroces para que su nombre perviva. Más aún, un mártir es aquel que muere en defensa de la fe o al negarse a renunciar a su dios. Consecuentemente, los numantinos no pueden ser considerados mártires, pues profesan la misma religión que sus invasores. Cervantes hace de los numantinos fieles seguidores de los dioses romanos, una alteración histórica que no puede pasarse por alto. Cervantes, que intenta dotar de verosimilitud a la obra indicando, por ejemplo, que los soldados romanos deben aparecer “armados a lo antiguo, sin arcabuces” (1010), introduce un grave anacronismo que no se limita a una mención de pasada. Al no haber un trasfondo religioso en la contienda, Cervantes deslegitima completamente la inusitada crueldad de los hechos narrados. Esto no implica que no haya continuos paralelismos religiosos. No me detendré en ellos pues han sido ampliamente estudiados.

La creencia de los numantinos en el panteón romano no es el único anacronismo significativo. El otro es la muralla misma. El muro que rodea la Numancia de ficción, en lugar de ser una empalizada como correspondería a un poblado celtíbero en el año 133 a.C., es de piedra y tiene altas torres a la manera de las murallas que aún existían en muchas ciudades europeas del XVI. Según Urszula Aszyk “el propósito de Cervantes no era el de reconstruir los sucesos históricos del año 133 a. C., sino —al aludir a estos— hacer que el espectador los vinculase con la España imperial de su tiempo” (17). Al mostrarnos una ofensiva militar que se asemeja a sitios contempo-

ráneos, como argumenta Armon, Cervantes “granted readers access to the ‘terrible beauty’ of foreign wars” y “permitted the audience to admire the lethal implements of siegecraft: its fortifications and punishing duration, as measured on the relentless clock of starvation and despair” (21). La táctica militar sufrió alteraciones sustanciales en el siglo XVI debido a la generalización del uso de armas de fuego. Las fortificaciones cobraron mayor relevancia y los ataques a la población civil aumentaron. George Rothrock resume así este cambio: “field battles were rarely fought and the preponderance of military effort was absorbed in the attack and defense of fortified places or in maneuvers to pose the threat of such an attack” (v). Aunque en Numancia obviamente no hay artillería, la ofensiva de Escipión sobre una ciudad fortificada y las consecuencias que ésta tiene para la población civil serían reconocibles para una audiencia o lector contemporáneos.

Queda claro, pues, que la muralla y el foso actúan a lo largo del texto como metáfora del conflicto en sí mismo y del antagonismo entre dos pueblos que desemboca en tragedia. La muralla y el foso buscan separar completamente a romanos y numantinos, pero, incluso después de la construcción del foso, hay cinco instancias en el drama en que alguien traspasa la frontera artificial dando lugar a un encuentro entre enemigos. Uno de estos encuentros se produce a nivel, digamos, oficial. Se trata del momento en que los numantinos intentan negociar una salida diplomática al conflicto por segunda vez. Los otros cuatro revierten el discurso de animalización y deshumanización empleado por Escipión. En estos casos, los romanos dejan de verse a sí mismos como incuestionablemente superiores e intentan ver la realidad desde la perspectiva del enemigo. Me refiero a la salida de Menandro y Leoncio a robar pan, el diálogo entre Lira y un soldado, la entrada de los romanos a Numancia tras la victoria y la caída del cuerpo de Bariato.

Como veremos, en los cuatro saltos de la muralla en los que se produce un contacto directo entre la población civil numantina y los soldados romanos, estos últimos deponen el discurso oficial de desprecio hacia el otro y reconocen los valores de sus adversarios. Por el contrario, Escipión mantiene siempre una distancia física y anímica con los numantinos. Al inicio de la tercera jornada, Escipión se está vanagloriando del progreso de su ofensiva, “En forma estoy contento

en mirar cómo / ... esta libre nación soberbia domo” (1052), cuando de repente suena una trompeta:

Oye, señor, que de Numancia suena  
el son de una trompeta, y me asiguro  
que decirte algo desde allá se ordena,  
pues el salir acá lo estorba el muro.  
Caravino se ha puesto en una almena  
y una señal ha hecho de seguro;  
lleguemos más cerca. (1053)

Los numantinos son quienes, una vez más, tratan de establecer un diálogo. Subido a la muralla y blandiendo una bandera blanca, Caravino pide hablar con Escipión. Esta vez la muralla literalmente entorpece la comunicación. A petición de Mario, los romanos no se acercan suficientemente. Caravino, que no está seguro de que le oigan bien, ruega que Escipión se arrime al foso, pues no le distingue en la distancia. Escipión se mantiene en su puesto y le dice que hable desde donde está. El gesto es indicación de que no piensa ceder en nada. Escipión menosprecia hasta tal punto a los numantinos que no les ofrece paso franco a su mensajero. A Caravino no le queda más opción que presentar su propuesta desde lo alto del muro: un duelo singular entre un soldado de cada nación. Escipión no se toma en serio las palabras de Caravino, “Donaire es lo que dices, risa, juego” (1055), y vuelve a llamar “bestias” (1055) a sus oponentes. Escipión ni siquiera considera la propuesta de Caravino y se marcha sin más. Caravino, que hasta aquel instante había guardado la compostura y tratado a Escipión con respeto, pierde los nervios y lanza una ristra de insultos que los romanos ya no escuchan:

¡Pérfidos, desleales, fementidos,  
cruels, revoltosos y tiranos,  
ingratos, cudiciosos, malnacidos,  
pertinaces, feroces y villános,  
adúlteros, infames, conocidos  
por de industriosas mas cobardes manos! (1055–1056)

En un soliloquio, Caravino advierte a Escipión que si sigue empeñado en privar de sustento a los numantinos no alcanzará la fama

que tanto ansía, pero Escipión ya no está allí para escucharle. Desde el momento en que el líder romano rechazó la primera propuesta de paz hasta que vea caer el cuerpo de Bariato, el muro y el foso se interponen siempre entre él y su enemigo.

El desdén de Escipión hacia los numantinos y la separación física entre ambos contrasta con las interacciones que se producen entre los numantinos y los soldados romanos. Una de las partes más emotivas del texto es la historia de amor entre Lira y Marandro. Los dos jóvenes están prometidos en matrimonio, pero sus nupcias han sido pospuestas hasta que termine el conflicto que, los dos son conscientes, nunca llegará. Lira, que ya ha visto morir a sus familiares más cercanos, está cerca de seguir el mismo camino. Su amado Marandro no puede resistir el dolor de verla en tal estado y decide arriesgar su vida saltando el muro para traerle algo de pan. Su amigo Leoncio se ofrece a acompañarle, aunque saben que tienen pocas posibilidades de cruzar el muro, el foso y la línea de defensa romana, robar el pan y regresar con vida.

El heroísmo de Marandro y Leoncio se ve amplificado por la admiración que sus actos despiertan entre los mismos soldados a los que han ido a robar. Su escaramuza no se muestra sobre el escenario, sino que es narrada por un soldado romano, Quinto. Quinto cuenta que dos numantinos desesperados por el hambre han llegado hasta el campamento. Allí han logrado matar al menos a tres romanos y dejado a muchos maltrechos, antes de que uno de ellos fuera abatido y el otro escapara con algo de comida. En su narración Quinto muestra admiración por el arrojo y destreza del enemigo. Comprende qué les llevó a actuar así y no les guarda rencor ni se siente avergonzado de que dos numantinos hambrientos hayan provocado tal caos.

Lo que Quinto ha visto no son las bestias bárbaras de las que habla Escipión, sino dos hombres valientes y desesperados. Escipión, sin embargo, no ha presenciado la escena y mantiene su perspectiva. Juzga la reyerta una prueba más de la bestialidad de los numantinos y de la necesidad de reprimirlos:

Si estando deshambridos y encerrados  
muestran tan demasiado atrevimiento,  
¿qué hicieran siendo libres y enterados[?]

.....

¡Indómitos, al fin seréis domados! (1076–1077)

Marandro y Leoncio son los últimos numantinos que logran salir vivos de la muralla, pero su hazaña no logra el fruto deseado porque ya es imposible reparar la brecha que separa a romanos y numantinos. A Leoncio lo matan en el campamento romano. Marandro regresa a Numancia con el pan, aunque muere al poco desangrado a los pies de Lira. Ella se resigna a morir también y se niega a comer el pan romano mojado en la sangre de su amado.

Leoncio y Marandro son los únicos numantinos que cruzan el foso y sus muertes son las únicas heroicas tanto desde un punto de vista militar (mueren a consecuencia de las heridas que le inflige el enemigo) como del cristiano (dan la vida en un intento de salvar la de alguien más débil). Al cruzar el muro, Marandro y Leoncio encuentran su muerte, pero también su salvación. Su temprana muerte les libra además de participar en los atroces pecados que ocurren poco después: los asesinatos de niños y los suicidios colectivos.

Después de Marandro y Leoncio, los numantinos ya solo parecen de hambre o se suicidan. Mientras Lira llora sobre los cadáveres de su amado y su hermano, aparece en escena un soldado romano persiguiendo a una mujer para matarla. No se sabe cómo ni por qué ha cruzado la muralla, pero esto le permite percibir de primera mano la realidad de los numantinos, algo que le es vedado a sus compañeros. El soldado anónimo y Lira entablan una conversación, la única conversación personal de la obra que tiene lugar entre dos enemigos. Lira le ruega que la dé muerte a ella, en lugar de a la otra mujer, pues ya no le queda razón alguna para seguir viviendo. Él se enfrenta entonces a una disyuntiva: actuar de acuerdo a lo que de él se espera como legionario romano (matar a Lira) o dejarse llevar por sus sentimientos:

Puesto que es decreto del Senado  
que ninguna mujer quede con vida,  
.....  
Yo, señora, no soy tan mal mirado  
que me precie de ser vuestro homicida. (1082)

El cambio de posición del soldado resulta del contacto personal, no necesariamente de sus principios morales. No habría tenido ningún problema en matar a la otra mujer, que no era para él más que una idea abstracta, un objetivo a eliminar. Lira, al dirigirse a él,

se convierte en un ser humano concreto. El soldado se conmociona con su presencia física (su hermosura):

¿cuál será el bravo pecho acelerado  
que en ese hermoso vuestro dé herida?  
.....  
Que yo solo nací para adoraros. (1082)

Se establece entre ellos un puente emocional que hubiera sido imposible de haber estado separados por la muralla. Este vínculo de unión evita, aunque sólo sea temporalmente, la muerte de dos mujeres inocentes. Las palabras del romano sacan a Lira de su ensimismamiento. Enfoca ahora su atención en los cadáveres de los dos hombres que ama, su hermano y su prometido, que yacen a sus pies. Se da cuenta que debe darles sepultura y pide ayuda al soldado. Él accede:

Con condición que en el camino cuentes  
quién a tu amado esposo y caro hermano  
trujo a los postrimeros accidentes. (1083)

El soldado, claro está, sabe que la dureza del sitio ha causado la muerte de los dos hombres, pero necesita racionalizar el horror que percibe y distanciarse anímicamente porque no puede, o no quiere, verse a sí mismo como parte de la colectividad asesina. Lira le responde “Amigo, ya el hablar no está en mi mano” (1083). Lira está ya demasiado débil para contar ninguna historia. El diálogo sincero entre dos enemigos ya no es posible. La muralla ha creado una brecha insalvable entre ellos. Ambos abandonan el escenario cargando con los cadáveres, pero en silencio. El romano nunca llegará a comprender completamente a su adversario.

El silencio entre Lira y el soldado romano anticipa el silencio en el que queda sumida Numancia tras el suicidio colectivo:

Ya no parece gente en la muralla  
ni suenan las usadas centinelas;  
todo está en calma y en silencio puesto,  
como si en paz tranquila y sosegada  
estuviesen los fieros numantinos. (1091)

La escena final se nos narra desde la perspectiva de los romanos y tiene lugar fuera de la muralla. El espectador queda del lado del asesino. Mario se ofrece a subir al muro para ver qué ocurre. Antes de confrontar las crudas consecuencias del sitio, Mario sigue hablando de los numantinos con desprecio:

... yo me ofrezco  
de subir sobre el muro ...  
... solo por ver aquello que en Numancia  
hacen nuestros soberbios enemigos. (1091)

Temeroso de lo que pueda encontrar, pide sus armas y se encomienda a los dioses. Sube a lo alto del muro, mira dentro y su actitud cambia completamente. Los romanos han logrado su objetivo, pero Mario no puede sentir orgullo ni alegría ante el trágico espectáculo. Sus primeras palabras revelan un repentino shock: “¡Oh, santos dioses! ¿Qué es esto?” (1092). Mario se limita a describir lo que ve dentro de la muralla:

de sangre  
un rojo lago y ... mil cuerpos  
tendidos por las calles ...  
de mil agudas puntas traspasados. (1092)

Escipión, principal culpable del desastre, tampoco celebra la victoria ni se apresura a comprobar que realmente ha concluido la lid. Finalmente puede cruzar la muralla, pero no lo hace. Ordena a Mario y Yгурта a cruzar el muro, mientras él se queda sujetando la escala por la que suben. Yгурта experimenta la misma sensación que Mario: “Caliente sangre baña todo el suelo; / cuerpos muertos ocupan plaza y calles” (1093). No quiere dar la espalda a la carnicería de la que ha participado. Pide permiso para traspasar el muro “Y verlo todo” (1093). Mario y Yгурта se sitúan así al otro lado de la muralla, del lado de las víctimas. El enemigo pasa a ser el prójimo.

Escipión permanece en el lado romano, impassible y preocupado solo por su interés personal. Los miles de muertos le son indiferentes con tal que quede alguno vivo para poder cobrarse “el triunfo, en Roma / de haber domado esta nación soberbia” (1093). Mario



regresa entonces de caminar entre los cadáveres. Su percepción del otro ha cambiado radicalmente. Comprende que los numantinos son quienes verdaderamente merecen la fama que ansiaba Escipión:

Del lamentable fin y triste historia  
de la ciudad invicta de Numancia  
merece ser eterna la memoria.

.....  
Nuestros designios han salido vanos,  
pues ha podido más su honroso intento  
que toda la potencia de romanos. (1094)

Mario es portador de una noticia devastadora para los planes y el ego de su general:

Y a un solo numantino no he hallado  
que poderte traer vivo, siquiera  
para que fueras de él informado. (1095)

Escipión comprende entonces que ya no tendrá un rehén que presentar ante el senado. Para Mario ese detalle es ahora irrelevante. Lo que él desea es comprender lo que ha ocurrido, escuchar a un superviviente contar su lado de la historia, pero ya es imposible. Mario y Roma nunca llegarán a saber lo que de verdad ocurrió, porque ambos pueblos estuvieron separados por un muro.

El sueño de Escipión se desvanece. En un acto de introspección sin precedentes, Escipión reconoce sus propios errores y la humanidad del enemigo:

¿Estaba, por ventura, el pecho mío  
de bárbara arrogancia y muertes lleno,  
y de piedad justísima vacío? (1095)

La solidaridad le dura poco. En cuanto Yugurta le informa de que quizás quede un numantino vivo en la torre, revierte en su egoísmo:

Si eso fuese verdad, eso bastaba  
para triunfar, en Roma, de Numancia,  
que es lo que más agora deseaba. (1096)

Escipión y los suyos se acercan a la torre en la que está Bariato. Escipión, que nunca quiso escuchar al enemigo y que por tanto no comprende sus motivaciones, procura convencer al muchacho de que no se suicide ofreciéndole riqueza. Bariato se lanza al vacío. Él es el último numantino en cruzar la muralla. Cuando su cuerpo toca el suelo romano, mueren él y Numancia. Finalmente, Escipión ve con sus propios ojos morir a un civil numantino. Ahora sí se da cuenta que quienes él creía meros animales eran gentes nobles y loables:

¡Oh nunca vi tan memorable hazaña!  
¡Niño de anciano y valeroso pecho,  
que no sólo a Numancia, mas a España  
has adquirido gloria en este hecho:  
con tu viva virtud y heroica, extraña,  
queda muerto y perdido mi derecho! (1099)

La obra se cierra con las palabras triunfales de Fama que anuncia un futuro glorioso para la España heredera de los valerosos numantinos, mas sus palabras se ven nubladas por las circunstancias. Irónicamente, y por mucho que Duero, España y Fama así lo anuncien, los españoles del XVI no pueden ser herederos de los numantinos porque todos los numantinos murieron. Igualmente problemático resulta establecer un lazo simbólico, pues el acto que da fama a los numantinos, el valor de que hablan las figuras alegóricas, proviene de cometer un pecado capital: el suicidio. Podría argüirse que para los numantinos quizás no haya en esto un problema moral, pero para un español del XVI no cabe duda sobre la cuestión. Si Numancia es la raíz del imperio español, entonces este se funda en un acto imperdonable a los ojos de Dios. Cuando el drama concluye, lo único que queda de Numancia es su muralla. El monólogo triunfalista de Fama en la última escena tiene como marco escénico un ejército que ha vencido pero no recibirá gloria, el cadáver de un niño, la muralla y el foso. Escipión y sus hombres regresarán a Roma con las manos vacías y la única herencia tangible que permanecerá en el territorio hispano es el muro de Numancia, el símbolo de la imposibilidad de comunicación entre dos pueblos y la causa de la debacle final de ambos.

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## DISIDENCIA E IDENTIDAD EN UNA COMEDIA MARRANA: *LA PRUDENTE* *ABIGAÍL* DE ANTONIO ENRÍQUEZ GÓMEZ

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**Resumen:** Carl Gebhardt definió al marrano como “un católico sin fe, un judío sin saber, aunque un judío por voluntad.” El marrano tiene la necesidad de recurrir a textos que comparte con los cristianos para poder reconstruir su enseñanza hebraica y, sobre todo, para poder construir una identidad propia. La necesidad de construir una identidad propia a partir de un texto compartido está dramatizada en *La prudente Abigaíl* de Antonio Enríquez Gómez (1600-63) —una comedia impresa por primera vez en las *Academias morales de las Musas* en el Burdeos de 1642 y ubicada al final de la *Academia II*—. Para su obra, Enríquez Gómez sigue fielmente el *Primer Libro de Samuel*, pero no se olvida de incluir la circuncisión, la abstención del consumo de carne de cerdo y los malsines. Me atrevo a proponer la interpretación de esta comedia bíblica como una perfecta comedia marrana: “católica sin fe, judía sin saber, aunque judía por voluntad” —y aquí retomo las palabras de Gebhardt—. En una obra que pone en escena, con exactitud, un relato bíblico, se encuentra una gran riqueza de creencias y de prácticas en la que domina la tolerancia religiosa y la convivencia pacífica: se combaten la arrogancia, la venganza, la avaricia, la codicia y la envidia de gobernantes, poderosos y ricos; y triunfa la prudencia femenina, la lealtad, la amistad, la compasión y el perdón, y esto con el futuro enlace matrimonial entre

Abigaíl y David. Defiendo, entonces, que *La prudente Abigaíl* otorga voz teatral a la disidencia marrana y, asimismo, es un significativo ejemplo de disimulación. Disidencia y disimulación convierten esta obra en una comedia de inusual modernidad.

**Abstract:** Carl Gebhardt defined the *Marrano* as “a Catholic without belief and a Jew without knowledge, but in will a Jew.” The Marrano has the need to use texts shared with Christians in order to reconstruct his Hebraic learning and, above all, to be able to construct an identity of his own. The need to construct an identity from a shared text is dramatized in Antonio Enríquez Gómez’s *La prudente Abigaíl*—a play first printed in the *Academias morales de las Musas* in the Bordeaux of 1642 and placed at the end of *Academia II*. For his play, Enríquez Gómez (1600-63) faithfully follows the *First Book of Samuel*, but does not forget to include the circumcision, the abstention from the consumption of pork, and the *malsines*. I interpret this biblical story as a perfect marrano play: “Catholic without belief and Jew without knowledge, but in will Jew”—using again Gebhardt’s words. In a play that accurately stages a biblical story, we find a great wealth of beliefs and practices in which religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence dominate: arrogance, revenge, greed, covetousness and envy of rulers, the powerful and the rich are fought; and feminine prudence, loyalty, friendship, compassion and forgiveness triumph, and this with the future marriage between Abigaíl and David. I argue, then, that *La prudente Abigaíl* gives theatrical voice to the *Marrano* dissidence and, likewise, is a significant example of dissimulation. Dissidence and dissimulation make this text a play of unusual modernity.

**Palabras clave / Keywords:** *Marrano*, comedia, *La prudente Abigaíl*, disidencia, Biblia / *Marrano*, comedia, *La prudente Abigaíl*, dissidence, Bible

Soy de esos marranos que ni siquiera se llaman judíos en lo hondo de su corazón, no para ser marranos autenticados en una u otra parte de la frontera pública, sino porque dudan de todo.  
—Jacques Derrida, *Circonfesión*

## Una comedia marrana: Católica sin fe y judía sin saber

Carl Gebhardt definió al marrano como “católico sin fe, judío sin saber, y no obstante judío por voluntad” (136).<sup>4</sup> El marrano tiene la necesidad de recurrir a textos que comparte con los cristianos para poder reconstruir su enseñanza hebraica (Lomba Falcón 78) y, sobre todo, para poder construir una identidad propia y segura. La necesidad de construir una identidad propia a partir de un texto compartido está dramatizada en *La prudente Abigail* de Antonio Enríquez Gómez (1600-63) —una comedia impresa por primera vez en las *Academias morales de las Musas* en el Burdeos de 1642 y ubicada al final de la *Academia II* (Martos Pérez 155)—.<sup>5</sup> Para su obra, Enríquez Gómez sigue fielmente el *Primer Libro de Samuel*, pero no se olvida de incluir la circuncisión, la abstención del consumo de carne de cerdo y los malsines.<sup>6</sup> Me atrevo a interpretar esta comedia bíblica como una perfecta comedia marrana: “católica sin fe, judía sin saber, y no obstante judía por voluntad”—y aquí retomo las palabras de Gebhardt. Como autor marrano, Enríquez Gómez llevará una forma de vida ambivalente en la que la duplicidad prevalece. Como comedia marrana, *La prudente Abigail* mantiene la misma duplicidad y ambivalencia de su propio creador. En una obra que pone en escena, con exactitud, un relato bíblico, está dramatizada una gran riqueza de creencias y de prácticas en la que dominan la tolerancia religiosa y la convivencia pacífica: se

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<sup>4</sup> El término *marrano/a* se utilizaba despectivamente en el pasado. Ahora, “the originally prejudiced word *Marrano* is used as neutral scholarly term” (Yovel xvi). Aunque se pueden encontrar varias definiciones de *marrano/a* palabras como *dualidad*, *híbrido*, *parcial* aparecen constantemente en estas definiciones. Benzion Netanyahu alega que los marranos “en vísperas del establecimiento de la Inquisición ... estaban *semigentilizados*” (177). El prefijo *semi* se sumaría a la duplicidad que define al marrano.

<sup>5</sup> Nechama Kramer-Hellinx afirma que *La prudente Abigail* probablemente “fue escrita entre 1622 y 1636” (“La lealtad” 2).

<sup>6</sup> *Malsín* es “seguramente la forma más antigua para designar al soplón ya que Corominas la registra en esta acepción como siendo de 1307, ‘delator’, ‘que siembra discordia’. Del hebreo ‘malšín’, ‘denunciador’ (derivado de ‘lašon’, ‘lengua’, ‘lenguaje’) ... en Covarrubias: ‘El que de secreto avisa a la justicia de algunos delitos con mala intención y por su propio interés’ ... en otras acepciones como ‘testigo falso’, ‘maleante’ o ‘chismoso y malintencionado’, todas ellas relacionadas más o menos con el hecho de ‘delatar y levantar chismes y líos’” (Alonso Hernández 318).

combaten la arrogancia, la venganza, la avaricia, la codicia y la envidia de gobernantes, poderosos y ricos; y triunfa la prudencia femenina, la lealtad, la amistad, la compasión y el perdón, y esto gracias al futuro enlace matrimonial entre Abigaíl y David. Avanzo ya mismo mi hipótesis de interpretación: *La prudente Abigaíl* otorga voz teatral a la disidencia marrana y, asimismo, es un significativo ejemplo de disimulación.<sup>7</sup> Disidencia y disimulación convierten esta obra en una comedia de inusual modernidad. Presento a continuación un resumen breve de la comedia, para luego proceder al análisis de los elementos de *La prudente Abigaíl* que la harían perteneciente a la categoría de lo que llamaré “comedias marranas”.

La comedia comienza con el encuentro donde David le confirma su lealtad a Saúl. De ahí, se pasa al desierto, donde David y su ejército sienten gran extenuación por la dureza del terreno. David envía diez de sus soldados a la finca de Nabal para pedirle comestibles a este. Nabal les niega los víveres de mala manera. Nacor oye la conversación y le cuenta el suceso a Abigaíl, la esposa de Nabal. Sin comentarle nada a su esposo, Abigaíl decide enviar los comestibles. David planea vengarse por la rudeza de Nabal y por su negativa, pero cambia de idea con la llegada de Abigaíl y de los víveres. Mientras tanto, en la hacienda de Nabal se celebra una fiesta en la que el hacendado bebe demasiado y se queda dormido. Nabal despierta de su ebriedad y Abigaíl confiesa que le ha enviado los víveres a David. Nabal se encoleriza y muere de apoplejía. La comedia concluye cuando David le pide a Abigaíl que en un tiempo prudente se despose con él, y ella accede —con sumo agrado.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sigo la definición de *disidencia* que presenta Diego Tatián para describir a un Spinoza disidente: “desvío de lo preasignado, de lo que debía pensarse o creerse, del curso biográfico, filosófico o político que debía seguirse, disidir es romper con lo impuesto y con las imposturas” (13). Para la definición de *disimulación*, sigo las palabras de Fernando Alvia de Castro: “callar y encubrir aquello que es como si no fuese” (cit. Fernández-Santamaría 748).

<sup>8</sup> Para un resumen más extenso y dividido por jornadas, véanse las páginas 157 y 158 del estudio de María Dolores Martos Pérez. Todas las citas de *La prudente Abigaíl* pertenecen a la edición de esta misma autora. El estudio (pp. 153-68) y la edición (pp. 555-654) se encuentran en el primer volumen de *Academias morales de las Musas*.



## De *Shmuel I a Primer Libro de Samuel: Una doble identidad para לייגיבא / Abigail*

Antes de pasar a la disimulación y a la disidencia desarrolladas en la comedia, me dispongo a advertir los paralelismos entre el autor y esta obra en concreto. Empiezo con el propio Enríquez Gómez del que se posee más información sobre su vida que sobre su obra.<sup>9</sup> A la crítica le ha interesado un dramaturgo que se caracteriza por su doble identidad, por su disidencia y por su disimulación. Enríquez Gómez nació probablemente en 1600 en Cuenca. Huyó a Francia en 1636 o principios de 1637 y vivió en Burdeos y en Ruan.<sup>10</sup> En 1649 regresa a España, concretamente a Granada. Tras un año, se instala en Sevilla y es detenido por la Inquisición en 1661.<sup>11</sup> Muere por enfermedad el 19 de marzo de 1663 en la cárcel del castillo de Triana, sede del Santo Oficio (González Cañal 292). La doble identidad del autor se aúna a los dos periodos de su vida en los que se dedica a escribir obras de teatro. De hecho, su actividad teatral se efectúa durante los dos periodos en España —en Francia cultivará otros

<sup>9</sup> Su obra no ha cautivado tanto el interés de la crítica como su vida. Más aún: hasta hoy, no he encontrado ningún artículo ni capítulo de libro que analice exclusivamente *La prudente Abigail*. Dejando de lado el estudio y la edición a la que me refería anteriormente de Martos Pérez, Kramer-Hellinx ha escrito un artículo en el que estudia conjuntamente *La prudente Abigail* y otra comedia de Enríquez Gómez, el cual lleva por título “*La prudente Abigail y A lo que obliga el honor: Honor, prudencia, amor, celos y muerte. Dos comedias de Antonio Enríquez Gómez (1600-1663)*”. Asimismo, en academia.edu se encuentra un documento subido por la misma autora, pero que parece no haber sido editado todavía, ni publicado en una revista o en un libro. Este documento se titula “La lealtad, el honor y la prudencia en *La prudente Abigail*”.

<sup>10</sup> Como muy bien señala uno/a de los evaluadores, no es azaroso que Enríquez Gómez se exiliara en Burdeos ya que en esta ciudad francesa se había establecido desde el siglo XVI una comunidad conversa española.

<sup>11</sup> Pedro Lomba Falcón advierte que el marrano se reconoce en su movilidad: “cambia de residencia, emigra o se exilia, según la presión política y social del lugar que habita sea más o menos intensa. Su vida se convierte en una perpetua disposición para la huida... . También puede reconocerse al marrano en su movilidad ‘identitaria’: es frecuente que disponga de varios nombres ficticios para burlar la censura y las pesquisas inquisitoriales” (72-73). Las palabras de Lomba Falcón describen a la perfección a Enríquez Gómez con la movilidad física, España-Francia, y con la movilidad “identitaria”, el nombre Fernando de Zárate.

géneros—<sup>12</sup>: el primer periodo tendría lugar hasta 1637, cuando escribió *La prudente Abigail*, y el segundo periodo cuando regresa a España. Mientras en el primer periodo utiliza su verdadero nombre, Antonio Enríquez Gómez, el dramaturgo se convierte en Fernando de Zárate en el segundo periodo.

Enríquez Gómez cambió probablemente su nombre debido a la persecución religiosa que sufrió por ser criptojudío. Aunque en la actualidad no cabe duda de que “Don Fernando de Zárate (es Antonio Enríquez Gómez)” (de Castro xc), más de un crítico literario ha puesto en entredicho que se trate de una misma persona: “nos encontraríamos con tan diversa índole, tan distintos estilos, que no parece posible que sean obra de una misma mano” (Mesonero Romanos xxxiii). Es más: Ramón de Mesonero Romanos defiende el cristianismo de Zárate y desecha que se pueda tratar de un autor criptojudío: “composiciones todas en que se revela la íntima creencia cristiana del autor en términos, que sería imposible concebir siquiera a otro de distinta fe, ni en el caso de haber disimulado ó renegado la suya hasta tal punto, que hubiera tenido necesidad de adoptar distinto nombre” (xxxiii).<sup>13</sup> Por el contrario, Jesús Antonio Cid alega que la doble identidad del dramaturgo le permitió “una vida ‘doblemente críptica’” en la que compuso varias “comedias de santos y de temas neotestamentarios” (“Antonio Enríquez Gómez”).

Si bien Mesonero Romanos no dudaba del cristianismo de Fernando de Zárate por el contenido de sus “composiciones”, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo opinaba que su “afición” al Antiguo Testamento delata su judaísmo: “Conócese, por lo demás, la sangre judaica de Enríquez en su declarada afición a las historias del Viejo Testamento, que llenan la mitad de su teatro” (260). Por un lado, y

<sup>12</sup> Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez advierte que carecía de sentido escribir comedias españolas y en español en la Francia de Luis XIII “donde no tenía la menor posibilidad de ser vendido y representado” (17).

<sup>13</sup> Para más información sobre la doble identidad de Enríquez Gómez, véase “Antonio Enríquez Gómez: Alias Fernando de Zárate” de Glen Dille: “The polemic surrounding the identity of the late Golden Age playwright, Fernando de Zárate, began ... when the Spanish critic, Adolfo de Castro, reported that some plays of another dramatist, Antonio Enríquez Gómez, had been circulated under Zárate’s name ... Castro convinced him that there was in fact no such person as Fernando de Zárate” (11).

siguiendo la teoría de Mesonero Romano, para un escritor marrano adaptar una historia bíblica en una comedia podría mostrar a los que dudaban de su religiosidad que el autor realmente se había convertido al catolicismo. Por otro lado, y siguiendo la teoría de Menéndez y Pelayo, estas historias bíblicas pertenecientes al Antiguo Testamento también forman parte del Tanaj. *La prudente Abigail* se basa con exactitud en el *Primer Libro de Samuel* del Antiguo Testamento (Biblia), pero, también, sigue con precisión *Shmuel I* de los *Nevi'im* (Tanaj). El hecho de que el judaísmo y el cristianismo compartan textos sagrados lleva al dramaturgo marrano a recurrir a estos textos religiosos que “aceptados por el catolicismo como canónicos, pueden abrir una vía de acceso al judaísmo” (Lomba Falcón 75). Lomba Falcón concluye que “el constructo religioso marrano no podrá sino ser defectuoso” (76). Esta defectuosidad se encuentra en *La prudente Abigail*: una comedia marrana en la que se entremezclan elementos propiamente judaicos con elementos netamente católicos, y todo ello en una suerte de sincretismo e intertextualidad —repito aquí las palabras que Lomba Falcón utiliza para describir el constructo religioso marrano. *La prudente Abigail* se distancia de imposiciones colectivas y, en cambio, pluraliza las interpretaciones que pueden extraerse del *Primer Libro de Samuel* del Antiguo Testamento: “essentially consist in inscribing an ‘original’ Jewish into the broadly familiar typological interpretation of the ... Old Testament stor[y] to the contemporary situation of the Jews” (Zepp 165). La pluralidad de interpretaciones convierte *La prudente Abigail* en una comedia marrana ya que suscita libertad e individualidad: “does not put forth unambiguous cultural origin and affiliation as invariables but instead understand literature as a possible place for protecting the individual” (Zepp 161).

## **El arte de disimular: Malsines, tocino y circuncisión o incircuncisión**

Según Kramer-Hellinx, en *La prudente Abigail*, el rey Saúl representa la Inquisición: “En el lenguaje de Enríquez Gómez todos los tiranos históricos y bíblicos —Nerón, Amán, Nemrod, Antíoco— representan la Inquisición ... solo nombra a Saúl, y ya entendemos

que habla del Santo Oficio” (“La lealtad” 1). Para justificar tal afirmación, Kramer-Hellinx se basa en una obra política de Enríquez Gómez, *Luis, dado de Dios* (1645), en la que también utiliza el nombre en plural “Saúles” para referirse a la Inquisición: “No se contentan estos Saúles con afrenta; quieren sangre, devorando como lobos crueles las ovejas inocentes. Aconsejan a los reyes que salgan a ver en públicos teatros lastimosas tragedias” (296). De igual manera, Israel Salvator Révah entiende la expresión “Saúles sin cetro” como una perífrasis que apunta al Santo Oficio (284).<sup>14</sup> Si bien la Inquisición no es nombrada directamente en *La prudente Abigaíl*, los malsines sí que aparecen en dos ocasiones en la obra:

seré [David] rayo de enemigos,  
fuego de consejos locos,  
.....  
marcial estruendo de vidas  
y fin de malsines todos (1.203-4, 1.207-08)

y “destrucción de los malsines” (1.269). El malsín —“informer, a frequent target in the work of Enríquez Gómez; in real life, both he and various members of his family were denounced to the Inquisition by such informers” (Rose y Kerkhof 13)— añadiría significativa dualidad a la obra: el malsín unido al rey Saúl en contraposición al “valeroso David, / cuyo leal corazón” (3.2391-92).

En esta comedia religiosa, los malsines peninsulares se entremezclan con los personajes bíblicos del *Primer Libro de Samuel*, tal y como las viandas bíblicas contrastarán con el festín español en la hacienda de Nabal. Los víveres que le envía Abigaíl a David en la comedia

ducientos panes,  
mata unas ovejas presto,  
y de la bodega grande  
saca una carga de vino;  
acomoda en los costales  
cinco medidas de harina  
y doscientos panes grandes (1.962-68)

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<sup>14</sup> La expresión “Saúles sin cetro” se halla en el prólogo de las *Academias morales de las Musas*: “la invidia de los satanes encarnados y Saúles sin centro” (271).

no difieren en gran medida de los “doscientos panes, dos cueros de vino, cinco ovejas guisadas, cinco medidas de grano tostado, cien racimos de uvas, y doscientos panes de higos secos” (*Reina Valera*, 1 Sam. 25.18) descritos en la Biblia. Sin embargo, del festín de Nabal en la Biblia solo se sabe que “tenía banquete en su casa como banquete de rey” (25.36). En cambio, Enríquez Gómez lo describe con todo lujo de detalles. Ciertamente, el festín de Nabal recuerda más al de las bodas de Camacho que a un banquete bíblico:

las empanadas,  
 los gigotes, los cabritos,  
 las terneras, las hojaldras,  
 las perdices, los faisanes,  
 las palomas, las tortadas,  
 las gallinas, los capones,  
 los palominos, las natas,  
 la codorniz, el carnero,  
 los pollos, las ensaladas,  
 los güevos reales, la fruta,  
 las albóndigas, la salsa,  
 el majar blanco, la leche,  
 las ternerillas, las pavas. (3.2342-54)

Algunos de estos platos son ya conocidos en recetarios medievales y de la temprana edad moderna: “los guisos de gallina, las empanadas, las albóndigas ... y un clásico de nuestra cocina ... el manjar blanco” (Pozuelo 7). E incluso se mencionan en el *Quijote*: “buen Sancho, que sois tan amigo de manjar blanco y de albondiguillas” (II, 62, 509); y en el *Estebanillo González*: “Hacia cada día un potage, que aun yo mismo ignoraba como lo podía llamar, pues ni era ni gigote francés, ni almodrote castellano” (121). Tras los alimentos, Enríquez Gómez pasa a enumerar las bebidas, especialmente los vinos: “el ojo de gallo, el tinto, / el blanco, la limonada” (3.2355-56). El festín de Nabal es toda una delicia culinaria, al que Martos Pérez califica de “espléndido bodegón de la época” (664).

No obstante, el “espléndido bodegón” carece de la carne más consumida en el norte de Castilla, el tocino: “the area of the northern Castile studied by Brumont, 50 per cent of the meat was pork, 35 per cent mutton and 15 per cent beef” (234), según el estudio de Teofilo

F. Ruiz sobre la sociedad española entre 1348-1700. Enríquez Gómez no puede olvidar que en Judea se abstienen de comer tocino: “y solo lo que te falta / es el tocino porque / en Judea no se gasta” (3.2358-60). Mientras la asociación del tocino y de los judíos podría suponer una “prescripción religiosa identificativa de raza o burlesca” (Cid, “Judaizantes” 288), en Enríquez Gómez, y en esta comedia en particular, su alusión es completamente informativa, limitándose “a señalar un hecho con toda seriedad” (Cid, “Judaizantes” 288). Cid explica otras referencias hebraicas, en concreto “la sinagoga” y “la ley vieja”, que se encuentran en otra comedia del dramaturgo titulada *El vaso y la piedra*. Este crítico asevera que “se harán siempre dentro del respeto y la comprensión” (“Judaizantes” 288).

En *La prudente Abigail*, además de la “destrucción de los mal-sines” y del tocino que “en Judea no se gasta”, Enríquez Gómez incluye la circuncisión o, mejor dicho, la falta de circuncisión: David “dividió con sus manos / tanto incircunciso monstro” (1.35-36) y “juzgaba por despojo / del bárbaro incircunciso” (3.2086).<sup>15</sup> Pese a que la circuncisión se practicaba más entre la población morisca de la época que entre la judía, para muchos el término *circunciso* era sinónimo de judío: “Even though it had primarily a *morisco* connection in practice on the Peninsula in the early seventeenth century, influential writers ‘forgot’ this and made it a quintessentially Jewish practice” (Beusterien 363).<sup>16</sup> Sin embargo, en la comedia de Enríquez Gómez, la conexión circunciso-judío no aparece. Al contrario, los gentiles incircuncisos se relacionan con “monstros” o con “bárbaros”.

<sup>15</sup> El *Diccionario de Autoridades* define *incircunciso* como “No circuncidado. Los Hebreos llamaban así por oprobrio a los de otra Religión ... Los Judíos por escárnio los llaman incircuncisos ... Este de quien hablamos era Gentil incircunciso, convertido a nuestra Fe”.

<sup>16</sup> Entre los que conectan la circuncisión con el judaísmo se encuentran Lope de Vega (1562-1635), Sebastián de Covarrubias (1539-1613) y Francisco de Quevedo (1580-1645): “Aside from Lope’s play [*Auto sacramental de la circuncisión y sangría de Cristo*] that connects circumcision with Judaism, Covarrubias’ dictionary entry from 1611 equates those who are ‘circumcised’ as a synecdoche for Jews... . A description by Francisco de Quevedo that associates Jews with circumcision also adds to the equivocal language from the time in visibly locating the Jew” (Beusterien 363).

## “Que ha de ser / reina de Israel” (1.679-80): La Abigaíl decorosa de Enríquez Gómez

Como ya anunciaba anteriormente, la dualidad en *La prudente Abigaíl* y en el propio dramaturgo supone una constante. Entre los dobles de la comedia se encuentran el circunciso-incircunciso, las viandas sagradas-viandas peninsulares, personajes de las santas escrituras-personajes de la historia de la península ibérica, Tanaj-Biblia, judío-cristiano, Antonio Enríquez Gómez-Fernando de Zárata, y, sobre todo, David-Saúl y Nabal-Abigaíl. Esa misma dualidad es constatada por Kramer-Hellinx al anotar los dos temas de la comedia: “desarrolla, simultáneamente dos temas: la lealtad ante el monarca y la prudente lealtad matrimonial” (“La lealtad” 1). Cada tema tiene a la vez dos personajes: David y Saúl, para el primer tema, y Abigaíl y Nabal, para el segundo tema. Mientras el primer personaje de cada tema se consideraría el héroe o la heroína de la comedia, el segundo representaría el villano: “que *Nabal* se llama / en nuestro idioma / ‘veneno que mata’” (2.1508-10) y, como apuntaba Kramer-Hellinx, Saúl representa la Inquisición. La comedia concluirá con la unión de los dos héroes y con sus futuras nupcias. Esta historia bíblica funcionaría a la perfección con la convención de la boda final en las comedias barrocas. Ciertamente, el desenlace con las viandas llevadas a David por Abigaíl, el perdón de David, la apoplejía de Nabal, su repentina muerte y la pedida matrimonial de David a la viuda Abigaíl pertenecerían con más derecho al género de la comedia de enredo que al de la historia sagrada.

Abigaíl, como bien advierte el título de la comedia, se proclama la protagonista de la obra. Al igual que David, Abigaíl muestra lealtad, sobre todo, una lealtad matrimonial. Asimismo, las múltiples bondades de Abigaíl se repiten de principio a final de la comedia. Abigaíl es hermosa y bella: “Su hermosura es celestial / ... / la hermosa zagala, / bella Abigaíl” (2.1338, 1441-2); humilde: “que todos somos testigos / de tu discreta humildad” (1.583-84); gallarda: “a la condición gallarda / de muesa ama Abigaíl” (1.670-71); discreta y sabia: “¡Oh mujer discreta y sabia!” (2.1724); franca: “Decid vos que sois muy franca” (1.708); admirable: “Eres mujer admirable” (1.986); caritativa: “sino que deis a los pobres / lo que la ley manda darles” (1.813-14); generosa: “Abigaíl generosa” (3.2618); virtuosa: “mujer

de tanta virtud” (3.2631); honrada: “que las mujeres de honor / a sus maridos dan cuenta / de cuanto les sucedió” (3.2430-32); prudente: “(No vi joven tan prudente)” (2.1761); y reina de las mujeres, de las amas y de Israel: “Haz lo que manda muesa ama, / que es reina de las mujeres” (1.650-51), “Haya fiesta y gira a la venida / de la reina de las amas” (1.659-60) y “Brindis a la soberana / Abigaíl, que ha de ser / reina de Israel” (1.678-80).

Muchas de las características de Abigaíl se encuentran en un auto sacramental de Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-81) sobre este mismo episodio bíblico: “pura a mi pesar y honesta” (1.170), “Bellísima Abigaíl” (1.183) y “Abigaíl divina” (2.1555). En esta obra titulada *La primer flor del Carmelo* (representada por primera vez en 1647 o 1648), Calderón de la Barca utiliza las mismas descripciones, pero, incluso, llega a conectar alegóricamente Abigaíl con la Virgen:

prefiguración de las palabras de la Virgen aceptando la nueva del ángel Gabriel... . Su papel de mediadora entre David y Naval también se ve como prefiguración del papel mediador de la Virgen... . Abigaíl aplaca la ira de David para salvar al necio Nabal, del mismo modo que Cristo castigaría a muchos pecadores si no mediara la intercesión de María. (Plata Parga 671-73)

Véase la figura 1 donde Abigaíl se asemeja a la Virgen: ante David, no ante el ángel Gabriel.



Figura 1. “Abigail Seeking Mercy from David”. *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 81, Abaris Books, 1476. Cortesía de Artstor Collection.



Si bien no se encuentra atributo negativo en la Abigaíl de Enríquez Gómez, la crítica ha señalado la falta de decoro en las protagonistas de las comedias del dramaturgo. En su artículo titulado “Notes on Aggressive Woman in the *comedia* of Enríquez Gómez”, Dille señala que las heroínas del dramaturgo violan las leyes del decoro (216). Sin embargo, excluye las comedias bíblicas e, incluso, se refiere a *La prudente Abigaíl* como una excepción: “Actually Enríquez’s *comedias*, especially those with biblical settings, can offer examples of ladies as decorous as those of any other dramatist of the period (his Abigail of the very popular *La prudente Abigaíl*, for example). But if it can be said that many of the heroines do violate the ‘laws of decorum’ it is because they have good cause” (216). Otros críticos literarios no han descrito a las protagonistas de Enríquez Gómez tan benevolentemente: “Tal vez pinta demasiado fáciles y celosas a estas mismas damas que atropellan las leyes del decoro, para lograr sus amorosos intentos y se ven al cabo obligadas a sufrir indignas humillaciones” (de los Ríos y Serrano 555). Ante la afirmación anterior, cabría hacerse las siguientes preguntas: ¿sufre indigna humillación Abigaíl al presentarse ante David con los víveres? ¿Viola Abigaíl las leyes del decoro al decidir llevarle los víveres a David sin preguntarle antes a su esposo? ¿Atropella Abigaíl las leyes del decoro para lograr sus amorosos intentos con David? Concuero con Dille y no encuentro falta de decoro en el comportamiento de la protagonista en *La prudente Abigaíl*, tampoco hallo ningún avance amoroso de Abigaíl hacia David en la obra. Muy al contrario: Abigaíl aparece como “un ángel en forma humana” (2.1431). No obstante, la humillación y la falta de decoro señaladas por de los Ríos y Serrano podrían intuirse en las representaciones pictóricas de Abigaíl: “parece que a los pintores les hubiera interesado la fuerza dramática que emana del contraste entre la belleza de Abigaíl y la fiereza de David y sus ejércitos” (Plata Parga 677). Véanse, por ejemplo, en la figura 2, a una Abigaíl penitente y, en la figura 1, a un David altivo.<sup>17</sup> Es

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<sup>17</sup> Véase el contraste entre la belleza de Abigaíl y la fiereza del ejército de David en los cuadros *El encuentro de David y Abigaíl* (c. 1630) de Peter Paul Rubens ([www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.99280.html](http://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.99280.html)), *David y Abigaíl* (1629) de Avanzino Nucci (<https://picryl.com/media/avanzino-nucci-david-and-abigail-f1192b>) y *La prudente Abigaíl* (1667) de Juan Antonio de Frías y

más, tanto en la comedia como en la figura 2, Abigaíl no sigue los preceptos estipulados por Fray Luis de León para el comportamiento idóneo de una mujer: “Como los hombres para lo público, así las mujeres para el encerramiento; y como es de los hombres el hablar y el salir a la luz, así dellas encerrarse y encubrirse. Nada de teñirse el pelo, llevar aros” (130). Se insiste, sobre todo, en “cubrir a la mujer... siguiendo el ejemplo de la Virgen María. El pie fue el objeto sexual máspreciado y por ello el más ocultado” (Ruiz Ortiz 185).



Figura 2. *La prudente Abigaíl* (1696-97) de Luca Giordano. Cortesía del Museo del Prado.

## Una comedia moderna: Tolerancia religiosa, libertad de conciencia y justicia divina

En el apartado anterior, he enumerado todos los atributos que Enríquez Gómez dedica a su protagonista, menos uno —que podría, incluso, considerarse el más revelador—: Abigaíl se convierte en la paloma de la paz —símbolo que se encuentra en el Génesis y que ha perdurado hasta hoy en día—. La paloma de la paz representa la reconciliación tras el diluvio universal. En el Génesis, el pasaje reza: “La paloma vino al atardecer, y he aquí que traía en el pico un ramo verde de olivo, por donde conoció Noé que habían disminuido las aguas encima de la tierra” (8.11). En la comedia, Abigaíl se pre-

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Escalante ([www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/la-prudente-abigail/c33679b4-bbe2-48e1-bd3e-b01c0adadc2b](http://www.museodelprado.es/coleccion/obra-de-arte/la-prudente-abigail/c33679b4-bbe2-48e1-bd3e-b01c0adadc2b)), entre otros.

senta ante David como la paloma de la paz, con los víveres o “con la oliva en la boca” (1.993). Ella trae consigo la reconciliación y la alegría tras la arrogancia y la avaricia de Nabal, “que no le daré, por Dios, / un jarro de agua a ninguno” (2.1158-59),<sup>18</sup> y tras la cólera de David, “—¡ciego de cólera estoy!—” (2.1174). Ante la necesidad de los hombres, Abigaíl emerge como la portadora de la paz: “Tú serás de este diluvio / la paloma favorable / que con la oliva en la boca / fue alegría de la nave” (1.991-94).

Al contrario de Abigaíl, Nabal se manifiesta como el villano de la comedia junto con Saúl. En *La prudente Abigaíl*, Saúl “todavía tiene conciencia y sufre remordimientos” (Kramer-Hellinx, “La lealtad” 2). Según Kramer-Hellinx, en las obras posteriores de Enríquez Gómez, el Saúl tirano “ya no tiene remedio ni conciencia humana. Es un asesino indigno y sin escrúpulos” (2). David, en cambio, se situaría con Abigaíl en el bando de la generosidad hospitalaria, es decir, de los bondadosos. *La prudente Abigaíl* comienza con David y, más tarde, se explican las dos ocasiones en las que este le perdona la vida a Saúl. En primer lugar, David halla a Saúl durmiendo y, en lugar de darle muerte, corta un pedazo de su manto:

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<sup>18</sup> La descripción de Nabal en boca de Rubén contrastaría con la de Abigaíl. Nabal es caracterizado como mal nacido, traidor, con cortés pundonor, rudo, alevoso, feroz, ladrón, salteador de los delitos y ambicioso:

tan mal nacido y traidor

.....

y con cortés pundonor

.....

Estaba el rudo villano

.....

los ojos, vertiendo dos

basiliscos por veneno;

el semblante, de traidor;

el mirar, de hombre alevoso,

.....

siendo su rostro feroz,

por la nube de la barba,

bosque de tan gran ladrón,

salteador de los delitos

y cueva de la ambición. (2.1100, 1102, 1117, 1120-23, 1134-38)

y dividiéndole un trozo,  
me aparté de ti, diciendo

.....

No permita la venganza  
que yo, con intento loco,  
profane el laurel divino. (1.102-3, 105-7)

En segundo lugar, David vuelve a encontrar a Saúl durmiendo. Rubén le sugiere que lo mate, pero David le contesta

si de él quisiera vengarme,  
le matara cuerpo a cuerpo,  
pero de ninguna suerte  
cuando estuviera durmiendo. (3.1939-42)

Sin duda, la obra muestra la lealtad de David, a quien Enríquez Gómez llama *rey David*, sin que, en efecto, lo fuera: “REY DAVID es el nombre que recibe siempre este personaje en la obra, a pesar de que en el momento en que se desarrolla la acción todavía no ocupa el trono” (Martos Pérez 557). Por una parte, el rey David de la comedia se presenta como valeroso y leal. Los calificativos que Enríquez Gómez usa para describirlo son “joven gallardo” (1.1), “mancebo heroico” (1.2), “pastor valeroso” (1.34), “David valeroso” (1.100), “rey de las fieras” (1.37), “pastor justo” (1.235), “David generoso” (1.258), “David es fiero león” (2.1198), “al fuerte David” (2.1440) y “Capitán heroico” (2.1455). Por otra parte, el David bíblico es descrito como un talentoso hombre de Estado y un soldado diestro, pero también con algunas imperfecciones: “Más torvas aun fueron sus cualidades de soldado, pues como tal manchó tanto sus manos de sangre que el Señor le prohibió construir el templo, lo que siempre había sido su gran ambición” (Beecher Keyes 56). El *Primer y Segundo Libro de Samuel* muestran a un monarca estratega con una agenda política muy ambiciosa y efectiva. Aun cuando se puede cuestionar moralmente a David (Wall), no hay imperfección alguna en Abigail: “Based on her prescience, the Talmud identifies Abigail as one of the seven female prophets in the Hebrew Bible” (Adelman).

Kramer-Hellinx afirma que Enríquez Gómez se identifica con David: “David representa al autor mismo, converso que sufría repetidamente de la injusticia inquisitorial” (“La lealtad” 2). Ahora bien:

yo prefiero postular que Enríquez Gómez sostiene su verdadera máscara con Abigaíl; y menos con el personaje de David. Aunque se trate de una mujer, Abigaíl compartiría la misma dualidad existencial que caracteriza al dramaturgo. Ella es *la otra*: una mujer que decide en un mundo en el que el hombre decide. Enríquez Gómez también es *el otro*: un marrano en una España católica. Ambos disimulan, disiden y difunden paz: ella con su discurso ante David; él con su comedia marrana. Para convencer a David de que abandone la venganza contra Nabal, Abigaíl usa la prohibición bíblica de derramar sangre del Génesis: “El que vertiere sangre de hombre, por el hombre verá su sangre vertida, porque Dios hizo al hombre a su imagen” (9.6). Enríquez Gómez repetirá las palabras del Génesis en la comedia:

Quien derrama sangre  
por liviana causa,  
fama dura adquiere  
y sepulcros labra. (2.1591-94)

El mensaje de Enríquez Gómez y de Abigaíl coinciden: convivencia pacífica.

Aunque no hay lugar en *La prudente Abigaíl* donde se exprese que los cristianos y los judíos deban vivir conjuntamente en armonía, el hecho de que la obra se base en un texto compartido por judíos y por cristianos promueve tolerancia religiosa. Es decir, la historia del texto sagrado y, también la comedia —que es una reinterpretación teatral de ese texto bíblico— conjugarían las enseñanzas destinadas tanto a judíos como a cristianos. Enríquez Gómez escoge un texto disimulado que fomenta la dualidad y que refleja su propia dualidad. O, según Yirmiyahu Yovel, fomentaría una doble alienación: la Inquisición, creada para erradicar a los conversos fingidos, simplemente aceleraría esa doble alienación —también, sin darse cuenta, instruiría a sus sospechosos sobre el judaísmo. Al carecer de cualquier conciencia religiosa profunda, los marranos adoptarían *un nuevo yo* (61). También se enfrentarían a contradicciones y a tensiones que les ayudaría a forjar un enfoque acaso inédito de su identidad religiosa, el que enfatizaría la realidad interna frente a la apariencia externa, y, al mismo tiempo, la espiritualidad interna frente a la ortodoxia y al ritual externos. La mente marrana contribuiría, de esta manera, a iniciar la voluntad moderna. En dicha voluntad moderna sobresale

un fuerte deseo: la exigencia de reformar el mundo, especialmente en relación con la tolerancia religiosa y con las libertades individuales y de conciencia (343).<sup>19</sup> Las propias decisiones que toma Abigaíl —o sus propias libertades individuales y de conciencia— conllevarían a aplacar la ira de David, a evitar un derramamiento de sangre, y a impedir, por esta vez, la muerte de su esposo:

pues con ellas detuviste  
 los alientos de mi espada  
 .....  
 pues estorbaste a mi mano  
 de la más justa venganza  
 el impulso que quería  
 regar aquesta campaña  
 de la sangre de Caleb,  
 que hoy en tu esposo se guarda. (2.1677-86)

O sea, Abigaíl se sitúa ética y políticamente del lado David y, también, con Nabal. Ella contradice a su esposo, pero a la vez salva su vida a manos de David: “a Nabal he de matar” (2.1412).

La comedia de Enríquez Gómez fomenta las libertades individuales y de conciencia porque Abigaíl actúa según sus convicciones y sin tener en cuenta las decisiones de la autoridad o, mejor dicho, de su esposo Nabal. ¿No habría actuado quizás, de similar manera, el disidente y disimulado Enríquez Gómez? El dramaturgo huye a Francia; se esconde bajo el nombre de Fernando de Zárate; y se vale de un texto sagrado compartido para divulgar su mensaje. En otras palabras, Enríquez Gómez actúa según sus convicciones y sin tener en cuenta las decisiones de la autoridad —en este caso la Inquisición o, en general, la España católica de la época. Al fin y al cabo, ni David, ni Nabal ni siquiera Abigaíl imparten justicia. El Dios judío y cristiano impone la auténtica justicia: erradica el mal con la muerte de Nabal y propicia el bien con las nupcias de David y de Abigaíl. Esto es: se impone la justicia divina. Hay algunas palabras de Jorge Luis Borges que permitirían sospechar, con buenas razones, sobre

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<sup>19</sup> Lomba Falcón comparte la tesis argumentativa de Yovel: “La subjetividad marrana, de esta manera, da forma clara a una de las condiciones que hace posible pensar la pluralidad religiosa en términos de tolerancia y libertad de conciencia” (78).

el carácter inevitablemente autobiográfico de *La prudente Abigail* —y, tal vez, de toda obra artística. En “Profesión de fe literaria”, Borges establece su comprensión de la literatura como expresión de una vida en la historia, “Este es mi postulado: toda la literatura es autobiográfica, finalmente. Todo es poético en cuanto nos confiesa un destino, en cuanto nos da un vislumbre de él” (128). Tengo, por mi parte, la certeza de que el postulado de Borges es, sin duda, verdadero en este caso: porque Enríquez Gómez expresará un mensaje nacido de su propia autobiografía y lo hará a través de un alter-ego dramático. Abigaíl, al igual que Enríquez Gómez, asume una posición política y ética desde sus propias convicciones: tolerancia y hospitalidad generosa serían virtudes necesarias para una satisfactoria vida en sociedad.

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## THE COMEDIA BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: CASTING RACE IN ANTONIO DE ZAMORA'S *EL HECHIZADO POR FUERZA* (1697)

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**Abstract:** The butt of ridicule in Antonio de Zamora's 1697 comedia, *El hechizado por fuerza*, is the grotesquely xenophobic figurón, don Claudio. Claudio has broken his promise of matrimony to doña Leonor, who fights to recapture him through the specter of sorcery. *El hechizado* became a favorite on the eighteenth-century stage. Yet, behind the word "hechizado" lay an uncomfortable association between mixed-race peoples and the occult. Central to Leonor's campaign to bring Claudio to heel is her slavewoman, Lucigüela (Lucía), whose presumed "native" powers of enchantment terrorize the wayward groom. Yet how would a director best portray this subservient yet intimidating character? Described alternately as *criolla*, *guatamelteca*, or *esclava*, Lucigüela's dramatic representation remains contradictory and vague. Is her character even credible or believable by Lope de Vega's standards as expressed in the *Arte Nuevo*? One might expect a household slave like Lucía to be dark-skinned, but pale slaves also populated the seventeenth-century imaginary (see Isabel/Zelima of *Zayas*, "La esclava de su amante"). Her spoken Castilian betrays none of the parodic argot ascribed to recently arrived Africans or *bozales*. And Lucía's campy capers—voodoo dolls, potions, oil-lamps, etc.—conform to literary convention, not ethnography. The most compelling hint for casting Lucía comes from Don Clau-

dio's reaction to her, which is one of terror and repugnance. In order to motivate his fear, Lucigüela's character should project exoticism and foreignness. She is *criolla*, but not in the usual sense of a descendent of Spaniards born in the New World (Aut.), but rather as a *ladina*, *mulata*, *garífuna*, *zamba*, or other Creole mix (Fleischmann 1993; Lara Alberola 2010). This paper investigates these New World hybridities and their unsettling effect upon Claudio, who here caricaturizes the complacent, maurophobic Spanish social order. By the same token, Lucigüela drew audiences by appealing to the inverse of maurophobia: Spanish literary maurophilia (Fuchs 2008).

**Resumen:** El blanco de la burla en la comedia *El hechizado por fuerza* de Antonio de Zamora de 1697, es don Claudio, un figurón xenófobo y esperpéntico. Claudio romper su promesa de casarse con doña Leonor, quien brega para recobrarlo mediante lo fantasmal de la hechicería. La figura del hechizado llegó a ser un personaje popular en las tablas del siglo dieciocho. Sin embargo, embebida en la palabra “hechizado” había cierta inquietante asociación entre el ocultismo y la gente de raza mixta. La campaña que emplea Leonor para recoger a Claudio se centra en su esclava Lucigüela (Lucía), cuyos supuestos poderes “nativos” de embelesamiento aterrorizan al novio descarriado. No obstante, ¿cómo podría un escenógrafo representar este personaje tanto servil como desconcertante? Se le describe variamente como criolla, guatemalteca y esclava: la representación dramática de Lucigüela resulta contradictoria y vaga. Tomando en cuenta las normas expuestas en el *Arte Nuevo* de Lope de Vega, ¿hasta qué punto se puede pensar que este personaje es verosímil? Sería normal pensar que una esclava doméstica como Lucía tendría piel oscura, pero frecuentemente se veían esclavas de piel clara en el imaginario del siglo diecisiete (por ej., Isabel/Zelima de Zayas en “La esclava de su amante”). El español hablado de Lucía no contiene ninguna muestra de dialectalismo paródico que caracterizaba a los bozales o los africanos recién llegados. Además, las travesuras bobaliconas de Lucía—muñecas de vudú, pócimas, lámparas de aceite, etc.—responden a convenciones literarias, ya que no a la etnografía. En la comedia la pista más convincente para interpretar la representación (racial) de Lucía se halla en el modo en que don Claudio reacciona ante ella, lo cual es de terror y repugnancia. Con el fin de motivar su terror, el carácter de Lucigüela debe exhibir

elementos de exotismo y extranjería. Ella es criolla, pero no en el sentido usual de una descendiente de españoles nacidos en el nuevo mundo (Aut), sino más bien como una ladina, mulata, garífuna, zamba u otra mezcla racial criolla (Fleischmann 1993; Lara Alberola 2010). Este artículo indaga estas hibridades novohispanas y sus efectos desconcertantes en Claudio, quien en esta comedia caricaturiza al orden social español displicente y morofóbico. Al mismo tiempo al público le cayó bien Lucigüela, cuya atracción era la inversa de la morofobia, o sea, la morofilia literaria española (Fuchs 2008).

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** enchantment, *El hechizado por fuerza*, Antonio de Zamora, maurophobia, maurophilia / hechizo, *El hechizado por fuerza*, Antonio de Zamora, morofobia, morofilia

*Fue la obra más famosa de su época. Y estuvo reponiéndose durante un siglo y medio. No es de extrañar todavía hoy, como se ha visto gracias a la Fundación José Estruch, consigue que el público estalle en carcajadas.*

--Luis García-Araus

Over the past two decades, Antonio de Zamora's (1660-1727) most successful play, *El hechizado por fuerza* has finally begun to stir critical interest.<sup>20</sup> Performed one-hundred and fourteen times following its debut performance in 1698, its subsequent popularity exceeded even that of José de Cañizares's blockbuster, *El domine Lucas* (Dowling, 281). Nonetheless, *El hechizado por fuerza* has never managed to make it into the Spanish dramaturgical canon. The closest this comical *figurón* play has come to a revival took place at the Festival de Teatro Clásico de Almagro in 2003, where it was adapted and staged by the Compañía José Estruch de la Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático de Madrid. Ironically, Zamora's play was chosen precisely because of its obscurity today ("Una comedia" qtd in García-Araus: 92).

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<sup>20</sup> I will be referring by page number to the 1744 edition of the play cited in the bibliography. For a more complete discussion of various available editions, see Londero 1117-18.

Actor Luis Moreno, who played the part of Don Claudio, the disagreeable fiancé who reneges on his engagement, neatly summarizes the action of Zamora's *comedia*:

En la obra, su negative a casarse impide de rebote el matrimonio de su hermana con su enamorado. Además, su actitud prepotente, prejuiciosa y capricuda trae de cabeza a sus sirvientes, sus amigos y su médico. Al resto de los personajes que le rodean no les queda otro remedio que urdir una trama de engaños en la que le hacen creer que está hechizado y que morirá si no se casa. (64)

An intriguing feature of the Almagro adaptation was the decision to cast a white actor (Ana Ruiz, 1979-) in the role of Luzigüela, the Guatemalan *criolla* slave woman who carries out Claudio's ersatz enchantment. Her character appears among the *dramatis personae* listed in Joaquín Sánchez's 1744 edition of *El hechizado por fuerza* as *la esclava*. The Almagro Festival playbill lists her as *la hechicera* (García-Araus 98), both equally non-committal regarding her racial representation.

Other than the clues given by various characters that Luzigüela, also addressed as Lucía throughout the play, is a *criolla guatemalteca*, Zamora's play offers no direct description of this character's physical features. The apparent contradiction of occupying both the identities of Guatemalan slave woman and *criolla* is more fully explored below. Although *El hechizado* grants substantial creative latitude to future directors for deciding the hue of Lucía's skin, her complex positionality is neither incidental nor inconsequential to the semiotic coherence of the play. As we shall see, her alterity impacts the play's causal logic, comic appeal, and satirical aspirations. In other words, her visual representation on stage matters.

Lope de Vega, in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo* ("New Art of Writing Plays in our Time") warned dramatists that action on the Spanish stage should lie within the realm of the plausible: ("Guárdese de imposibles, porque es máxima / que sólo ha de imitar lo verisímil"; 284-85). Would Zamora's audiences have found Lucía credible, or did she constitute an *imposible*, a contrived hodge-podge of historical contradictions that failed the test of

probability?<sup>21</sup> How might a director today—through physical traits, costuming, and manner—most convincingly project Luzigüela’s New World hybridity? And, finally, there is the question of her role as fake enchantress. Why, of all the principal and secondary characters at his disposal, did Zamora assign this part to the slave woman from across the sea? In order to address these questions, it will be useful to sketch out the action in this seldom-seen play, with special attention to Luzigüela’s primary and supporting roles in each act.

The butt of ridicule in *El hechizado por fuerza* is Don Claudio. As noted above, Don Claudio has broken his promise of matrimony to Doña Leonor, who must recapture him in order to restore her honor. Described as an imbecile and an animal by his own sister, Doña Luisa, Don Claudio is the play’s *figurón*. When Luisa asks Leonor why she insists on marrying such a dolt as her brother, Leonor replies:

LEONOR:       Ya conozco cuan injusto  
                  es mi deseo, o mi error,  
                  mas, por salvar el honor  
                  quiero maltratar el gusto. (121)

Act one establishes the motive behind Claudio’s decision to back out of his engagement to Leonor. He inherited a minor ecclesiastical post in the town of Parla that would require him to remain unwed.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The late eighteenth-century *comedia*, *A un tiempo esclavo y señor y mágico africano* also superimposed the positionalities of master, slave, African and magician, but for more didactic ends. Mohammed appears in the opening scene dressed as an elegant Morisco. He dies in the final act, revealing himself to be an evil slave. The earliest *suelta* I have located online is that of the British Library (1780, no author, Barcelona, Juan Francisco Piferrer) digitized by Google Books, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Theatergoers would have laughed at Claudio’s insistence on pegging his future to the impoverished backwater of Parla, also ridiculed for its swampy environs in Pedro Francisco Lanini y Sagredo’s *entremés El parto de Juan Rana* (Thompson 93-120). The general plot of *El hechizado por fuerza* also resembles another Juan Rana play, *Juan Rana, mujer* (1655) by Jerónimo de Cáncer y Velasco. Just as Leonor and her allies collude in *El hechizado* to persuade Don Claudio that Luzigüela has cast a fatal spell upon him, in *Juan Rana, mujer*, Juan Rana’s wife, neighbors, and friends collude to persuade Juan that he is and always has been a woman, and therefore must now serve his “brother” (disguised wife, Casilda) (Thompson 255-74).

Claudio's insolent refusal to move out and marry Leonor—along with a long list of other faults that includes hypochondria, miserliness, and superstitiousness—turns everyone against him. The conspiracy to push Claudio to the altar includes Leonor, Luisa, Diego's servant Picatoste, Luisa's maid, Isabel, and the slave woman Luzigüela, as well as Claudio's doctor Fabián Carranque. John Dowling explains: "Para forzar que Don Claudio se rinda ante las leyes sociales, los otros personajes traman una intriga, haciéndole creer que está hechizado" (278). Luzigüela and Luisa learn, in the following passage, exactly how Leonor plans to deceive Don Claudio into returning to her:

LEONOR:       he pensado en que después  
de obligarle cortesana,  
que si de mi razón se resiste  
le he de amenazar airada  
con mi razón y contigo,  
de quien verdad sea, o chanza  
desconfía, pues de criolla  
venida de Guatemala  
le has hecho creer, que en las Indias  
hacer hechizos es gala,  
de suerte de que, concurriendo  
el Médico, que se halla  
pretendiendo marido  
con Luisa, hacerle creer que anda  
hechizado, y tú, esforzando  
con tus enredos la traza,  
según es poco avisado,  
será posible que caiga  
en el engaño. (101, 102)

As we have already seen, Doña Leonor lines up her household and that of her future sister-in-law, Doña Luisa, to collude in exploiting Don Claudio's fear of occult forces. Leonor next proceeds to warn Claudio that she will take revenge on him if he continues to insist on leaving her. Perplexed, Claudio asks Lucía what Leonor meant by making such a ludicrous threat. But Lucía responds by tightening the screws: "[vuestra vida] está pendiente de un hilo: / amigo, o morir o boda (105). When Don Claudio complains to his sister



Luisa, she gives further credence to Luzigüela's words, sobbing, "Claudio, o luto, o casamiento" (106), to which Picatoste adds, "Yo solo sé que la tal / Luzigüela es una fiera / enredadora hechicera" (106). Zamora stages Lucía's antics as transparent hoaxes that the theatergoing public could identify as well-worn tropes—voo-doo dolls, rattling chains, amulets, talking statues, potions, etc. (See Flores and Masera, editors. *Relatos populares de la Inquisición Novohispana: Rito, magia y otras "supersticiones," siglos XVII–XVIII*). Nonetheless, these ruses intimidate and eventually terrorize the gullible Don Claudio. Already by the middle of act one, Claudio is ready to believe that Lucía may be making him ill:

CLAUDIO      Además de que estas criollas  
de la otra parte del charco  
por quitarme allá esta boda,  
hechizarán a un cristiano:  
Vive Dios que el caso es recio. (107)

Continuing with act two, Picatoste deepens the intrigue by appealing directly to Claudio's fear of New World others. He slyly remarks that "todas estas criollas / son inclinadas por uso / a supersticiones" (113). He continues to prod Claudio, adding, "Lucía / es hechicera famosa / con pacto explícito *ad intra* / en la magia negra" (113). Next, the servant paints the conventional picture of a witch who anoints herself with oils, falls into a trance, casts spells, etc. He claims that he saw Lucía casting a spell on Claudio, "con raras ceremonias de oraciones y visajes" (114). He further inflames Claudio's fears by relating that he witnessed Lucía filling a lamp with oil "negro como el color de tu loba" (114), also attesting that Claudio's life would last only as long as Lucía's lamp continued to burn—unless Claudio agreed to fulfill his promise of marriage to Leonor.

A play-within-a-play unfolds in the second half of act two as Picatoste leads Claudio toward what he is told is Luzigüela's sorcery-chamber. Picatoste carries a reliquary bag that Claudio thinks will protect him from evil spirits (which only contains a length of rifle flint). As he places the amulet around Claudio's neck in the dark, Picatoste takes the opportunity to whack his tiresome master in the nose with it. While they tiptoe toward the dreaded chamber, Lucía, Isabel, and other co-conspirators drape the room with a gallery of

“mascarones, sierpes, y otras cosas ridículas” (123). Illuminated by the flickering light of the oil lamp that Claudio hopes to replenish in order to prolong his life, the ghastly images and exotic lettering appear to dance and move. The women, now “backstage,” create a soundtrack of thunder, and clanking chains to enhance the frightful scene, described by Claudio as “boca es por donde respiran / las gargantas del abismo” (123). Picatoste slips away while Claudio begins to inspect the gallery of demonic paintings. As he reaches to refill the oil lamp, he addresses it directly:

CLAUDIO: Lámpara descomunal  
 cuyo reflexo civil  
 me va a moco de candil  
 chupando el óleo vital  
 en que he de vencer me fundo  
 tu traidor influjo avieso  
*velis nolis*, pues para eso  
 hay alcuzas en el mundo;  
 otra panilla por mí  
 arda, y aunque airada estás  
 si vivo ocho días más  
 ¡ay de Lucía! (124)

Claudio begins pouring oil into the lamp, but the sound of clanking chains causes him to drop the oil-cruet (124).<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, Leonor’s veiled helpers wheel an automaton doppelgänger statue of Claudio onstage. Luzigüela appears veiled and dressed in black, to ask whether Claudio is ready to marry Leonor. When he refuses, the automaton shakes its head ‘no’ as well. The veiled women roll

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<sup>23</sup> Francisco Goya (1746-1828) immortalized this scene in “La lámpara del diablo,” one of six *brujería* compositions that Goya painted in 1798 for the Duchess of Osuna to lampoon the ignorance and superstitiousness of her countrymen. Now displayed in the National Gallery of London, the painting depicts Claudio, dressed in black clerical robes and matching brimmed hat. He holds up one hand to his face in fright as he extends the other to replenish the oil lamp proffered by a goat-like devil crowned with massive horns. The room is dim and ill-defined. Only Claudio’s frightened visage is illuminated by the lamp, while a towering, devilish, donkey-like figure hovers in the shadowy background. (See Fig. 1).

away the statue, chanting “¡Ay Dómine infeliz! Porque si no te velas, te han de velar a ti” (125). More bumps in the night follow, culminating with proof that Claudio has fully internalized Lucía’s stark message. Having fallen down in terror, Claudio limps offstage repeating, “Que si no me velo / me han de velar a mí” (126).<sup>24</sup>

Another ally Leonor pulls into her scheme is Don Fabián Carranque, a Molièresque quack of a physician, so thoroughly in love with Doña Luisa that he will go to any length to please her. Luisa urges the doctor to confirm Claudio’s fears about his declining health. The doctor and his equally fatuous colleagues stage a farcical consultation at don Claudio’s bedside in act one, and another in act three. Amid a hailstorm of Latinate gibberish, they unanimously declare the patient moribund. Subsequent ersatz magic and mistaken identities that occur during a Carnival picnic convince Don Claudio that Luzigüela’s spells have brought him to death’s door. The cranky curate suffers a violent case of hiccups due to the herbs that had been slipped into his drink. As he lies on the ground awaiting confession, he feels something bulky in his coat, which turns out to be a wax doll stuck with more than thirty needles. “Ese soy yo / menos el hipo,” he glumly observes (143). Finally, pushed to the brink of death in his imagination, Don Claudio rises to his knees and offers to marry Leonor, complaining all the while that he wished it didn’t interfere with his picnic:

CLAUDIO:      Pues Leonor de mis entrañas  
sabe Dios cuanto me pesa  
de haber de casarme en  
Marte de Carnestolendas;  
mas si me importa la vida  
esta es mi mano derecha. (143)

The play closes in a carnivalesque parody of the happily-ever-after marriages that typify Golden Age *comedias*. Dissatisfied with Claudio’s tepid proposal, Leonor demands that her friends further punish Claudio by giving him a bad toothache (143). When they

<sup>24</sup> For an illustration of this moment see Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes (1746-1828). “*The Bewitched*.” (*Una escena de El hechizado por fuerza*) (1797-98). Oil on canvas. London: The Trustees of the National Gallery. In Licht, p. 213, plate 167.

resist this impossible request, Leonor begrudgingly accepts Claudio's hand. Doctor Fabián Carranque, accompanied by Don Diego, his rival for Luisa's hand, storms onto the scene, furious upon realizing he had been duped into playing along with the plot to ensnare Claudio. And Don Claudio, hearing that he had been "bewitched perforce" now vainly protests:

CLAUDIO:     A buena hora  
os venís con esta media  
espada, doctor, que ya  
me he casado hasta las cejas;  
pero pido nulidad  
aquí y hasta que vengan  
los Nazarenos. (144)

Having all too cursorily summarized the high jinks that contributed to making *El hechizado por fuerza* the hit that it became, it should now be evident that Luziguëla's character is no wallflower. Yet, how might readers and directors of Zamora's play have reconciled Lucía's flashy, intrepid role with her other attributes—those of *esclava*, *criolla*, and *guatemalteca*? Let us begin by retracing the slippery semantic evolution of the term *criolla*. In his *Comentarios reales* of 1609, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (?1439-1516) affirmed that the term *criollo*, originally applied to the children of Africans born in the New World, came to refer to the offspring of Spaniards born in the Americas as well:

Es nombre que lo inventaron los negros, y así lo muestra la obra (*La Florida*) del Inca. Quiere decir entre ellos negro nacido en Indias; inventáronlo para diferenciar los que van de acá, nacidos en Guinea, de los que nacen allá, porque se tienen por más honrados y de más calidad por haber nacido en la patria, que no sus hijos porque nacieron en la ajena, y los padres se ofenden si les llaman criollos. Los españoles, por la semejanza, han introducido este nombre en su lenguaje para nombrar los nacidos allá. De manera que al español y al guineo nacidos allá les llaman criollos y criollas. (Book 9 ch. 31)

In 1958 Esteban Rodríguez Herrera concurred that the original purpose of the word *criollo* was to distinguish Black slaves born in

Portugal's New World territories from those arriving directly from Africa: "Todo parece indicar que la etimología de criollo es posible reconstruirla a partir del latín 'creare' [...] en su acepción de engendrar" (391). From the Portuguese *crioulo* the term entered Castilian as *criollo*. The French term, *créole* may have come directly from Latin or via Portuguese (Venegas 8, 9).

Raquel Chang-Rodríguez documents a host of reasons that *hispanocriollos* were looked upon suspiciously on both sides of the Atlantic during the early colonial period. From the Spanish perspective, *criollos* were of questionable character and loyalty. They lived among potentially restive native populations, they were thought to receive an inferior education in the new Jesuit, Dominican, and Augustinian universities founded throughout Spanish America, and they were perceived as being lazy (120). Contributing to these prejudices was the prevailing belief that one's place of birth "within the early modern matrix of terrestrial, sublunary, and supralunary constellations" exercised a decisive influence over one's future character development. Only by conscious effort could such handicaps as being born under the unfavorable stars of Spain's overseas territories be overcome (Bauer and Mazzotti 5). From an indigenous Peruvian perspective, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala also criticized free white *criollos* as being more arrogant and cruel than either Spaniards or *mestizos* (Chang-Rodríguez 123-27).

On the other hand, between 1600 and 1700, the pejorative connotations of white *criollo* gave way to a counter-stereotype. According to Flor Ángela Buitregó Escobar, "La noción de criollo pierde su sentido étnico-racial y adquiere el significado más amplio de 'poblador de América'" (192). *Hispanocriollos* and their offspring tried to elevate their own status by differentiating themselves from the multiple hybridities surrounding them. In Chance and Taylor's formulation, a "cognitive and legal system of hierarchically arranged socioracial statuses (was) created by the Spanish law and the colonial elite in response to the miscegenated population in the colonies" (460). This *casta* (caste) system identified and regulated various degrees of admixture, as Inca Garcilaso explained:

Al negro que va de acá, llanamente le llaman negro o guineo. Al hijo de negro y de india, o de indio y de negra, dicen mulato y mulata. A los hijos de éstos llaman cholo; es

vocablo de la isla de Barlovento; quiere decir perro, no de los castizos, sino de los muy bellacos gozcones; y los españoles usan de él por infamia y vituperio. A los hijos de español y de india o de indio y española, nos llaman mestizos, por decir que somos mezclados de ambas naciones; fue impuesto por los primeros españoles que tuvieron hijos en indias, y por ser nombre impuesto por nuestros padres y por su significación me lo llamo yo a boca llena, y me honro con él. Aunque en Indias, si a uno de ellos le dicen “sois un mestizo” o “es un mestizo,” lo toman por menosprecio. (*Comentarios reales*, “Nombres nuevos para nombrar diversas generaciones.” Book 9, ch. 31)

Here it should be recognized that the relative valuation of *casta* also varied from group to group. Inca Garcilaso took pride in being *mestizo*; however, his pureblood tribesmen scorned him for it.

As noted above, caste in the Indies could vary generationally by degree of admixture. A *mestiza*, should she marry a *criollo*, could actually elevate her offspring's caste to the higher level of *castiza* by decreasing the measure of her child's indigenous blood, in a process known as blood-mending (Gómez-Menjíbar 109). The same process of elevation occurred when a *castiza* wedded a Spaniard or *hispanocriollo*: her children would then rise to *criollo*/a standing. Yet, the fact that between twenty and forty per cent of those who claimed *hispanocriollo* status hid their mixed ancestry in order to maintain privileges and power blurred the picture (Bauer and Mazzotti 34-7). Another complicating factor, as Venegas cautions, with regard to the signifying value of *criollo* was that it failed to catch on universally until the eighteenth century: “El hecho de que la elite (sic) hispanocriolla haya pretendido—y logrado parcialmente—restringir el calificativo para sí, en particular a través de sus intelectuales ancilares, no ha podido impedir que el término mantuviese su acepción original para el negro nacido en América, y sus mestizos.”(11). Thus, as Buitrago Escobar notes in her review of Vitelli and Solodkov's *Poéticas de lo criollo*, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, “Lo criollo se inserta en una dinámica como término inestable, reelaborado y transformado” (191). It is this polyvalence that opens a rainbow of possibilities for casting Luzigüela.

How might Zamora and his audiences have understood the term *criollo* at the end of the seventeenth century and throughout the

eighteenth century? One source of information were *casta* paintings that were exported to Spain, providing images of different degrees of officially recognized racial admixtures (Katzew 2; see fig. 2). Often adorned with colorful New World fruits, plants and birds, *casta* paintings represented both varieties of colonial hybridity, as well as the flora and fauna of Spain's distant territories (Gates 67).<sup>25</sup> Ricardo de la Fuente Ballesteros reviews the variety of black figures in Spanish iconography from the medieval stereotype of King Baltasar to the comic archetype of the happy African or *afrocriollo* slave in eighteenth-century *tonadillas*.<sup>26</sup> Early Spanish *comedia* occasionally alluded to emerging transatlantic identities, both real and mythical. Furthermore, Kurt Reichenberger catalogues plays featuring conquerors, native peoples, mythical Amazons, and so-called *indianos*, Spaniards returning wealthy from the Indies—but not *criollos*.<sup>27</sup>

Sebastián de Covarrubias's dictionary, the *Tesoro de la lengua* did not yet register the word *criollo* in 1611. However, in 1614, Cervantes employed the term in Canto IV of his satirical epic, *Viaje del Parnaso*. In the course of an allegorical battle between warring poets, Cervantes's jocular narrator claims that a single sonnet written by Lupericio Leonardo de Argensola destroyed fourteen ranks of a squadron of enemy books, slayed two *criollos*, and wounded one *mestizo* (stanza 250, 121). By 1726, Spain's *Autoridades* dictionary

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<sup>25</sup> Yet, limiting hybridity to eight or sixteen (latermore) officially recognized distinctions only scratches the surface. Henry Louis Gates lists 135 descriptors for degrees of color or of African heritage that he found in Brazil, thirty-one in Mexico, eight in Peru, twelve in the Dominican Republic (not counting eleven hair-texture descriptors), and thirty-three in Cuba (223). Because Gates focuses on the hidden history of Blacks in the New World, his lists do not include white-indigenous blends.

<sup>26</sup> De la Fuente Ballesteros notes the comic presence of Africans and *afrocriollos* in sixteenth-century farces by Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, Lope de Rueda, and the Portuguese dramatist Gil Vicente. In the seventeenth century, Cervantes, Luis Quiñones de Benavente, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón de la Barca, among others, had expanded the repertoire of the imaginary Black. (191). De la Fuente Ballesteros also provides examples of dignified dramatizations of Blacks that includes Andrés de Claramonte's *El valiente negro en Flandes*, Ximénez Enciso's *Juan Latino*, and Blacks in Lope's hagiographic plays (194).

<sup>27</sup> Reichenberger also catalogues plays featuring phony *indianos* as in *El parecido en la corte*, *La prueba de los amigos*, *La bella malmaridada*, and *El amante agradecido*, yet he does not record the presence of *criollos*.



definition had steered the definition of *criollo* away from its earliest association with blackness: “El que nace en Indias de padres españoles.” (“One born in the Indies of Spanish Parents.”)<sup>28</sup>

While the verses from *Viaje del Parnaso* cited above demonstrate that Cervantes understood *criollos* and *mestizos* to be different from one another, peninsular Spaniards may not have made a clear distinction between *criollos* and *mulatos*, especially given that the word *criollo* could point either to Africans or Europeans ancestry. One clarification that can be made with respect to staging Luzigüela is that her spoken Castilian betrays none of the parodic argot ascribed to *bozales*.<sup>29</sup> Was she seen to be *criolla* or *mulata*? William Phillips’s definition of *bozal* both clarifies and obfuscates:

La sociedad colonial española poseía un rico vocabulario para describir a la gente según su estatus racial y su nivel de asimilación. El término *bozal* generalmente se empleaba para describir a un africano recientemente introducido en las regiones controladas por los europeos, mientras que el de *ladino* al principio se empleaba para el esclavo que había nacido en España o que había residido allí el tiempo suficiente para adquirir el lenguaje antes de que él o ella fuesen conducidos a las Indias; más tarde, *ladino* vino a utilizarse para designar al esclavo que había sido asimilado en España o en los territorios españoles de ultramar, y el de *criollo negro* para describir al negro nacido en América. A medida que pasaba el tiempo las palabras *ladino* y *criollo negro* acabaron utilizándose indiscriminadamente. (214, 215)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> For an example of the *casta* paintings that depicted racial difference in the New World see Luis de Mena (ca. 1750). *Casta* painting. Oil on canvas. Madrid: Museo de América. In Katzew, p. 195, plate 259.

<sup>29</sup> De la Fuente Ballesteros identifies a variety of linguistic markers associated with Afro-hispanic speech in early modern Spanish literature that includes phonetic, morphosyntactic, and lexical features (192-4).

<sup>30</sup> Free Blacks in the Captaincy General of Guatemala, known as *morenos* constituted a rising economic class whose success belied the social handicap of their African origins. Eventually, the term *ladino* would replace *moreno*, further dimming the association of dark skin with slave-origins. At the same time, runaway slaves or *cimarrones* who escaped to the isthmus’s rugged highlands, formed organized rebel populations that also defied Spanish and *hispanocriollo* authority (Gómez Menjivar 103-109).



By applying Phillips's formulation to the cultural situation portrayed in *El hechizado por fuerza*, the fully socialized Luzigüela, who understands and deploys Spanish cultural codes and speaks fluent Spanish, might better be characterized as a *ladina* or *criolla negra*, terms that, in any case, soon overlapped (215). Furthermore, if she were light-skinned, she may have been a *castiza* (light-skinned *mestiza*) or a *morisca* (light-skinned *mulata*) (Katzew 44).

Zamora prepared his audience to accept an exoticized portrayal of New World hybridity by ensuring that Lucía's costume set her apart from the rest of the cast. For her entrance in act one, the stage directions indicate that she be marked with a slave-brand on her cheek, and be dressed *a la andaluza* (101), that is, a colorful style distinct from courtly couture.<sup>31</sup> Much like Brazilian actor and singer Carmen Miranda (1909-1955), whose iconic turbans and "tutti-frutti" hats projected a mystique of generalized tropical flamboyance, Lucía's costume did not require ethnographic specificity, but rather a glamorous faraway air. Further setting Lucía apart from the other characters was her cheeky discourse. When the maid Isabel scolds her for over-sleeping, Lucía snaps back, "toca esos huesos" (101), an idiomatic reference to the wisdom of not pulling the bone from the jaws of a hungry dog. Lucía's retort to her superior (servant versus slave) foreshadows the audacious role she will play as Claudio's "enchantress" later in the play.

Returning to Lope's dictum of verisimilitude, both Luzigüela's role as slave woman, and that of mixed-race (fake) sorceress, invite closer scrutiny. Luzigüela's status as a female slave in an aristocratic household would not have surprised seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences. Enslavement had been practiced on the Iberian Peninsula and its territories at least since Roman times, and certainly during the Caliphate period. Christians based their justification for slaveholding on biblical reference as well as the "Curse of Ham"

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<sup>31</sup> Tracking down Andalusian style at the end of the seventeenth century presents a challenge, as the flamenco style with which we associate Andalusian fashion today did not become entrenched until the nineteenth century. However, the Arabic penchant for rich colors and fabrics may have inflected Andalusian ladies' style, as well as the early arrival of Roma communities from the east. Women from southern Spain also enjoyed more immediate contact with fashionable New World imports such as feathers, beads, and dyed woven goods arriving at the ports of Seville, and later, Cádiz.

argument (Gen 9:22-29). During the early modern period, the Canary Islands, Andalucía, and the Mediterranean coast accounted for the highest percentages of Iberian slaves, who were most commonly of African origin imported directly into Spain (Lobo Cabrera 1096-99). Surprisingly, few baptisms of enslaved people are recorded for Madrid. In fact, the population of slaves in the capital by the end of the sixteenth century—despite the presence of the royal court—was lower than that of Valencia or Seville (Philips 236). Eighty per cent of slaves in Madrid were owned by the nobility (Cabrera Lobo 1101), which is where Lucía's character finds herself in Zamora's play.

Lucía (or her parents) apparently came to Spain from the Captaincy General of Guatemala rather than directly from Africa. In the New World, the Spanish forced indigenous peoples into slavery until the 1542 "New Laws" nominally prohibited the practice. By then, seventy-five per cent of the indigenous population had already succumbed to war, disease, and overwork. To satisfy labor shortages in its territories, Spain resorted to purchasing African slaves through Portuguese middlemen. The trade was largely illegal, yet it is estimated that more than eleven million Africans suffered displacement to the Americas as forced laborers between 1500 and 1870 (Cáceres-Gómez 10, 11). Considering the scarcity of purebred Indian slaves, it is most likely that at least some generations back, Lucía's ancestors were of African origin.

Veracruz became the sixteenth-century port of entry for the slave-trade to Mexico, the Yucatán and the Captaincy General of Guatemala (Cáceres Gómez 10, 11). However, once Portugal regained its independence from Spain in 1640, the viceroys of the Indies stopped buying slaves from the Portuguese, coming to rely instead on their Protestant rivals, Holland and England. Intra-Caribbean trading at the ports of Portobelo (Panama), Curaçao, and Caracas eventually supplanted Veracruz (García Montón 423-24). Zamora's *El hechizado por fuerza's* action takes place in an indeterminate courtly present contemporaneous with the author's service at the court of Carlos II (r. 1665-1700). Depending on how many generations earlier Lucía's ancestors had arrived in the New World from Africa, they might have disembarked at Veracruz or any of the Caribbean ports that replaced it.

Spanish law forbade the break-up of slave families (Phillips 214). Yet such illegal separations did occur, and Lucía may have been swept up into a process of assimilation despite her captivity. Indeed, again, depending on the number of generations and admixtures that Lucía's parents bequeathed to her, her ancestral African features may have receded. And if those admixtures included whites, she would also fit the category of *mulata*,<sup>32</sup> which in the Indies could have opened new horizons of social mobility to a woman like her. In colonial Mexico, Spanish men often chose Black or *mulata* women as mistresses during the seventeenth century. This preference allowed some Black women in the capital and in Puebla to make a good living. In addition, *negras* and *mulatas* were exempt from the sumptuary laws governing Spanish, *criolla*, and indigenous women in Mexico. This liminal situation permitted *mulatas* and *negras* to develop a uniquely showy style of dress (Israel 69).<sup>33</sup>

Jonathan Israel's account of Spanish and white *hispanocriollo* men's attraction to comely *mulatas* offers a clue regarding the final stage of Lucía's trajectory from Africa through Guatemala to Madrid. Quite conceivably, she (or her mother or grandmother) caught her owner's eye and became his mistress. When the master's business in Guatemala was finished, he could have brought her with him back to Madrid. There she may have remained within his household, or she or her daughter may have been gifted to another family. Accustomed to finery, she may have continued as before to dress extravagantly. In fact, Luzigüela's literary precedent could well be Zelima / Isabel, also an enslaved female who ends up in a wealthy household in Zayas's 1647 novella "La esclava de su amante."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Gates notes that he himself, Barak Obama, and Beyoncé also fit the hybrid category of *mulato* (74).

<sup>33</sup> The same flamboyance was true for *hispanocriollo* men, who were called *papagallos* according to Chang-Rodríguez:

The singular beauty and flashy feathers of this tropical bird were linked to the *criollo*. His good looks and courteous demeanor hid the two failings of his place of birth and his intellectual limitations. Like the *papagallo*, the *criollo* was condemned to show off, to imitate, and never to create. (123)

<sup>34</sup> In Zayas's narrative, Zelima / Isabel at first merely dons the trappings of a morisca slave in order to track her unfaithful lover to Sicily. But, after Don Manuel rejects her a second time, Zelima / Isabel sells herself voluntarily into slavery. Fortunately, she is eventually gifted to Doña Lisis, to whom she

Whether light-skinned, tan, or dark, *ladina*, *mulata*, *garífuna*, *zamba*, or other Creole mix, Luzigüela finally arrived in Spain, where her presence in *El hechizado por fuerza* harmonizes with the historical record, the resemanticization of the word *criollo* throughout the colonial period, the possibilities open to *mulatas* in the Captaincy General of Guatemala, and the evolution of the transatlantic slave trade. It would have been reasonable for Zamora's audience to believe that either Lucía or her ancestors had completed a triangular route as slaves from Africa through the New World to Spain terminating her adventure in Leonor's household speaking perfect Spanish.

Finally, let us examine the implications of Luzigüela's role as parodic sorceress. As we have seen, Zamora's play debuted in Toledo before Carlos II (r1665-1700) and his second wife, Mariana de Neoburgo, and played again before the royals at the Buen Retiro Palace Coliseum in Madrid in 1700, both dates coinciding with Carnival of their respective years (Bermejo Gregorio 89, 90). Thereafter, *El hechizado* enjoyed one hundred and fourteen known performances over the next century and a half (Dowling 281). This legacy appears even more remarkable in light of the cultural and religious sensitivities of Zamora's varied audiences. Those sensitivities revolved around the polyvalent implications of sorcery under inquisitorial scrutiny during the reign of Carlos II and beyond.

Blazing in *El hechizado por fuerza*'s title is the theologically, politically, and ethnographically loaded word *hechizado*. Zamora walked a fine line with the Inquisition for treating sorcery in a lighthearted fashion, especially as he deployed it to deceive an ecclesiast. The notion that malignant powers could override free-will challenged Catholic doctrine.<sup>35</sup> Paradoxically, doctrinal literature was instrumental in spreading knowledge of diabolical and magical practices. For example, Pedro Ciruelo's 1530 *Reprobación de supersticiones y hechicerías* censures "belief in the evil eye, the use of amulets, reliance on horoscopes, healing by spells, and rainmaking" while accepting the existence of

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becomes more a friend and companion than a slave. This appears to be the relationship that Leonor and Lucía enjoy, especially as they join forces to ensnare Don Claudio.

<sup>35</sup> Thomist and Molinists alike maintained that humans could elect good or evil behavior. Thomists believed God foresaw human choice, but Molinists claimed that God merely foresaw the unique conditions that would be present when humans exercised free will. (*New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia online*).

witch's sabbaths and witches' ability to fly (Campagne 26). In 1631, Valencian Jesuit Benito Pereira credited demonic spirits with the power to create strong winds, storms at sea, and earthquakes. More relevant to Claudio's hypochondria in *El hechizado*, Pereira's *Adversus fallaces et superstitiosas artes* also claimed that evil spirits could make inanimate objects speak, and "change and perturb bodily humors, causing severe disturbances and illness" (Campagne 48).<sup>36</sup>

Novelists and playwrights of the period who wove occult elements such as witchcraft or judiciary astrology into their plots used several strategies to sidestep theological concerns. First, writers could cast occult motifs in a negative light as morally corrupt.<sup>37</sup> Exemplars of this didactic formula include Fernando de Rojas' greedy Celestina; Cervantes's witch-like characters Cañizares and la Montiel of "El coloquio de los perros;" Calderón's ersatz astrologer of *El astrólogo fingido*, and María de Zayas's depraved Don Diego of "La inocencia castigada." Such characters fulfilled a double role. In terms of marketing, exotic characters wielding supernatural powers attracted curious readers. At the same time, such fictive encounters admonished readers to guard against deceitful enchanters.

Another evasive recourse for authors who included elements of sorcery in their writings was to place practitioners of the occult at the margins of society in order to underline that they did not belong in decent company. Recall, for example, that Celestina lived near the tanneries on the outskirts of Salamanca. Don Diego of Zayas's "La inocencia castigada" purchased the candle with which he bewitched Doña Inés from a Moorish vendor, during a period when dominant Catholic society viewed Moslems as social pariahs. Lope skirted criticism in *El niño inocente de la Guardia* by casting its "witches" as *conversas*.

Furthermore, when preternatural events turned out merely to be products of gullibility, they fell into the realm of harmless comic expedient. Superstitious characters such as Don Manuel's servant Cosme in Calderón's *La dama duende* became beloved objects of

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<sup>36</sup> For a more extensive bibliography of theological treatises on demonology and witchcraft, see Graciela Rodríguez Castañón 89.

<sup>37</sup> In 1484, Pope Innocent VII promulgated the Bull "*Summis desiderantes affectibus*," which formally acknowledged the existence of witches and detailed the nature of their heresies (*Catholic Encyclopedia*). Gaspar Navarro's *Tribunal de la superstición ladina* (1631) endorsed the reality of *maleficia* and the witch's sabbath, calling for public punishment of witches (Haliczer 147).

ridicule.<sup>38</sup> With reference to *El hechizado por fuerza*, John Dowling notes that humor defused criticism of Zamora's play:

La farsa no suele proponer ideas de gran envergadura. Su intento es producir la buena carcajada. Precisamente por eso es el general indicado para poner en tela de juicio la perversidad o la sinrazón en situaciones que pudieran ser peligrosas para el autor que se atreva a burlarse de ellas. La ira de la persona ridiculizada, si se reconoce en la alusión, se disuelve en risa. Por eso, Zamora pudiera acercarse atrevidamente a la realidad de la corte de Carlos II. (280)

Staged during Carnival, *El hechizado* was expected to provide comic, even burlesque entertainment. Bermejo Gregorio conjectures that this permissive atmosphere may have further shielded Zamora from censure (90).<sup>39</sup>

Politically speaking, the word *hechizado* in Zamora's title rather unsubtly brought up the subject of Carlos II's inability, across two marriages, to sire an heir.<sup>40</sup> The king, aware that his mother, Queen Mariana was eager to regain the power she had wielded as Regent before he came of age, deduced that she had cast a spell on him that deprived him of his procreative powers. To undo the hex, the monarch underwent various exorcisms conducted by his confessor, Friolán Díaz. These ineffective ceremonies would earn him the

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<sup>38</sup> Cosme reacts with superstitious panic to inexplicable rearrangements of his master's room. By contrast, Don Manuel, pursues a rational explanation. Viewers of the play, however, know that a cleverly concealed doorway permits Doña Ángela and Isabel to sneak in and make mischief. This dramatic irony renders Cosme's invocation of succubuses and energumens even more risible.

<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that the *comedia de magia* remained a popular genre throughout the eighteenth century. Limiting his tabulation of ticket sales to Madrid alone, René Andioc lists *Diablos son los alcabute y el espíritu de foletto*, *El mágico Brocario*, *El mágico de Salerno Pedro Vayalarde*, and its four continuations, the three installments of *El anillo de Gíges*, *Don Juan de Espina en Madrid* and *Don Juan de Espina en Milán*, *Juana la Rabicortona*, *El mágico de Astracán*, *El mágico Finea*, *María la Romarantina*, and *A un tiempo esclavo y señor y mágico africano* (36-40).

<sup>40</sup> For further details regarding the King's infirmity and its diagnosis, see González, 143, 44. The dynastic crisis that followed the monarch's death in 1700 led to a sixteen-year war of succession that would end Hapsburg rule in Spain and inaugurate Bourbon accession to the throne.

derisive sobriquet of Carlos II *el hechizado*. Thus, any reference to sorcery during the period of Carlos II's second marriage might have been interpreted as an imputation of the king's impotency, of his superstitiousness, or of the dynastic uncertainty that his reproductive deficiency entailed.<sup>41</sup>

Even so, the word *hechizo* had appeared in the full title of other plays of the period, notably the tri-authored *El encanto es la hermosura y el hechizo sin hechizo: la Segunda Celestina* by Agustín de Salazar y Torres, Juan de Vera Tassis and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, staged in 1675 or 1676 (O'Connor). Zamora's contemporary, Francisco Bances Candamo (1662-1704) also produced a trio of palace plays loosely linking the theme of royal succession to that of sorcery. In the third of these, *La piedra filosofal*, the allegory of an heirless prince, evidently hit too close to home. Shortly after Carlos II attended the opening of the play in 1693, Bances found himself banished to the provinces as a minor functionary, unable to return to court for three years (González 136).

Zamora's successful send-up of superstition in *El hechizado por fuerza* contrasts markedly with the consequences that Bances Candamo suffered. Like Bances, Zamora matched the theme of matrimony with that of sorcery, but, unlike his contemporary, Zamora steered clear of any references to royal succession. As a further margin of safety, Zamora placed the occult arts in the hands of a safe scapegoat: an enslaved, presumably Guatemalan woman serving in a noble Madrid household. Coming from a subaltern New World subject, Luzigüela's command of "witchcraft" reinforced prevailing negative stereotypes without challenging Church doctrine. Luis Moreno, the actor who played Don Claudio at the Almagro Festival performance of 2003, conjectures that Zamora assigned the role of enchantress to a slave woman in order to allay inquisitorial compunctions: "Como vehículo, utilizan una esclava (ni siquiera criada, cuidado con la inquisición de entonces) de las Américas para justificar sus desmanes." (García-Araus 64). Furthermore, Lucía's alterity magnifies the impact of her actions in the eyes of Don

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<sup>41</sup> Bermejo Gregorio draws an explicit parallel between Leonor and her friends' manipulation of Claudio's superstitiousness for their own gain in *El hechizado por fuerza* and Queen Mariana and her followers' struggle for political control through exploitation of the king's superstitiousness (92, 93). For a closer examination of the crisis of succession provoked by Carlos II's inexistent heir, see González 133-34.



Claudio whose “terca simplicidad” (100) would become the Achilles heel that Leonor exploits to reel him in.

Spanish authorities mistrusted the religious practices of novo-Hispanic indigenous, *mestizo*, and *mulato* populations. Inquisitorial trials conducted in the Indies attested to perceived magical and diabolical practices of these colonial subjects, including the casting of spells and brewing of potions both to sicken and to heal, witches’ sabbaths, pacts with the devil, metempsychosis, human-to-animal transformations, apparitions, and communal dances that could conjure or dispel spirits, etc. (Flores and Maserá, editors. *Relatos populares de la Inquisición Novohispana: Rito, magia y otras “supersticiones,” siglos XVII–XVIII*). Many of the tropes that Leonor stages to frighten and subdue Claudio—the threat of being hexed by a *guatemalteca* in act one, the makeshift amulet, enchanted oil-lamp and talking automaton of act two, and the voodoo doll and hiccup-inducing powders of act three—represent a mash-up of Old and New World conventions and clichés that collectively fall under the heading of ignorant superstition. Recall that in act one Leonor relates that Luzigüela had already persuaded Claudio that she was an enchantress,

pues de criolla  
venida de Guatemala  
le has hecho creer, que en las Indias  
hacer hechizos es gala” (102).<sup>42</sup>

Barbara Fuchs terms the orientalist fascination with Spain’s Islamic past maurophilia, whereas she calls the equal and opposite aversion to Moslems evident in much of Spanish reconquest literature maurophobia. This ambivalence effortlessly translated to New World subjects, whose appearance, customs, flora and fauna were sources of wonderment, while their “heretical” beliefs and habits drew contempt and fear. Significantly, Luzigüela’s character embodies both attitudinal extremes. Her exoticism appealed to a seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spanish public curious about the faraway Indies, yet, at the same time, her triple alterity—as *criolla*, enslaved person,

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<sup>42</sup> New World witch trial transcripts reveal that “The witches in New Spain, as well as the witches in Europe, used to fly, suck the life from children, employ hallucinogenic substances, and transform themselves into animals. They were usually mestizo or mulatto, unmarried, and old” (Rodríguez Castañón 92 n3).



and Guatemalan—actually multiplied her ability to cow the wayward groom. This comic reversal of the expectation that subaltern bodies lack power provides much of the play’s dramatic spark and sparkle.

Four factors to take into account when casting Luzigüela’s character are: the degree of agency Zamora accorded her; her potentially heterodox role as “enchantress”; Don Claudio’s inordinate aversion to her; and her comical stage presence. These elements hint at a flamboyant character, distinct from the household members surrounding her. As long as she can credibly prey upon Claudio’s maurophobia and simultaneously incite the audience’s maurophilia, Lucía’s racial features might reasonably fall anywhere within the broad spectrum of admixtures and interpretations of *criollismo* discussed above. Whether cast today as white, like Ana Ruíz, as *mulata*, like Beyoncé or Carmen Miranda, or as Black, like Whoopi Goldberg (my top choice for the part), Luzigüela configured the optimal deflective agent for thematizing enchantment on stage before the very eyes of Carlos II *el hechizado*.

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## THINKING THROUGH EMBODIMENT, GENDER, AND ADAPTATION IN *FUERZA DE LA COSTUMBRE* AND ITS REIMAGININGS

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**Abstract:** In Guillén de Castro's play *La fuerza de la costumbre* (c. 1610) cross-gendered siblings Hipólita and Félix de Moncada are used to examine the concept of gender, and identity more broadly, through the lens of the nature vs. nurture debate as it existed in the early modern period. The title somewhat spoils the conclusions of the play, that it is habit, not nature, which has had the stronger hand in the development of these siblings. The play itself is grounded in a careful study of how gender is meant to be embodied, with particular emphasis on how clothing, movement, and even stance factor into a successful performance of masculinity or femininity. But what happens to this understanding of gender when the plot is tested by different societal constraints in different historical periods? We have existing examples of how gendered embodiment functions transhistorically in several adaptations of *Fuerza*, the first being the contemporary *Love's Cure or The Martial Maid* (1612-13), by English playwrights Beaumont and Massinger, a later reimagining in the Spanish *zarzuela Talismán* (1929), by Federico Romero and Guillermo Fernández-Shaw, and two American adaptations in 2022, Dave Dalton's *Forces of Nature* and *The Force of Habit* by Peter Cockett and

Melinda Gough. Of particular interest is how each play portrays the intersection between maleness/masculinity and social occupation, with the role of the male-coded protagonist shifting depending on the constraints of their particular society. The point of departure for this article is thus tracing how Guillén de Castro's character Félix is reimagined, reconfigured, or rebuilt to fit other times and places, and how practices of embodiment, both at the level of the text and the level of historical theatrical practice, continue to challenge gender conformity and categorization across different societies.

**Resumen:** La obra de Guillén de Castro *La fuerza de la costumbre* (c. 1610) examina el concepto de género e identidad a través de los hermanos Hipólita y Félix de Moncada, una examinación que se basa en el debate sobre la naturaleza vs. crianza tal como existía en la temprana modernidad. El título hace clara las conclusiones de la obra, que es el hábito, no la naturaleza, lo que ha tenido mayor influencia en el desarrollo de estos hermanos. La obra en sí se basa en un estudio cuidadoso de cómo se debe encarnar el género, con énfasis en cómo la ropa, el movimiento e incluso la postura influyen en una actuación exitosa de la masculinidad o la feminidad. Pero, ¿qué sucede con esta visión del género cuando la trama se pone a prueba por diferentes restricciones sociales en diferentes períodos históricos? Tenemos ejemplos existentes de cómo funciona la encarnación de género transhistóricamente en varias adaptaciones de *Fuerza*, la primera la adaptación contemporánea *Love's Cure o The Martial Maid* (1612-13), de los dramaturgos ingleses Beaumont y Massinger, una reinención posterior en la zarzuela española *Talismán* (1929), de Federico Romero y Guillermo Fernández-Shaw, y dos adaptaciones estadounidenses en 2022, *Forces of Nature* de Dave Dalton, y *The Force of Habit* por Peter Cockett y Melinda Gough. De mayor interés es cómo cada obra retrata la intersección entre la masculinidad y la ocupación social, con el papel del hijo protagonista cambiando dependiendo de las limitaciones de su sociedad particular. El punto de partida de este artículo es seguir los cambios del personaje, Félix, examinando cómo es reimaginado, reconfigurado o reconstruido para adaptarse a otros tiempos y lugares, y cómo las prácticas de representación, tanto a nivel del texto como a nivel de la práctica teatral histórica, continúan desafiando la conformidad y categorización de género en diferentes sociedades.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** cross-gender, *Fuerza de costumbre*, sibling rivalry, intersectionality, masculinity / transgénero, *Fuerza de costumbre*, rivalidad entre hermanos, interseccionalidad, masculinidad

In Guillén de Castro's play *La fuerza de costumbre* (c. 1610)<sup>43</sup> the siblings Hipólita and Félix are used to examine the concept of gender, and identity more broadly, through the lens of the nature vs. nurture debate as it existed in the early modern period. Due to the illicit coupling of their parents, two siblings are raised apart for twenty years, each by a parent of the opposite gender. The baby girl, raised on the battlefield by her father, grows into a brave and honorable soldier, while her brother, raised alongside the women of his noble household, speaks softly and knows how to handle a knitting needle. Once the family comes back together, the cross-gendered siblings horrify their parents and amuse onlookers as “monstruos de naturaleza,” which sets off a series of attempts by friends and family to restore them to a more natural—read, socially acceptable—state. Can they ever unlearn the gender they were raised in? Will love be the cause of their ultimate transformation? Do they even want to change their ways?

The title somewhat spoils the conclusions of the play, that it is habit and not nature which has had the stronger hand in the development of these siblings, echoing Aristotelian thought on the power of habits. The play itself is grounded in a careful study of how gender is meant to be embodied, with particular emphasis on how clothing, movement, and even stance factor into a successful performance of masculinity or femininity. In this sense, Aristotle's theory underlies the entire premise of the play: that education and the cultivation of habits lead to success (or failure) in assuming one's “natural” role (31). The plot explicitly stages the process of constructing an acceptable gender performance as over the course of Castro's play, Félix and Hipólita must undergo a painstakingly thorough re-education at the hands of their parents, each other,

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<sup>43</sup> Dates for Guillén de Castro's plays come from Courtney Bruerton's extensive study of Castro's versification, as his chronology continues to be the most comprehensive study to date. Bruerton, Courtney. “The Chronology of the Comedias of Guillén De Castro.” *Hispanic Review*, 12, 2 (1944).



and their love interests in order to embody their gender roles in a socially acceptable way. As Harry Vélez Quiñones has noted, while *La fuerza de la costumbre* is not unique in examining ideas of gender instability, as the highly popular trope of cross-dressed characters often destabilizes essentialist understandings of gender within the *comedia*, it is remarkable for how it suggests that Hipólita and Félix’s “trouble ‘getting [gender] right’ suggest in fact that no such thing as ‘right’ exists and that *costumbre* is always relative, at best” (192).

We have existing examples of how gendered embodiment functions transhistorically in two early adaptations of *Fuerza*, the first being the contemporary *Love’s Cure or The Martial Maid* (c.1606-1613), by John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, and a later reimagining in the *zarzuela Talismán* (1929), by Federico Romero and Guillermo Fernández-Shaw. The reconfiguration of the Félix character is of particular interest for how each play portrays the intersection between maleness/masculinity and social occupation, with the possible role of the male-coded protagonist shifting and even expanding depending on the constraints of their particular society.<sup>44</sup> This same challenge to gender essentialism has proved attractive for modern practitioners and audiences as well, with adaptations and performances of the play increasing in recent years amidst political fights in the United States over legislating when, how, and where individuals might freely express their gender identities.<sup>45</sup> Two recent adaptations which are worth examining for their broadening representation of gender as a spectrum are Dave Dalton’s *Forces of Nature*, performed in a staged reading at the LA Escena Festival in September 2022, and a production at McMaster University by Peter Cockett and Melinda Gough in November 2022. The questions about gender and identity which form the central premise of this play are seemingly timeless, and yet the answers which *Fuerza* provides about how gender is and should be performed are far from universal.

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<sup>44</sup> By contrast the gender expectations for the Hipólita characters are remarkably similar, involving a general requirement to be less: less active, less public, less vocal.

<sup>45</sup> Recent stagings of *Fuerza* in the United States, based on Kathleen Jeffs’ translation, include a staged reading at the ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) conference in 2012 and full productions at Gonzaga University, 2013; University of Puget Sound, 2015; Lewis-Clark State College, 2018.



In recent times the concept of intersectionality has created another way to conceptualize identity which allows for far greater complexity than the Aristotelian theories of habits, allowing for more nuanced understanding of the way that individual identities are shaped, countered, or encouraged by their societies. But what happens to our understanding of intersecting categories of identity when tracing something like “gender” across different time periods? The point of departure for this article is thus tracing how Guillén de Castro’s character Félix is reimagined, reconfigured, or rebuilt to fit other times and places, and how practices of embodiment, both at the level of the text and the level of historical theatrical practice, continue to challenge gender conformity and categorization across different societies.

## Bad Habits: Félix de Moncada

To begin, it is important to examine how Castro’s source text details how gender is learned (and unlearned) by the siblings. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Félix and Hipólita’s trajectory in *Fuerva* is the way that their transformation throughout the play allows for the deconstruction of gender norms, expectations, and embodiments through the very construction of their heteronormative identities as Félix, nobleman, and Hipólita, noblewoman. While the siblings share the stage, splitting the plot fairly evenly between their personal struggles and triumphs, the plot of the play in many ways favors Félix. As the son and heir to the house of Moncada, he must learn how to be a man worthy of that name, and so his trajectory becomes one of upward movement as he gains power and respect within the household, while in opposition Hipólita becomes increasingly more constrained.<sup>46</sup> In the course of becoming a worthy heir, Félix must learn how to wear male clothing, how to take a manly stance, hold a sword and fight with honor. Until this point in his life, Félix

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<sup>46</sup> Of course, there are nuances to play within the text which allow Hipólita to retain her agency, as advocated by Kathleen Jeffs and Vélez Quiñones. See Jeffs, Kathleen. “Gender Politics in Guillén de Castro’s *La fuerza de la costumbre*.” *On Wolves and Sheep: Exploring the Expression of Political Thought in Golden Age Spain*. Ed. Aaron M. Kahn. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011, 147-76.

had been perfectly happy to dress in the robes of a student, and in fact when Don Pedro first meets his son he wonders if Félix is determined to be a scholar or even a man of the cloth. As soon as he discovers his son has no such intentions, however, Don Pedro begins Félix's lengthy education process to fulfill his duties as heir to the house of Moncada. A change from long robes to noble male attire is Félix's first step, though Castro makes it clear that clothing alone cannot make the man:

*Sale DON FÉLIX, vestido de corto, mal puesto cuanto lleva, y él muy encogido.*<sup>47</sup>

Don Pedro [...] Bueno vienes, Félix mío;  
pues ya sin trabas estás,  
alarga los pasos más

*Alarga el paso descompasada y ridículamente*  
asienta los pies con brío.

Félix Servirte en todo deseo.

Don Pedro Caiga con más desenfado  
el ferreruelo a este lado;  
advierte que no es manteo;  
imita a los cortesanos.

*Pone los dos dedos pulgares asidos de la pretina.*  
Esa es postura frailesca;  
¡quita, quita! No parezca  
que te embarazan las manos.  
Párate varonilmente...

*Pone los pies juntos*

...¡qué mal te paraste aquí! (I.481-494)

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<sup>47</sup> *La fuerza de la costumbre* was first published in 1625 as part of the *Segunda Parte de las comedias de Don Guillem de Castro* by Miguel Sorolla in Valencia, with Castro himself receiving the "Aprobación" in 1624 and as Melissa Machit has documented, there is much variation among the surviving manuscripts. While these stage directions do not appear in every surviving manuscript of the play, they do appear in one of the manuscripts at the Biblioteca Nacional de España (MSS/17064. 28) and appear in their entirety in the first printed edition. Machit's assessment is that "the manuscripts pre-date the princeps, and that Guillén de Castro made final edits to the play, with most new material appearing in Act III, before the 1625 print publication" (21). Citations for *Fuerza* are from Machit (2013).

This scene is remarkable in the context of the *comedia* as it has surprisingly detailed stage directions for the actions of the character throughout the exchange. The importance of embodiment is evident: from the description of the clothing that is “mal puesto” to the direction that Félix must be “encogido” in his movements, the text zeroes in on the body and its expressions as the key to signify Félix’s failure to behave like a man of noble status.

Don Pedro’s immediate corrective commentary focuses in on the minutiae of expectations surrounding male bearing, at one point even detailing the appropriate length of a stride and how far apart to keep one’s feet (Castro, “La fuerza de la costumbre” 1.497-500). As we can see in the quoted passage, this particular embodiment of masculinity does not come easily, and indeed it will require constant social correction from his father, his servant, his sister Hipólita, and even his love interest Leonor. Learning to embody masculinity quite literally begins with learning how to carry his body through the world in a recognizably masculine way. These teaching sessions are followed by lessons in fencing and swordplay before moving on to flirtation and eventually learning how to defend his honor and by extension that of his family in a duel. It is important to note that Félix’s final transformation into an acceptable version of masculinity occurs with a physical altercation between himself and a rival, where his skills with a sword finally confirm his right to be Don Pedro’s heir.

These lessons are constant throughout the play, and it is not until Félix nearly kills a rival in a duel at the play’s close that he finally learns to step into the gender expectations he must live by for the rest of his life. This representation of constructing gender from the body up, so to speak, bears out what we now understand about the embodiment of gender norms in that “the embodiment of gender is extremely complex, fragile and, above all, never fully achieved. Ethnomethodological work tells us a lot about the endless effort it takes to be socially recognizable as a man or woman” (Villa 179). It requires a constant self-vigilance or risk the corrective nature of societal pressure; in Castro’s play, this pressure takes form in Don Pedro’s threats to kill his own son if he cannot learn to behave, in body and soul, as a nobleman. As Vélez Quiñones notes, gender performance “is always all about deportment, that is, it is always a matter of getting it ‘right enough’ through repetition and performative

skills” (197). Nevertheless, if we look at how the play opens, we are confronted immediately with the always already failed enterprise of meeting societal expectations around gender norms, even the ones trying to be reinforced by the characters themselves. After all, if not for Doña Costanza and Don Pedro’s failures to keep the decorum and honor expected of individuals of their class and gender, the plot of the play would never have occurred to begin with. Doña Costanza chastises Hipólita not to look at men, bemoaning how her own eyes betrayed her, while Don Pedro exhorts Félix to always duel the honorable way, and yet he himself killed a man as a trespasser in that man’s home. In both cases, the parents in *Fuero* have not fulfilled the roles that were expected of them, and the consequences they faced were terrible: a twenty-year separation across continents, a lost youth and a broken family. In trying to “fix” their children, the parents of Castro’s play are also attempting to make up for the gaps in their own embodiments of socially acceptable masculinity and femininity.

### **Making a Man: Lucio**

The first adaptation of Castro’s *Fuero* surfaces soon after the creation of the source text. Attributed to English playwrights John Fletcher and Philip Massinger as *Love’s Cure, or The Martial Maid* (1606-1613),<sup>48</sup> this adaptation is more explicit in its references to physical and sexual violence, exaggerating the moral and physical shortcomings of its male characters and presenting—in spite of a similarly conventional ending of heteronormative couplings—an even stronger argument for gender as performance than Guillén de Castro’s original. *Love’s Cure* recasts Castro’s gender-swapped siblings to better fit and reflect another society’s gender norms and expectations, and thus reimagines how issues of gender were represented on a broader early modern stage.

The English adaptation is set in Seville and begins, much like the original, as patriarch Alvarez (Don Pedro in Castro’s play) returns

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<sup>48</sup> The play had previously been attributed to Fletcher and Francis Beaumont, as it forms part of a folio which includes works by Beaumont. See Pérez Díez, José A. “Introduction.” *Love’s Cure, or The Martial Maid*, Manchester University Press, 2022.

from a 20-year exile serving as a military commander in Flanders. The first major difference in the adaptation is that Alvarez has been banished from Spain by royal decree because he murdered another man, creating a blood feud with the man's nephew Vitelli which affects every aspect of the plot moving forward. While in *Fueroza* Don Pedro is able to claim his rightful place as Costanza's husband after her father dies, Alvarez instead finds pardon through the actions of his daughter Clara, raised as a soldier under the name 'Lucio,' a name she must surrender to her brother once the family is reunited.<sup>49</sup>

Although not as fully developed a character as his *Fueroza* counterpart Félix, Lucio nevertheless contributes to the play's examination of gendered expectations around masculine behavior and deportment. A stark change in the English adaptation is that Lucio has been raised as female, under the female name Posthumina, so that no one but the closest servants and his mother know that he is actually the male heir of the exiled Alvarez. Even in this early adaptation the change in social context marks a dramatic shift along the gender spectrum: Lucio is not just a cross-gendered male son raised with femininely coded interests, he has in fact lived two decades fully embodying the female gender and even being identified by outside society as female. Herein lies the most important distinction in the gender dynamics experienced in Castro's source text and its English adaptation. Félix is recognized as male his entire life and thus his gender expression, while lacking as far as his father's standards for a noble male heir are concerned, remains nevertheless male. By contrast, Lucio has lived his entire life performing a female identity in order to protect himself, and so his self-conception becomes a far more complex question to contend with in comparison. Lucio's identity up until the beginning of the play is understood by the other characters to be a role he has played, marking him as perhaps the most explicit example of the constructedness of gender in this society.

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<sup>49</sup> Clara's protagonism in *Love's Cure* eclipses that of her brother Lucio, evidenced in the play's alternate title *The Martial Maid*. She is established early on as being a cut above all the men she interacts with. Anne Duncan has argued convincingly that Clara is "presented as the only 'real man' in the play" (398) because she gives a superior performance of the male code of honor, a form of masculinity based in chivalric ideals that all the other men fail to meet at one point or another.

Despite these marked differences in the plot, the trajectory of the male sibling in *Love's Cure* follows the same pattern of gender education as his Spanish counterpart Félix, from practicing physical embodiment with a change of attire to performing recognized masculine social action. Although there is less interest in representing the physical practicalities of embodying a noble masculinity with the detail found in *Fuerya*, the adaptation still stages the physical constraints imposed on expectations of the male body alongside the social obligations attached to masculinity. In the following exchange, the servant Bobadilla, tasked with shepherding the transformation to manhood, openly mocks Lucio's attempts at wearing male attire:

Bobadilla [...] Your  
 Father has committed you to my charge, and  
 I will make a man, or a mouse on you.

Lucio What would you have me do? this scurvy sword  
 So gals my thigh: I would 'twere burnt: pish, look  
 This cloak will ne'r keep on: these boots too  
 hide bound,  
 Make me walk stiff, as if my legs were frozen,  
 And my Spurs jingle, like a Morris-dancer:  
 Lord, how my head aches, with this roguish hat;  
 This masculine attire, is most uneasy,  
 I am bound up in it: I had rather walk  
 In folio, again, loose, like a woman.

Bobadilla In Foolio, had you not?  
 Thou mock to heaven, and nature, and thy Parents,  
 Thou tender Leg of Lamb; Oh, how he walks  
 As if he had bepossed himself, and fleers!

(I.747-762)

This adaptation of the scene from Castro's play makes several notable changes from the source text. First, the characters involved in this re-education have gone from the entire household in *Fuerya* to only the servant Bobadilla<sup>50</sup> being left responsible for Lucio's lessons in "masculine attire." This change is in line with the diminished importance of Lucio as a character within the adaptation, which

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<sup>50</sup> Based on the *gracioso* Galván in the *Fuerya*.

focuses much more on Clara's trajectory toward an embodiment of femininity that will still allow her to retain the agency she enjoyed as a soldier. Consequently, Lucio's scenes become focused on making him the butt of derisive jokes by the other men in the play. The servant's response to his master's complaints is unflinchingly harsh, especially cruel in regard to the clothing which Lucio has been made to wear his entire life as protection against a revenge-killing. Despite knowing that Lucio's previously female gender expression has been required as a precautionary measure, the servant is relentless in his insults throughout the course of the play, even going so far as to threaten Lucio with death in an attempt to incite the young man into actions deemed masculine. As a consequence, this exchange becomes much less instructive than the scene in the source text, focusing more on Lucio's discomfort with his new clothing and Bobadilla's mocking of Lucio's non-masculine bearing, in particular pointing to Lucio's walk looking "as if he had be-pissed himself" (vv 762). On a structural level, the fact that this scene lacks the kind of detailed stage directions seen in Castro's play means that we must rely on Lucio's speech to understand his bodily movements, enacting the discomfort of more restrictive male clothing which make him move stiffly and with more constraint. This is similar to the complaints made by both siblings in *Fuerza*, but the lack of instructive feedback on the part of the servant in this scene means that we lack the same kind of information of gendered expectations of maleness, at least in the deportment of the individual body, minimizing the importance of stance and clothing as markers of manliness within the context of this play.

Lucio's education in the manly arts of combat become crucial here, as well as the focus on his sexuality, the expression of heteronormative sexual desire, and functioning male organs. In order to be considered a man by the society being portrayed in this play, Lucio must learn to fight at least as well as his sister, although it is also made clear that a demonstration of heterosexual desire is just as, if not more, important. Once it becomes clear to the other characters that Lucio's bearing and swordsmanship are sorely lacking and not likely to improve, the focus of the other men shifts to ensuring that he express socially acceptable masculinity by way of violence or sexual conquest:

Alvarez     There's only one course left, that may redeem thee,  
              Which is, to strike the next man that you meet,  
              And if we chance to light upon a woman,  
              Take her away, and use her like a man,  
              Or I will cut thy hamstrings. (IV.2010-14)

Fletcher and Massinger's adaptation seems to leave no room for ambiguity: violent action makes you a nobleman, and sex makes you a man. And, while in Castro's original play Don Pedro makes similar threats against Félix's life stating:

la sangre mía  
en sus venas y en su pecho,  
será honrado, pues es limpia,  
o sacarésela toda (1.465-69)

He nevertheless focuses his attention on ensuring that Félix is able to adequately express his masculinity in public forums via brave actions and honorable combat when necessary. Although Don Pedro believes love to be the perfect motivator for his son to begin acting like a man, sexual desire or conquest is not considered as part of the corrective practices of embodiment of masculinity that Félix must undertake. By the end of the fourth act of *Love's Cure*, however, Lucio's own transformation has begun once he experiences a sexual awakening:

Lucio        My womanish soul, which hitherto hath governed  
              This coward flesh, I feel departing from me;  
              And in me by her beauty is inspired  
              A new, and masculine one: instructing me  
              What's fit to do or suffer; powerful love  
              That hast with loud, and yet a pleasing thunder  
              Roused sleeping manhood in me (IV.2220-26)

This fixation on expressing masculinity through sexual desire is perhaps the reason for Bobadilla's insistence throughout the play on making ribald jokes about Lucio's sexuality and male genitalia. Faced with a deeply engrained performance of femininity, calling attention to Lucio's sexual organs, and their function, seems to be the easiest way for Bobadilla and other male characters to reassure



themselves that masculinity cannot be lost, regardless of the outer trappings of the young man who has long embodied female gender characteristics. Although Lucio's transformation takes a backseat to Clara's for the majority of *Love's Cure*, there is no doubt by the end that the female dress and habits donned as a disguise by the young man are not only excusable but reversible, as Lucio eventually proves himself to be a man by every standard.

It is impossible to ignore here how the realities of English stage practices might inform the male anxieties surrounding Lucio's performance of femininity, and the very real arguments of English anti-theatricalists who believed in "the power of clothing to change the self" (Duncan 397). There is an inherent metatheatricality throughout *Love's Cure*, and while Clara must learn to perform femininity while being portrayed by a male actor trained to inhabit female characters, it is the actor in the role of Lucio, enacting the practice of a male performing femininity for the stage, which calls to mind most clearly the debates around all-male casts in English theater. This complicating factor in the acceptability of gender as performance for the theater, but not for society at large, is something wholly unique to the English adaptation of the play, and it bears considering in light of the characterization of the siblings.

## A Man is a Poet: Omar

The early 20th-century Spanish version, *Talismán* (1929), by Federico Romero and Guillermo Fernández-Shaw, maintains the basic premise of gender-swapped siblings trying to reconcile their previous identities with their family's new demands for "correct" gender expression, but also makes substantial changes which fundamentally alter the way that gender is portrayed and understood by the characters. There is a shift in genre, from the polymetric verse forms of the *comedia* to the mixed prose and song libretto of the 20th-century *zarzuela*, a form of Spanish light opera. There is also a change in setting, with the action now set in 10th-century Córdoba, under the reign of Abderramán III.<sup>51</sup> In this *zarzuela* adaptation the

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<sup>51</sup> Romero and Fernández-Shaw may have arrived at *Fuerza* via Castro's most famous work, *Las mocedades del Cid* (1605-1615), itself a retelling of the famous

male protagonist Omar undergoes a similarly difficult first lesson in masculinity, here more in line with the physicality that we see in Castro's original than with the ridicule of *Love's Cure*. Again, the father, Ali-Mansur in this version, is in charge of direct instruction, but we also have a chance to see how his sister Suleika, raised as a warrior, models a masculine bearing for Omar, in this case with a physicality that is marked by its *marcialidad*:

Ali-Mansur Omar también acude,  
por dicha transformado.  
*Sale Omar por la segunda de la derecha con cota de malla, almete y  
borceguíes con acicates con los que apenas puede andar desenvuelto.*  
[...]  
Suleika Levanta la frente  
y aprende a andar así.  
*Da unos cuantos pasos, con marcialidad [...]*  
Ali-Mansur ¡Bracee con soltura!  
Omar ¿Quién puede bracear?  
Con esta ligadura  
no sé ni respirar.  
[...]  
Ali-Mansur Se affige como un niño,  
como una llama tiembla.  
¡Malhayan los que olvidan  
las armas por las letras! (I.43-46)

It is interesting to note here that while in the source text Félix is clearly uncomfortable in his new skin, he is also focused on pleasing his father and so complains little and instead tries to embody the identity his father lays out for him. Both the English Lucio and the *zarzuela's* Omar, however, complain about how restrictive they find male clothing after the looseness of female attire, making it clear that the masculinity their fathers demand is as oppressive to them as the femininity their respective sisters must learn to accept. Indeed, *Talismán's* Omar seeks not to please his father in learning

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*Cantar de mio Cid* (*Song of the Cid*; 1140-1207) of roughly the same time period in which they set their own libretto. It is heavily orientalist, relying on idealized visions of a Moorish past to create an exotic setting for the plot to play out.

to change and adjust his body to fit the standards of a masculine warrior, instead hoping to convince Ali-Mansur that being a poet, weak in the fighting arts but strong in the poetic ones, is another valid embodiment of masculinity in their newly peaceful society.

Ali-Mansur's last line in this exchange is an ongoing lament of the play, which does not focus solely on juxtaposing the corrective moves toward masculinity and femininity in the children, but rather grapples with showcasing different types of acceptable masculinity. The play's ultimate conclusion is that the softer poet in Omar and the hypermasculine soldier in Ali-Mansur can both coincide in this society. Although this particular scene plays out in a similar way to that of Castro's *Fuerza*, in truth Omar's masculinity is hardly questioned or challenged by other men throughout the adaptation, though Ali-Mansur and the servant Masura do express exasperation at Omar's rejection of war and weapons. Indeed, the conflict over arms and letters—whether the warlike arts are better or worse than literary and poetic ones—often overwhelms the exploration of gender as a central focus of the text. Omar's sensitivity and poetic skill are an asset to him, as he's able to compose songs to win over his love interest Aisa. Some of the tension over masculinity in this text is certainly due to the fact that Ali-Mansur, so long at war, now finds himself returned to a world where his skills as a general are no longer needed, and in fact run counter to the peace and prosperity he finds himself surrounded by under Abderramán's rule. On a structural level too, the conventions of light opera, where the language tends toward the poetic and all the characters break into song, serves to undercut the strict masculinity of the soldier that Ali-Mansur is attempting to impose on his son; as the audience is aware, that argument has largely been settled within their own society. Indeed, part of the understanding of gendered behavior in this text, as regards the expression of masculinity at least, is the frustration that comes with defining gender too rigidly, and the inability of some men to adapt their gender expression to larger societal changes. Male gender in this text appears to expand to allow different kinds of expression—Omar as a poet in touch with his emotions, Ali-Mansur as a courageous and forceful soldier, Gazul (Suleika's love interest) as architect and skillful swordsman, combining both war and art.

By contrast, though Castro's source text allows for multiple instances of change of gender, there is no freedom for subjects to choose the gender that they feel suits them, the one they have embodied throughout their lives. Instead, there is an extreme external control of gender identity and performance, exerted in particular by their father. Hipólita and Félix's genders are thus shaped under duress and threat of violence, in stark contrast to the mostly gentle persuasion and petty schemes of *Talismán's* Alí-Mansur. This adaptation, written in the early 20th century, has begun to move beyond the strict binary understandings of gender which dominate *Fuerza* and *Love's Cure*, presenting not only a broader spectrum of masculine embodiments but also questioning the need for the gender reversal of the siblings at all. In what is perhaps the most radical change from *Fuerza*, the assumption that these siblings *must* reverse their genders to match their biological sex is offered a direct challenge by Omar's tutor and even their mother Nozhatú, who destabilizes her and her husband's project most elegantly when she scolds her husband "¡Te empeñas en que las ranas / vuelen como las palomas!" (Act III, p. 9). Although her questioning of their children's re-education only extends to Omar and not Suleika, it nevertheless signals deep changes in the way that Spanish society has come to understand gender expression by the 1920s.

### Free to Be: Félix, Embodying the Spectrum

If *Talismán* presents a broadening understanding about gender existing along a spectrum of possible embodiments between femininity and masculinity, the most recent adaptations of *La fuerza de la costumbre* have fully engaged in dismantling binary ideas of gender in their rewriting of the siblings at the center of the story. Both Dave Dalton's *Forces of Nature* and Peter Cockett and Melinda Gough's *The Force of Habit* maintain the basic structure of Castro's source text<sup>52</sup> but make substantial changes to the characterization

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<sup>52</sup> Both adaptations use the 2019 translation of *La fuerza de la costumbre* completed by the Working Group in Translation and Performance at UCLA as the basis for their adaptation. See Castro, Guillén. *The Force of Habit* transl. by The Comedia in Translation and Performance. Juan de la Cuesta, 2019.

of the siblings, allowing for more flexible interpretations of gender across the spectrum while also completely redoing the original ending. These adapters have noted that in the world of Castro's play, gender is surprisingly fluid for the time period, as the lines that divide women from men are crossed multiple times (Dalton, *Adapting and Rewriting the Comedia. Roundtable with Artists III*). In both cases, the adapters were inspired by Félix and Hipólita's internalizations of a gender other than that related to their biological sex, as it opened the doors for using a classical text to explore our ongoing societal grappling with recognizing and respecting identities across the gender spectrum. The recent McMaster production materials in particular highlight how

This play from the Spanish Golden Age is an example of classical theatre... simultaneously rich in evidence of queer and trans history...[providing] yet more textual evidence that trans and queer possibilities were being explored in early modern Europe. At the same time, it is a work of theatre – and hence of imagination. Inviting us to imagine otherwise, this production playfully explores what happens when the seemingly fixed boundaries of binary gender (and sexuality) in early modern Europe – and in our present day — turn out to be not so fixed. (“Program Notes”)

Aware of the harmful rhetoric and ongoing attempts at regressive political actions being aimed at the LGBTQIA+ community in the United States in recent years, these modern adapters have been mindful not only of the possibilities of validating representation opened up by *Fuero's* siblings but also of its potential to reinforce harmful narratives of “fixing” variations in gender expression. This mindfulness is what inspired these adapters to change the endings of their respective adaptations as well as the identities of their protagonists. Even in this we see the continued possibilities for gender expression that can be read into Castro's source text.

On the one hand, Dalton opts for recreating Félix as a genderqueer individual who still falls in love with a cisgender woman. Though pronouns are not discussed within the play itself, in characterization Félix has become flexible enough to accommodate a variety of gender identities which may or may not be associated with maleness and masculinity. In the opening scene, the character is described in this way: “The interior of a grand house in Zaragoza. Félix storms

on holding a pile of clothing in his hands. He is wearing a rich gown which does not easily conform to traditional male or female costume” (Dalton, *Forces of Nature* 2). As Dalton noted during a presentation which followed a staged reading of the play during the 2022 LA Escena Festival of Hispanic Classical Theater, the ambiguity of the characterization allows for wider casting possibilities, where the ultimate performance of Félix’s gender might conform to the actor’s own embodiment of their identity. Félix and Hipólita thus become not characters who will be “fixed” by play’s end but rather who allow the play to explore and examine a variety of gender expressions. Much in line with *Talismán*’s interest in broadening the embodiment of masculinity, Dalton’s *Forces of Nature* open space for the hypermasculine Don Pedro to explore a softer side of himself, to the point where the denouement of the adaptation is not that his children have returned to a rightful nature but rather that his own eyes have been opened to accepting his children as they are: “You’ve shown me that maybe there’s more to being a man that just taking control and fighting [...] Through their habits, my children changed my very nature. It’s amazing!” (Dalton, *Forces of Nature* 99).

If Dalton opts for the openness of gender flexibility, the McMaster adaptation undertaken by Cockett and Gough takes a more considered approach to what they identify as the text’s inherent queerness. As Cockett states in the Program Notes for the production, the goal of the adaptation is to examine the story as a contribution to queer history, reading Félix (later Felicia in the adaptation) specifically as a story about trans identity within the context of classical theater:

The premise for our show is that the play that comes down to us from seventeenth-century Spain is already queer, and that McMaster’s production merely brings into sharper focus that queerness by applying a trans lens to reveal historical evidence perfectly apparent in the original text. At the same time, our revised script creates a new comical unfolding of the action – one that makes visible and helps to further dismantle the gender binary the parents are so keen to impose. (“Program Notes”)

This adaptation frames its approach to gender representation within the concept of transcestors, that is, tracing the existence of trans individuals into the annals of history, though they might not

have been recognized as such in their own time period.<sup>53</sup> On this basis, the characterization of Hipólita becomes a representation of gender non-conformity, embodied in the casting of Preye Goodwin, who uses the pronouns they/he/she, and Félix becomes a representation of female trans identity, embodied in the casting of Evelyn Speakman, a transwoman herself (“Interviews”). In this adaptation we are able to clearly see the way that a society’s understanding of gender impacts the recreation of Castro’s source text, a process which has occurred with every adaptation of *La fuerza de la costumbre* but which we are able to trace directly for the first time with Cockett and Gough’s production. The feedback loop of gender representation within the text is all the more explicit in this adaptation of *The Force of Habit* as Speakman herself contributed to rewriting the final scene of the play when the child raised as female embraces that identity fully and declares herself to be Felicia:

I wanted to make you proud, father, and I still do to this day, for I am proud to be your daughter and I am proud to be a Moncada, so I pray that you can take pride in the ancestral courage coursing through my veins, as I beg you, support me in this endeavour. (“Interviews”)

As Speakman notes in an interview about the production, this dialogue is inspired in part by her own coming out letter, exemplifying the production’s commitment to telling trans stories alongside the reality of trans individuals.

While we must not conflate the historical forces which inform gender in works from different social contexts, there is nevertheless a real value in reading the story of these siblings across these various adaptations, an especially fruitful exercise for analyzing how real bodies in theatrical practice influence the way in which a play about identity can be read, understood, and ultimately embodied on stage. Reading *La fuerza de la costumbre* in relation to its adaptations allows us to examine how the limitations imposed upon gender expression and theatrical conventions in different traditions might change the underlying message of a story. This is a particularly useful exploration

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<sup>53</sup> As noted in the program notes for the production, the adapters drew this framing especially from Kit Heyam’s book *Before We Were Trans* (2022).



given questions surrounding more inclusive modern staging practices which intentionally wish to explore the nuances of different forms of casting. The impact of Castro's source text is thus not in its conclusions about what gender is and how it is done, but rather in providing a framework to explore how gender exists within a given society and how this understanding changes across space and time.

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## RECONSTRUCTING RELATIONSHIPS OF DESIRE: HOMOSEXUALITY IN SPANISH GOLDEN AGE THEATER

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**Abstract:** The figure of the *marión*, *maricón* or *puto*—that is, the male homosexual—appears in many Spanish Golden Age plays. The critical approaches to this dramatic type have centered on thematic and textual issues, ignoring the performative cues inscribed on the character. For this reason, this paper reconstructs the acting of male homoeroticism in the *comedia*, engaging with the *comediante's* paralinguistic features and bodily gestures. It focuses on Lope de Vega's 1621 *La vengadora de las mujeres* as case-study and analyses the role of Julio, the play's *criado*, as enacted by a *gracioso*. Methodologically, this study is framed within the parameters of Queer theory. It employs both socio-historical and aesthetic early modern sources to reimagine a particular staging of the play. These are cases against the *pecado nefando* or sodomy from Spain's Inquisition archive; definitions from Covarrubias' *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*; two *entremeses de marión* by Quevedo; Espinel's *Sátira a las damas de Sevilla*; and Peter Paul Rubens' painting *El rapto de Ganimedes*. Overall, the textual analysis of Lope's play and its comparison with these diverse resources show that the acting of 'queerness' at the *corrales* must have been extremely histrionic to fulfill comedic, ideological, and political effects. The paper argues that, throughout the performance, the *gracioso* would have parodied the vocal and gestural vocabulary

of homosexuality and effeminacy in Spanish society to construct a laughable but also problematic stage version of the *marión*. He would have employed a high timbre, blushing, a side jerk of his neck, head rigidity, secret hand expressions, and an emphasis on his legs, hips, and buttocks in order to make the audience both laugh and reflect on this social type. The combination of these features would have brought Lope's public close to similar complex social phenomena as those constantly treated in contemporary theaters and other media: same-sex desire, gender fluidity and performativity, queerness, and the abuse suffered by queer individuals.

**Resumen:** La figura del marión, maricón o puto—es decir, del homosexual—aparece en muchas obras del Siglo de Oro español. Las aproximaciones críticas a este tipo dramático se han centrado en cuestiones temáticas y textuales, ignorando las claves performativas inscritas en el personaje. Por ello, este trabajo reconstruye la actuación del homoerotismo masculino en la comedia, atendiendo a los rasgos paralingüísticos y a los gestos corporales del comediante. Se centra en *La vengadora de las mujeres* de Lope de Vega de 1621 como caso de estudio y analiza el papel de Julio, el criado de la obra, representado por un gracioso. Metodológicamente, este estudio se enmarca dentro de los parámetros de la Teoría queer. Utiliza fuentes socio-históricas y estéticas del Barroco para re-imaginar una puesta en escena particular de la obra: casos contra el 'pecado nefando' o sodomía del archivo de la Inquisición española; definiciones del *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* de Covarrubias; dos entremeses de marión de Quevedo; la *Sátira a las damas de Sevilla* de Espinel; y el cuadro de Peter Paul Rubens *El rapto de Ganimedes*. En conjunto, el análisis textual de la obra de Lope y su comparación con estos diversos recursos muestran que la representación de la 'mariconería' en los corrales debió de ser extremadamente histriónica para cumplir efectos cómicos, ideológicos y políticos. El artículo sostiene que, a lo largo de la representación, el gracioso habría parodiado el vocabulario vocal y gestual de la homosexualidad y el afeminamiento en la sociedad española para construir una versión escénica risible pero también problemática del marión. Habría empleado un timbre agudo, rubor, una sacudida lateral del cuello, rigidez de cabeza, expresiones secretas de las manos y un énfasis en sus piernas, caderas y nalgas para hacer al público reír y, a la vez, reflexionar sobre este tipo social.

La combinación de estos rasgos habría acercado al espectador de Lope a fenómenos sociales complejos similares a los que se tratan constantemente en los teatros contemporáneos y otros medios: el deseo entre personas del mismo sexo, la fluidez y performatividad de género, la homosexualidad y el abuso que sufren las personas *queer*.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** queer, Inquisition, Lope de Vega, performativity, hips / maricón, Inquisición, Lope de Vega, performatividad, caderas

## Introduction: Acting Queerness

Recently, *comedia* practitioners and scholars have begun to stage and study themes which were overlooked in the past by more conservative theatrical and academic circles. As Javier Berenguer states, “la Universidad española del franquismo, lo que yo llamaría el ‘nacional-filologismo’ y su continuación” have slowed down our discovery and discussion of socially engaging and politically relevant topics in Golden Age theater. One of these topics is male homosexuality—as was staged in seventeenth century Spain by hundreds of *comediantes* in a variety of dramatic forms, from the *entremés* to the *comedia de capa y espada*. This study aims to contribute to the examination and development of this area of *comedia* studies by answering the following questions: How was male homosexuality performed at the *corrales*? What were the acting resources used by the *comediante* to portray the *marión*, *maricón*, *puto* or *lindo*—to use historically accurate terms? What were the political consequences of performing “queerness” in this particular fashion? To answer these questions, we need to consider, first, that “...sexuality and desire are historically and culturally constructed and far from static across time and place” (Billing 450). Hence, the objective of this paper is to reconstruct the performance of male homoerotic desire, as it would have been articulated by the *comediante* onstage, while avoiding, as far as possible, a fall into anachronisms. Along with the historical distance, there is another limiting factor behind this performative re-establishment: that “los actores de ayer como hoy se llevan a la tumba su arte” (“Debate” 77-78). Consequently, the job of the *comedia* scholar is to unearth this art from the depths of time and memory.

The project of reconstruction set out here is inspired by the pioneering works of Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros, *La técnica del actor español en el Barroco: Hipótesis y documentos*, and José María Ruano de la Haza, *La puesta en escena en los teatros comerciales del Siglo de oro*. These books concern the hypothetical reimagining of the Spanish Golden Age player's technique in general. In turn, they have inspired authors like Isabel Pascual who apply their approach to specific stagings of *comedias* (e.g., *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* in her "Claves para la técnica de la representación del actor en el Siglo de Oro: *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*: una propuesta de lectura y puesta en escena"). All these examinations share with the present paper the same starting point:

los actores hacían algo, hacían cosas que no estaban en el texto, y de ahí, a partir de indicios, [debemos] anotar sus posibilidades de accionar y fundar en la repetición de ciertos elementos de comicidad las hipótesis indispensables. Hay que empezar a apostar por fórmulas de representación, aunque alguna vez nos equivoquemos. ("Debate" 77-78)

Following this incentive, this study aims to annotate the possibilities of acting by presenting the *comediante's* staging formulas for the performance of the homosexual character, which, as will be shown, acquired clear comic tones. It establishes these conjectures by employing as a case-study Felix Lope de Vega's 1621 *La vengadora de las mujeres*, which depicts the homoerotic infatuation of the *criado*, Julio, for another character, the *galán*, Alejandro. The voice, gestures, and body movement of the *comediante* playing Julio are highlighted in relation to the ideological undertones behind them.

The queer acting of the *criado* would have embodied the "dynamics of desire and anxiety shared among actors, characters, and playgoers, and between the stage and the audience" (Billing 444). Although a great deal has been written about the social diversity of *comedia* audiences, their sexual and gender construction and heterogeneity has received almost no attention. It can be assumed that a consequence of this "democratización del espectáculo teatral" was that playgoers also mirrored the variety of erotic appetites and aversions in early modern Spanish society (Díez Borque 179). Regarding male homosexuality, "queer" spectators intermingled with "heteronormative" ones at the

*corrales* (as proved by a series of Inquisition documents such as the one quoted by Carrasco [68] and further explored in the conclusion). The continuum expressed in the public's sexual preferences would have been reproduced in their reaction to a character as complex as Julio: from scornful laughter to sympathy and critical reflection. This paper also explores these paradoxical attitudes.

To support my findings, I use both socio-historical and aesthetic early modern sources. The first are documents extracted from the Inquisition archive of Spain's Archivo Histórico Nacional, as "various trials that took place during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries [...] give us an idea of what queer subcultures might have sounded [and looked] like at this time" (Battis 5). These are complemented by definitions from Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*—a catalogue of Spanish early modern cultural practices and their moral appreciation. The aesthetic sources are: two *entremeses*, which treat the theme of homosexuality (Francisco de Quevedo's *El marión* first and second parts [1646]); a poem, which includes satirical comments against *putos* (Vicente Espinel's 1578 *Sátira a las damas de Sevilla*); and a painting, which depicts one of the most famous emblems of mythological queerness (Peter Paul Rubens's *El rapto de Ganímedes* [1636-1638]).

## The *gracioso* and his *Gestus*

Lope's *La vengadora de las mujeres* is a play which deals with the protagonist, Laura, and her aversion to men—hence, her impulse to avenge the "weaker gender" by avoiding marriage. Laura's brother, Arnaldo, wants her to marry and invites many suitors, who are rejected one by one with ingenious arguments of the learned *dama*. For this reason, previous critics have focused mainly on the work's (proto)feminism (e.g., Sánchez-Crespo), instead of studying the gay character. However, the relevant part of the *comedia* for this paper is the sub-plot, which is not fully developed until the end of the second *jornada*. This moment concerns Julio's acknowledgment of homoerotic desires and their enactment by the company's *gracioso*.

The fact that, among all the *comedia's* dramatis personae, it is a *criado* who portrays the homosexual is revealing in terms of the connection between queerness and early modern social hierarchies.

The Inquisition files, which are one of the main sources for our historical knowledge of queerness, show the institution's elitist focus in the prosecution of sodomy. Those indicted for the so-called *pecado nefando* normally belonged to lower classes (e.g., *criados* such as Julio), rather than to more privileged sectors of Spanish society. Needless to say, they were not the only ones committing this "crime":

[e]ntre los sodomitas de la Valencia del Barroco [y España en general] dominan los esclavos, la servidumbre y la población nómada, los soldados, los vagabundos y pordioseros, medio pícaros y medio criados, los marineros, toda una sociedad de marginados que iban por aquellos caminos, durmiendo en hospitales o pajares, hurtando el sustento por los campos, emborrachándose en malas tabernas. Este conjunto de excluidos representa poco más de 36% del total de procesados cuya "profesión" conocemos. (Carrasco 64)

Due to space constraints, the political implications of these data and their relation to the history of homosexuality are only tangentially explored here. However, from a performative perspective, these cases allow us to hypothesize that the *gracioso's* stage business might have been inspired by the social observation of these "pícaros" and "pordioseros." This assertion is based on the fact that "en el Siglo de Oro se produce una sobrevaloración del gesto en la vida cotidiana, de forma que cabe hablar de una cultura gestual con un código preciso y riguroso" (Díez Borque 123). The theatricality of daily life implies that plays such as *La vengadora de las mujeres* might reveal, through the *gracioso*, a hyperbolic pantomime of the social gestures which typified queerness for the Siglo de oro audience, and which were "performed" by the "marginados" of the Spanish Empire.

Frédéric Serralta's article "Juan Rana, homosexual" states the importance of the study of the *gracioso's* gay body language. He highlights the preeminence of such a resource by saying that "el éxito cómico del gracioso también procedía [...] de una mímica o de una serie de mímicas de tipo homosexual" (82). Like Serralta, Jes Battis focuses on Juan Rana (Cosme Pérez), the most famous *gracioso* of *entremeses* in Golden Age literature and on his "gayness." The author emphasizes how a great part of the comic effect of the short plays with homosexual themes "depend[ed] on queer



*gestus*, a comportment that include[s] posture, movement, and vocal intonation” (12).

However, Battis takes these issues one step beyond Serralta and emphasizes the subversive ideological implications of queer acting. For him, “the space of the gracioso[s], if maneuvered correctly, can yield a certain political freedom [...] allowing them to criticize a variety of issues” (8-9). By following Battis’s standpoint, I assume the “task of the queer theorist [which] is to locate these hard-to-find ideologies and interrogate the ways in which texts uphold or disrupt them” (Billing 447). This means that this paper locates queerness in the *comediante*’s stage business or *gestus* and interprets how, through it, he managed to establish a dialectic between upholding and disrupting gender expectations.

## The *hechizo* and Gestural Exaggeration

Julio’s queerness is performed when, at the end of the second act, Alejandro, one of Laura’s suitors, decides to recur to “cierta mujer” that “hechizos sabía” to conquer the lady. This sorceress asks the desperate *galán* to bring her “una cinta de su frente” (2.1189-1202). Whoever touches the ribbon with their forehead—ideally Laura—will automatically fall in love with Alejandro. Alejandro asks Lisardo, Laura’s secret suitor, to execute the sorceress’s command and, in a paradigmatic moment of Golden Age *enredo*, he manages to place the “cinta” on Julio’s forehead (“aquí traigo aquestas cintas, / prendas de una hermosa dama / y te mediré con ellas” [2.1303-5]). A few lines later, Julio confesses his love for Alejandro to Laura, revealing the effectiveness of the spell: “Alejandro es más galán”; “Solo en su servicio son / mis pensamientos agora”; etc. (2.1601; 1606-7). The spectators could have also interpreted the “hechizo” as an excuse for the *criado* to express his attraction for other men. Indeed, his infatuation goes beyond Alejandro and, in the third act, targets different people. For example, at the beginning of the third act, the *criado* answers a question about a mysterious man with words which correspond to an enamoured *dama* rather than to a servant: “no sé más de que es galán” (3.1856). Julio’s change of sexual interest and the comedy behind it relied on the cultural conception that established that “...sodomy was associated with atheism, witchcraft... heresy, and

sedition” (Stymeist 234). This means that the laughter associated with queerness also brought about an element of socio-political disruption. Sedition and heresy would have been implied by the gay comic actions of the bewitched *criado*, a critique of the orthodoxy and conservatism of seventeenth century Catholic Spain.

To achieve the humorous and disruptive elements of the role, after the ribbon scene, the *gracioso*'s mannerisms would have changed from the unbewitched version of his own character to his bewitched interpretation. In general, this new vocal and gestural style would have been highly histrionic if the Covarrubias's definition of “hechizar” is taken into account: “cierto género de encantación con que ligan a la persona hechizada; de modo que le pervierten el juyzio, y le hazen querer lo que estando libre aborrecía” (fol. 465r). Someone with a distorted judgement and a newly acquired and previously abhorred desire would have been conveyed by the *comediante*'s over-emphasized kinetic expressions, histrionics that would have been culturally associated by the audience with homoeroticism.

Magic represents a particular thematic atmosphere that would allow Julio's desires to be hyperbolized. Beyond the extravagance demanded by the fantastic, the gestural exaggeration of sexual attributes and actions would have been more commonly perceived in early modern theater and society than what we traditionally think today. This is noted by Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality*, volume 1:

At the beginning of the seventeenth century a certain frankness was still common, it would seem. Sexual practices had little need of secrecy; words were said without undue reticence, and things were done without too much concealment; one had a tolerant familiarity with the illicit. Codes regulating the coarse, the obscene, and the indecent were quite lax compared to those of the nineteenth century [and today]. It was a time of direct gestures, shameless discourse, and open transgressions, when anatomies were shown and intermingled at will [...] it was a period when bodies ‘made a display of themselves.’ (3)

Lope (and the *autor de comedias* [director] in charge of the staging) would have devised Julio's homoeroticism to be interpreted by the *comediante* without much performative—or moral—restraints. His

kinetic and vocal obscenity would have been requested by both the scornful and the sympathetic spectators and tolerated by Spanish law. Hence, queer *gestus* would have been staged in the *corral* to an audience familiar to such frankness and eager to encounter the illicit (as the popularity of the gay actor/character Juan Rana shows).

### Effeminacy: Womanly Timbre and Pillows

In her interpretation of the play, Lillian von der Walde Moheno affirms that, from the moment of the spell, “el gracioso [...] es posible que haya representado la homosexualidad mediante el afeminamiento gestual” and, I would add, verbal (208). “Afeminamiento” is a key word to understand the theatrical and social performance of homoeroticism in early modern Spain. Covarrubias defines *afeminado* as “el hombre de condición mugeril, inclinado a ocuparse en lo que ellas tratan, y hablar su lenguaje, y en su tono delicado. Algunas vezes significa el delicado de miembros y flaco de complexión [...] y algunos destos suelen ser de grandes ingenios y habilidades” (fol. 17v).

The various aspects of the *afeminado* mentioned by Covarrubias can be assigned to Julio’s psychology, voice, and physique, after being bewitched. Regarding the paralinguistic features, the *gracioso* would have mimicked the highest tones of the “lenguaje” of women. This would have taken place when, for example, Julio pronounces the five *qués* in the following lines. These interjections would have needed vocal emphasis to achieve the comic effect:

Pues dime, ¿quién ha venido  
como el Duque de Ferrara?  
En su persona repara,  
¡qué gallardo, qué lúcido,  
qué lindo rostro, qué talle,  
qué discreción! (2.1616-20)

As he recites the adjectives written by Lope to describe Alejandro’s “persona” through Julio’s eyes—“gallardo”, “lúcido”, “lindo [de] rostro”, “discre[to]”—the *comediante* would have acquired a delicate tone, following Covarrubias’s definition. Part of the stage effect of Julio’s transformation would have relied on how the actor

“busc[aría] el timbre de la voz femenina, huiría del naturalismo y la verosimilitud para caer en la exageración y una sobreactuación propia del registro paródico-imitativo en la búsqueda de comicidad” (Pascual). A consequence of the *gracioso*'s overacting would have been the employment of a transvestite timbre that, at specific moments or throughout the whole play, ridiculously revealed the man's vocal physiognomy behind the attempts to imitate the high pitch of the *dama*'s register. A similar argument has been developed by Rodríguez Cuadros regarding Juan Rana and the fact that, in many of his *entremeses*, “hablaba con voz atiplada o de falsete” to convey “determinados indicios de homosexualidad” (465-6).

Returning to Covarrubias's definition, in terms of the body, the ideal *gracioso* to play the effeminate role would have been delicate and slim (if the prototypical effeminate *gracioso*, Juan Rana, was described and depicted as obese, it was due to his gluttony—yet another of his comic attributes—rather than to his homosexuality). To convey the change from hetero- to homosexuality, the *comediante* might have initially performed with a prosthetic prop, such as a pillow, to denote a heavier—and manlier—corporeality. After the ribbon spell, the actor could have taken off the bulk on his stomach to assume a more delicate—and feminine—physique. This supposition is justified if we remember that pillows have been used to transform the actor's body since the origins of Greek tragedy (MacGowan and Melnitz 27).

### ***Semblante and cerviz***

In the third act, Julio confesses his homoerotic desires for Alejandro in front of Laura and Lisauro. When questioned about the recipient of his lovesickness, the *criado* answers:

La causa  
es tan fuerte que me salen  
colores al rostro, Laura,  
y se me altera la sangre. (3.2450-53)

The documentary evidence available today on the staging of the *comedia* suggests that the “altera[ciones]” of the face's colors

were a resource almost exclusively reserved to female actors. If the *gracioso* blushed as the text suggests, this action would have performatively reinforced the thematization of Julio's *afeminamiento* after the ribbon's spell. The famous case of La Riquelme—one of the best *comediantas* to play at the *corrales*—can be used as further proof of this point:

Pocos años después (esto es, por los de 1624) aplaudian los Teatros á la Riquelme, moza hermosa, dotada de una imaginativa tan vehemente, que quando representaba, mudaba con admiracion de todos el color del rostro; porque si el poeta narraba sucesos prosperos y felices, los oia con semblante todo sonroseado; y si algun caso infausto y desdichado, luego se ponía palida; y en este cambiar de afectos era tan unica, que era inimitable. (Caramuel quoted by De Salvo)

The comedy of this scene might have depended on the *gracioso*'s parody of the “sonroseado” of the “semblante” of *comediantas* such as La Riquelme. To achieve this, he would need to “cambiar de afectos” more evidently—and, hence, more ridiculously—perhaps entering the scene with a “normal” color on his face and, then, changing it to a redder tonality as he pronounced the shameful lines quoted before. Another possibility presented by the alteration of face color is that the actor could have put on *pasas* (one of the most used types of *afeite* or makeup worn by women) on his face to whiten his skin pigmentation. There is evidence of the employment of *pasas* in parodic theater: the effeminate Don Constanzo puts them on in Quevedo's second part of *El marión* (44). Taking this document into consideration, it can be argued that, through makeup, the actor-Julio would have shown the audience “un rasgo más indicio del *afeminamiento*” of the character (Arellano and García 496).

Metatheatrical games such as these, which playfully elaborate on the *comedia* acting conventions, are not alien to the dramatic figure of “el gracioso [el cual] permite [...] introducir elementos de distanciaci3n.” Laughter and a critical attitude towards gender conventions were the natural consequences of this “distanciaci3n”, defined as the “efecto de privar al p3blico de la ilusi3n teatral [...] oblig3ndolo a asumir una posici3n despierta y cr3tica ante

el espectáculo que presencia” (Gómez 376, 260). One of the consequences of this attitude would have been to reveal to the spectators that gender conventions—what it is to be a man or a woman—are intrinsically artificial and theatrical. With a little bit of makeup, with the performative trick of blushing, a man can easily assume womanly roles. These social attributes are only masks that we put on, not immovable and irreversible realities.

Another specific aspect of performing homosexuality can be reconstructed if we consider what Covarrubias writes under the entry of “cerviz”: “el que tiene flaca cerviz que tuerce la cabeça a un lado, siendo natural, es señal de hombre afeminado..” (fol. 277r). As was argued before, the lexicographer acknowledges that certain bodily “fla[queza]” was a sign of effeminacy in Golden Age Spain. Also relevant to the present reconstruction is the gesture of tilting the head to one side, a social convention which would have been known by the *comedia* audience as a physical correlative to queerness. This codified movement could have been a cue for the *gracioso* as he embodied Julio’s gender transformation and would have been intermittently repeated throughout the last part of the play to stress the dynamics of desire and anxiety between on- and offstage.

However, there is a moment in the third act which would have been ideal for the *gracioso* to employ this *cerviz* mannerism parodically to achieve the ridicule and the distancing required by the role. I am referring to the scene where Julio wants to find a remedy for his incurable curse and asks Laura and Lisardo for help. These two, in turn, sadistically play with the *criado*’s expectations, delaying the cure. The *criado*’s desperation reaches a high point as he pronounces: “¡Que esto por un hombre pase! / Yo he de perder el juicio” (3.2467-68).

As the *gracioso* studied these lines when preparing the *gestus* for the characterization of an effeminate Julio, his immediate reference would have been the body part directly connected to the “juicio”: the head. Once onstage, a way to portray a change in judgment (such as “perder[lo]”) would have been with a certain kind of neck movement. By tilting the head to one side, in the manner described by Covarrubias, the actor would have conveyed this loss of his character’s rationality and the specific nature of such a loss: succumbing to irrational gay thoughts and desires.

These neck movements would have revealed certain rigidity from the upper part of the *gracioso*'s body—a rigidity that would have further provoked laughter. This conjecture is based on Espinel's *Sátira*, which was written to criticize women and effeminate attitudes in early modern Spain (particularly in Seville). In the middle of the poem, he laments the “caso horrendo, mísero y terrible, / en ver la juventud del suelo vándalo / envuelta en sodomía incorregible” (358-60). The poet specifically targets a “mozuelo melifuo” who goes around

...oliendo a sándalo,  
con blanduras al rostro y alzacuello,  
moviendo al cielo a ira, al mundo a escándalo.  
Engarrotado el triste, tieso cuello  
hiriéndote el pescuezo... (361-5)

Using this poetic resource as a didactic template for the present reconstruction, it can be said that the *gracioso*'s gayness would have been conveyed by his excessive use of sandalwood perfume as he appeared onstage after the ribbon scene—an element easily perceived by a theater audience. Also, before or after Julio's blushing, he would have worn makeup (the *pasas*) which would highlight the “blanduras al rostro” proper to a “puto” (361-5). Along with the spontaneous jerking of the *gracioso*'s neck, this body part would have been very rigid (“engarrotado”, “tieso”) owing to a piece of costume worn by the “putos” in Espinel's time and, hence, probably also born by the *comediante* after Julio's conversion: the neck ruff, “alzacuello” or “lechuguilla muy mirada y puesta” (373). Indeed, in the only portrait we possess of the famous Juan Rana—the anonymous *Retrato del actor Cosme Pérez, “Juan Rana”, el alcalde villano*, displayed at the Real Academia de la Lengua, Madrid—the queer *gracioso* is depicted wearing one of these collars.

This parodic use of a disguise and the distancing effect achieved through it would have also reinforced the critique to an essentialist approach to gender normativity. The audience might have reflected upon the fact that a piece of costume (or the wearing of makeup and perfume) can radically change how an individual is perceived by society, in terms of their sex, desires, and identity. Hence, through the ambiguous figure of the *puto*, the staging of Lope's play would have implied the disruption of certain social norms associated with manliness. As all cultural products, “man” and “woman” are

arbitrary constructs, easily *deconstructed* through theatrical devices, and ridiculed and questioned by “the a-social or unprincipled nature of the *gracioso* figure” (Forbes 78).

## The Hand-scratching Scene

The many culturally and geographically specific expressions of homosexuality have been persecuted by civil society and political forces alike. Hence, throughout history, queer individuals have come up with secret languages to manifest their identities and communicate with each other, avoiding oppression and censure. In Golden Age Spain, this secrecy was expressed with gestures, as described by the following Inquisitorial case against sodomy:

...dicho Nicolás le cogió la mano y con el dedo de en medio le rascó la palma de la mano y el declarante hizo lo propio con él, rascándole también la palma de la mano a dicho Nicolás, porque ya entendía lo que quería decir (pues ya con otros que declara más adelante le había pasado lo propio y le habían dicho lo que aquella acción significaba), y dicho Nicolás le dijo que éste le daría un real si se lo dejaba meter por el culo y éste por el interés de lo que le ofrecía, le respondió: «ya habríamos de estar en eso», y dicho Nicolás le dijo: ‘pues vamos a la pescatería, donde hay letrinas, y allí lo haremos.’ (A.H.N., Inq., leg. 560, n.º 11, quoted by Carrasco 72)

Examples such as this allow us to reconstruct the body language of homoeroticism in early modern Spain, in both the social and theatrical spheres. The extent of the use of “rasc[ar] la palma” is shown by the fact that “otros” knew about the meaning of the signal. Hence, for the case-study of Lope’s *La vengadora de las mujeres*, the *gracioso*-Julio might have mimicked more or less secretive and seductive hand gestures such as the one followed by Nicolà and his lovers to have sexual intercourse. When would this hand gesture have been used in the staging of the play?

This might have occurred in the second act, in a scene with implicit sexual tension between two male characters. After a military and poetic tournament to show Laura the best suitor, Lisardo tries



to convince her to choose him by using ambiguously homoerotic allusions. He praises the competitor/suitor who represented him in the tournament with words such as “galán” and confesses to having an “inclinación” for him. As a response, Julio defends Alejandro (also a participant in the tournament) thus:

El favor solo ha de dalle  
a Alejandro, pues su talle  
le tiene bien merecido.  
No hay caballero en la Corte  
como Alejandro.  
[...]  
Y que por ser el señor,  
que en todo a todos excede,  
Alejandro solo puede... (2.1644-74)

A possible interpretation of the proxemic relationships and the kinetics developed by the actors in this scene depends on reading it as a case of linguistic misunderstanding, a resource which is proper to many comic moments in the *comedia*. Following this analytical path, it can be argued that Julio interprets Lisardo’s metaphoric laudatory allusions to his champion in a very literal way, believing that the *galán* has real erotic inclinations to this mysterious knight due to his handsomeness. This unexpected feeling is similar to the one that the *criado* has towards Alejandro—his verbal reinstatement of it in the quoted lines is, to some extent, a verbal wink of mutual gay understanding. During this instance, Julio believes that Lisardo belongs to his clan of queer *bechizados*.

The *gracioso* might have reinforced this confusion through his hand gestures. As he recited how Alejandro exceeds all men, the actor might have, for instance, taken the hand of the *comediante* playing Lisardo and scratched his palm with his very allusive middle finger. As a response—in the manner of Nicolà’s lovers—the *galán*-Lisardo might have “h[echo] lo propio con él” to augment the sexual ambiguity of the scene and the play. To break the erotic tension, the *primera dama* playing Laura might have come in between them to separate this immoral union and angrily recited an order to her *criado*: “¡Ya estás, / necio! / [...] vete luego” (2.1665-66, 1669). This instance would have disruptively exposed the artificiality and fragility

of gender roles to the heterogeneous audience once again: even very virile *galanes* (such as Lisardo) can fall for erotic ambivalences and queer attitudes.

A reference similar to this hand gesturing can also be interpreted from the second part of Quevedo's *entremés El marión*—providing evidence to further support this point. As the *marión's* wife, Doña María, reveals her determination to go out at night, the effeminate husband, Don Constanzo, asks her what he should do while she is away: “¿qué he de hacer? / ¿Tener mano sobre mano?” (71). Although, at first, this gesture might allude simply to idleness, Doña María's exaggerated response adds vagueness to the reference: “¿Quién dice tal? Ni por el pensamiento” (72). If hand gesturing, such as Nicolà's palm scratching, was one of the main secretive forms to reveal sexual preferences from one *mari(c)ón* to another, then, it can be argued that Don Constanzo's reference—and consequent performance—of “tener mano sobre mano” would have been synonymous to the desire to have homoerotic encounters. This form of queer communication would have been known by both the *gracioso* playing Julio and his audience and, hence, probably performed during *La vengadora de las mujeres*.

### **Of *piernas, caderas, and culos***

A full reconstruction of the gestural language of homoeroticism on the Golden Age stage should necessarily include the lower part of the actor's body. Indeed, this area seems to be of paramount importance in conveying gayness on- and offstage, as the evidence chosen to illustrate this paper reveals. For example, Espinel's poem provides a probable way to recreate Julio's pace on the *tablado* after the ribbon spell. This is because, at the time of the writing of this satire, “mozalbillo[s] / oliendo a puto” “con el orden putesco”, walked the streets of Seville with “el compasado echar de pie y de pierna manjar provocativo” (370-8).

Hence, throughout Lope's play, the *gracioso* would have walked in a particularly rhythmic and regular way, carefully placing one foot after the other. This trot would have denoted the character of a “puto” to an early modern Spanish audience. In particular, at the end of the hand-scratching scene, when Laura rudely sends the *criado*

away, the actor might have walked offstage parodying the cadenced gait of extra-dramatic homosexuals while reciting:

Sí haré,  
 si te canso, mas yo sé  
 que te has de servir de mí.  
 Y que por ser el señor,  
 que en todo a todos excede,  
 Alejandro solo puede,  
 Laura, merecer tu amor. (2. 1669-75)

This parodic and emphatic movement of the actor's legs and feet as he walked offstage would have reinforced that his love of Alejandro—i.e., his “anomalous” appetite—cannot be diminished, not even when he is told off by his *dueña*. This would have also entailed a disruptive statement: not even those in power can force accepted gender roles upon queer individuals. Additionally, by underscoring this specific body part with affected movement, the *gracioso* would have also been pointing at one of the main sites of queer desire (according to Espinel). The center of provocation, the “manjar” for other “putos” would have been the “pie” and “pierna” of the actor.

Another carnal site for queer appetite would have been the subject's hips and backside. It is reasonable to think that, to personify the individual who embodies such desires and who intends to be desirable (Julio), the *comediante* would have parodically employed kinetics related to these lower areas of the body. This hypothesis is reinforced if we consider, once again, Quevedo's *El marión*—a compendium of gay *gestus*. After being menaced with a dagger by his manly wife, the effeminate Don Constanzo confesses to suffering an anomalous bodily reaction to fear: “Que de aqueste susto / las caderas se me han abierto” (35-6). The *marión*'s verbal allusion to hips would have been anticipated or accompanied by a gestural correlative from the *comediante* playing him, parodically illustrating the bodily reflex of fear.

As interpreted in the case of the secretive hand gesture, this “ab[rir]” of “las caderas” might connote a historically determined joke regarding the kinetics of Spanish Golden Age homosexuality. Although we might never understand exactly what Quevedo meant

and what was actually staged, two possibilities seem logical to visually reconstruct such an “opening-up” of hips. First, the actor, who frontally addressed these lines to the audience, would have *opened* his legs/hips—underlining, thus, one of the sites of (homo) sexual desire: the male genitals. Second, the *comediante*, standing perpendicularly or sideways in relation to the audience’s vision, would have *opened up* the compass of his body, using his legs as a pivot and throwing his torso forwards and his hips backwards—underscoring, thus, another site of erotic attraction: the buttocks.

This hypothesis of the use of the buttocks by the actors to convey homoeroticism finds further support if we consider the way in which one of the early modern emblems of homoeroticism—the mythological figure of Ganymede—was painted. Among the variety of seventeenth century representations of the abduction of Ganymede by the homosexually infatuated Jupiter (who turned into an eagle to kidnap and rape the boy), I wish to allude to the famous painting by Rubens *El rapto de Ganimedes* (fig. 1). As many art historians and curators have noticed, when confronted by Rubens’ work, it is impossible to avoid stumbling, at the very center of the piece, upon “the round shape of Ganymede’s buttocks” (Adler).

The main symbolism behind Rubens’ emphasis on such a specific part of Ganymede’s male body is analogous to that behind Quevedo’s Don Constanzo and his open-hipped posture: pointing at the center of homoerotic desire and pleasure. This focusing effect is singled out by Carlos Navarro, one of the main curators of Museo del Prado’s 2017 exhibition *La mirada del otro: Escenarios para la diferencia*. This exhibition, which had Rubens’s work as one of the main pieces, represented “un itinerario expositivo en el que se invita a contemplar la realidad histórica de las relaciones sentimentales entre personas del mismo sexo y de las identidades sexuales no normativas” in Spain (“La mirada”). When commenting about *El rapto de Ganimedes*, Navarro stressed that “el artista muestra a Ganimedes y una aljaba con flechas en yuxtaposición, en alusión a la penetración anal” (Minder).

To further deliberate on this point, we can notice how many forms of anal penetration were openly discussed in seventeenth century social life, as shown by the Inquisitorial archives which concern cases of sodomy (suggesting a less puritanical vision of Baroque Spain

than what is traditionally assumed). For example, in a 1617 case against a gay friar, it is mentioned that he made his disciples (many of them underage) “[que] se conociesen carnalmente, metiendo sus miembros genitales los unos a los otros y alternativamente por los óculos traseros” (A.H.N., Inq., lib. 939, fol. 256r°-259v°, quoted by Carrasco 67). Likewise, a 1578 case against a Sicilian man mentions that “se lo meneaba [el miembro a su víctima] y le decía que le quería hacer la puñeta y le metió un dedo de la mano en el sieso” (A.H.N., Inq., lib. 938, fol. 96r°-99r°, quoted by Carrasco 67).



**Fig. 1.** Peter Paul Rubens, *El rapto de Ganimedes*, oil on canvas, 1636–38, Museo del Prado, Madrid. Public Domain.

I would argue that this discursive familiarity with anal penetration and the buttocks in the art and social life of Golden Age Spain enables a gestural hypothesis for the reconstruction of the acting of Julio during the final scene of *La vengadora de las mujeres*. The *gracioso* would have employed the buttocks to

reinstate his character's queerness in the play's denouement. This ending is different from that of other plays which also use the resource of the magic spell but cancel this spell at the end (e.g., Jerónimo de Cáncer's *entremés Los putos*). In *La vengadora*, instead, "el dramaturgo lo va a dejar hechizado [a Julio] cuando la obra concluya..." (Walde 210). This discrepancy with the canon would have produced a contradictory effect on different sectors of the diverse audience: while some at the *corral* would have laughed at Julio, others would have sympathized with and critically reflected upon the *criado*'s final condition. To help the audience focus their attention Julio's comic and dreadful destiny, Lope gives him a very histrionic verbal reaction to being told that "ha estado por hechizos / de Alejandro enamorado":

¿Hay tal maldad? ¡Vive Dios  
que quiero desafiaros!  
Mas pedir primero al Rey  
se duela de los trabajos  
que he pasado amando a un hombre  
sin saber cómo ni cuándo.  
Dadme las cintas, que quiero  
quemarlas, y lleve el diablo. (3.2632-41)

The hyperbolic content of these lines, in which Julio names "Dios", "al Rey", and "el diablo" in the same intervention, would have been accentuated by the *gracioso*'s ham acting. If Lope's intention was for the audience to understand that his character remained a "puto" beyond the temporal limits of the play, then, the *comediante* would have employed the best bodily clichés associated with this social and theatrical type. Thus, the spectators would have remained with the most vivid images of queerness by the moment they left the *corral*—whether to ridicule it or to question it. That is, the full extent of the *gracioso*'s acting campiness would have been exposed in front of those playgoers eager for the last notes of laughter, side by side those reluctant to stop questioning the abuses against homosexuals by people with power (the *galanes* and the *damas*) once the *fiesta* finished. Hence, as in the case of Don Constanzo and Gamínedes, as he recited his last lines, the actor-Julio might have flexed his body forward to emphasize his buttocks—which, in this

context, symbolizes anal penetration, the paradigm of sexual actions proper to male homosexuality.

The text suggests that the final moment is Julio's gayest one—and, hence, the *gracioso's* most affected. When Alejandro (Julio's loved one) gives Diana (one of the ladies of Laura's retinue) his hand in marriage, the heartbroken *criado* reveals that “estoy por impedir, como damo, el matrimonio del duque” (3.2673-75, emphasis mine). In a moment of physical comedy, it might have been that the *criado*-turned-*damo* would have used his backside, emphasizing his buttocks, to come in-between the recently established heterosexual couple of Alejandro and Diana. The laughter produced by this exaggeration would have been ambiguous, as part of the audience might have realized the undignified place in society that queer individuals had, being more liable to offenses and mockery than “heteronormative” people (e.g., leaving Julio bewitched).

## Conclusions: Between Lope's World and Ours

This paper has addressed a crucial issue in the performance of homoeroticism in early modern Spanish theater: the lack of a thorough reconstruction of its paralinguistic features and face and body gestures. The actor's vocal and gestural effeminacy, his blushing, the side movement of his neck and head rigidity, his use of a secretive hand expression, his calmed pace onstage and his emphasis of the hips and buttocks are only few examples of how the issue of same-sex attraction could have been portrayed four hundred years ago. Overall, the textual analysis of the case-study—Lope's *La vengadora de las mujeres*—and its comparison with other social, theatrical, and artistic discourses of the time has shown that the acting of queerness at the *corrales* must have been extremely histrionic to fulfill comedic effects. However, considering the heterogeneous social and sexual constitution of the *corral* audience—composed of a continuum between desire and aversion to gayness—a secondary function of the *comediante's* queer *gestus* might have been ideological: to question the arbitrary nature of gender roles and to foster a more sympathetic view of homosexuals in early modern society. Furthermore, this performative language, its symbolisms, and parodic and political implications behind it would have been underscored if this *comedia*



would have been accompanied, during both of its inter-acts, by any of the many *entremeses* which deal with the topic of homosexual desire (such as Quevedo's *El marión*)—achieving, thus, to present a day-long theatrical *fiesta* dedicated to the ridicule and celebration of the single topic of queerness.

The combination of these aesthetic aspects would have brought Lope's audience close to similar complex social phenomena as those constantly treated today—mockingly or seriously—in our theaters and beyond the stage: same-sex desire, gender fluidity and performativity, and the scorn and abuse suffered by gay individuals. We owe this paradoxical articulation of the seemingly contemporary topic of “queerness” in Golden Age Spain to a character exclusive to this dramatic form, “the *gracioso* [...] a structural entity which allows for an openness to change, an expansion of alternative modes of behavior” (Forbes 83). Roles such as Julio (especially if we consider his problematic ending) allowed certain individuals watching these types of plays to re-evaluate different relationships of desire, to open themselves up to an “otherness” which would have been present in the *corrales*, as shown by the following example from 1623 (only two years after the performance of *La vengadora de las mujeres*):

Joan García Ibarra, residente en Valencia, que fue en su mocedad sastre, de edad de 56 años, natural de Segura de la Sierra, fue testificado por dos testigos varones de 20 años. El primero le testificó de que había cuatro años que el reo se le hizo amigo y le llevaba a la comedia, haciéndole caricias y halagos y asiéndole de las manos, y que estando en la comedia le metió la mano y asió de las vergüenzas apretándolas, y exasperándose el testigo, el reo le dijo que se alegrase mirando las representantes y no tomase de aquello pena... (A.H.N. Inq. lib. 939. fol. 500r<sup>o</sup>-501r<sup>o</sup>, quoted by Carrasco 68)

Cases such as those of Joan García Ibarra, who attended theatrical representations in Valencia with other “varones” as their partners, show that many of those watching Lope's, Tirso's or Calderón's plays could have identified with contemporary gender categories such as “queer,” “non-binary,” or “fluid.” If the Golden Age *comedia* really was a *theatrum mundi*, a mirror of social life, if Lope's dictum in his 1609 *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*—“como las paga el vulgo, es



justo hablarle en necio para darle gusto” (47-8)—is to be taken as evidence of the audience-creator connection, then part of this *vulgo* found a reflection on Julio, Don Constanzo, and Juan Rana, and paid a ticket to see these characters. Others went to the *fiesta* only to laugh at them and left the *corrales* unchanged.

However, in between both types of playgoers, there might have been some spectators who would have acquired political sensibility vis-à-vis Lope’s and Quevedo’s *mariones* and *putos*. Through the acting of plays such as *La vengadora de mujeres*, they would have assumed an awareness of the existence of a diverse queer (suffering) community surrounding them (inside the playhouse and outside). This awareness might have turned into tolerance—as has sporadically happened over the first twenty years of the twenty-first century with the consistent presence of gay individuals in pop culture (especially in TV series, cinema, and music). Maybe cultural bridges between the two worlds articulated by this paper—the early modern and the postmodern one—can be found, explored, and questioned through the understanding of how these relationships of desire and anxiety were performed and watched with more or less open-mindedness (and with more or less scorn).

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EMPEÑOS TRANSATLÁNTICOS /  
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## “PUES QUE NO ESTÁS EN EL ORO, O CONTENTO, ¿DÓNDE ESTÁS?”: GOLD AND MELANCHOLY IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH NEW WORLD DRAMA

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**Resumen:** Este artículo estudia la relación entre oro, melancolía e imperio en *El Nuevo Mundo* de Lope de Vega (c. 1598-1603) y *Midas* de John Lyly (1592). Tradicionalmente, los dramas españoles e ingleses sobre el tema del 'Nuevo Mundo' han sido analizados desde un contexto nacional, a pesar de sus paralelismos en género, motivos e innovación dramática. Siguiendo la propuesta de Barbara Fuchs a un *transnational turn* en los estudios renacentistas y aureoseculares, este estudio propone un enfoque comparado a las formas en que la comedia española del siglo de oro y el drama isabelino inglés interrogan el problema de la colonización del Nuevo Mundo. Explorando la sugerente interrelación entre el oro, la melancolía e el imperio, el artículo demuestra que el modo melancólico se utiliza en una reflexión tanto crítica como redentora sobre la historia, aunque dentro de diferentes contextos políticos, ya que el imperio Habsburgo español estaba en decadencia, mientras que el de Inglaterra estaba todavía *in statu nascendi*. Un enfoque comparado a la comedia española y el drama inglés isabelino demuestra sus enredos genéricos, estéticos y políticos, y, además, fortalece nuestro conocimiento de los varios modos cómo estos imperios se formaron en una re-

lación recíproca. Esta matriz analítica no solo revela las conexiones transculturales entre las historias literarias españolas e inglesas, sino que también subraya la compleja dialéctica del imperio a medida que se desarrolla en la escena y en el discurso político renacentista.

**Abstract:** This article studies the relationship between gold, melancholy, and empire in Lope de Vega's *El Nuevo Mundo* (c.1598-1603) and John Lyly's *Midas* (1592). Traditionally, Spanish and English dramas about The New World have been analysed in national frameworks, despite their parallels in genre, motives and dramatic innovation. Following Barbara Fuchs' call for a *transnational turn* in early modern studies, this study proposes a comparative approach to the ways in which Spanish and English drama critically engages with the problem of New World colonialism. By exploring the suggestive interrelation between gold, melancholy and empire, I argue that the melancholic mode is utilised in a both critical and redemptive reflection on history, albeit within different political contexts as Spain's empire was in decline, while England's was still in a nascent state. A comparative approach to Spanish and English drama demonstrates their generic, aesthetical, and political entanglements and strengthens our understanding of how these empires fashioned themselves in relation to and against each other. This analytical matrix not only reveals the cross-cultural connections between Spanish and English literary history, but also emphasizes the complex dialectics of empire as they play out on the stage and in the political thought of the early modern period.

**Keywords / Palabras Clave:** Comedia, Lope de Vega, John Lyly, Empire, Gold, Melancholy, Colonialism, The New World / Comedia, Lope de Vega, John Lyly, imperio, oro, melancolía, colonialismo, Nuevo Mundo

## Introduction

In 1625, four years after the investiture of the young King Felipe IV (1605–1665), the de facto head of state El Conde-Duque de Olivares received a letter from one of his diplomats containing a range of charges aimed at his government, summarized as “se va



todo al fondo” (Elliott 41). How did the once so powerful and global Habsburg Empire, the universal monarchy launched by the Catholic Monarchs, end in decline? This debate had been ongoing since at least the 1590s, a period marked by catastrophic defeats, e.g., the destruction of the Armada by the English, rebellions in the Spanish Netherlands, a state bankruptcy in 1597, King Felipe II’s death the following year, and a string of famines, plagues, and natural disasters that struck the Iberian Peninsula claiming almost half a million victims (Elliott 46). Furthermore, the debate was marked by the widespread dissemination of accounts of atrocities in the New World, as well as a general sense of unease related to the consequences of the *Conquista*, both moral and economic. How did the literary scene, and, particularly, the Spanish *comedia*—which was supposed to “reflexionar sobre las causas históricas de las miserias del presente” (Castañeda 37)—react to this historical feeling of crisis? Simultaneously, Spain’s bitter rival England, whose imperial ambitions were still *in statu nascendi* engaged in a “mimetic rivalry” with the Habsburg empire, which was seen as both an exemplum and its antithesis (Fuchs, “Another Turn” 412). Traditionally, Spanish and English dramas about the New World have been analyzed in national frameworks, despite their parallels in genre, motives, and dramatic innovation. The Spanish *comedia*, famously described by Lope de Vega as a mixture of tragedy and comedy, “Lo trágico y lo cómico mezclado” (*Arte Nuevo* 2.1.174), is often absent in comparative studies on early modern tragicomedy, though notable exceptions include the work of Mukherji and Lyne, and that of Maguire. Barbara Fuchs has argued for a transnational turn in early modern studies, emphasizing the need for a “refocusing of our critical gaze” to highlight cross-cultural connections and “ideological entanglement” (“No Field” 129).

Following this call for a transnational reorientation of early modern studies, I propose a comparative reading of “The New World” in the Spanish *comedia* and Elizabethan drama. Focusing on Lope de Vega’s *El Nuevo Mundo* (c. 1598–1603) and John Lyly’s *Midas* (1592), I examine how Spanish and English drama critically engages with the problem of New World colonialism with, however, different historical preconditions, since Spain’s empire was in decline while the English had only recently embarked on their imperial venture. I

focus in particular on the role of gold as a destabilizing force in the body politic. The search for gold, which has been an integral part of the critique of Spanish imperialism, relates to a deep sense of melancholy across both plays. I argue that melancholy, described as “one of the fundamental axes of renaissance culture,” serves as a fruitful *topos* for comparing Spanish and English dramatic responses to early colonialism, and can help bridge the gap between the worlds of Iberian and other European literary discourses and contexts (Bartra 2).

Early modern Europe was, indeed, struck by a “vogue of melancholy,” which was in part a result of the Neoplatonist appraisal of diseases of the soul as a sign of intellectual genius and solemnness—all desirable traits that made people simulate the classical marks of melancholy, such as wearing dark clothes, silently contemplating over a book, etc.—which also underlines the performative element of this ailment (Soufas 306). In their seminal study *Saturn and Melancholy* (1964), Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl designate early modern Spain and England as the countries where the artistic and philosophical discourse of melancholy found its fullest and most profound expressions (233). Furthermore, a focus on melancholy and gold can be a productive bridgehead between the worlds of Golden Age studies and other early modern literatures. Following Teresa Scott Soufas, who describes melancholy as “one of the markers of Spain’s trajectory towards modernity” (130), I argue that a transnational, comparative approach to gold and melancholy can help us complicate anachronistic nation-based categories and open our field to the complex dialectics of early modern colonial empires as they play out on the stage in Madrid and London.

## Tragicomic Visions of Empire

*El Nuevo Mundo* (c.1598–1603) elaborately stages the discovery, conquest, and religious conversion of the New World by Columbus.<sup>54</sup> Through its two intermingling plotlines, the *Reconquista* of Nasrid

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<sup>54</sup> The play was first published in print in *Parte IV* of Lope’s *comedias* in 1614. The title, however, appears in the prologue of Lope’s *El peregrino en su patria* from 1604, as noted by Menéndez Pelayo. Morley and Bruerton place the date

Granada by the Catholic monarchs is juxtaposed with the *Conquista* of the Indies, thereby underlining the messianic component of the nascent Habsburg empire. Following Maravall's influential *Cultura del Barocco*, much of the somewhat scarce criticism that exists has focused on the play's ideological involvement with and defense of Habsburg imperialism and Catholic devotion (e.g., Shannon 1989; Nelson 2010; Castillo 2021). This interpretation is not surprising, given the play's structure of fall and redemption (which is made quite explicit by the literal fall and rise of a large wooden cross on stage), the often hagiographic portrayal of Columbus' religious devotion, and the final surrender and baptism of the *Indios*.

The basic plot centers on the Genoese sailor's attempt to reach the New World (in contrast to the historical Columbus). In the first act or *jornada*, we find the protagonist attempting to persuade different European sovereigns to sponsor his overseas endeavor, albeit with little luck. This is interpolated with a subplot describing the siege and final capture of Granada by the Reyes Católicos, including a lustful tableau of the Nasrid King El Rey Chico's courting of his courtesan. The second *jornada* transports us to the island of La Deseada, where the *cacique* Dulcanquellín resides with his soon-to-be bride Tacuana.<sup>55</sup> Various accounts of cultural exchange and confusion play out, ending with the protagonist's return to Europe. In the final *jornada* the conquistadores' lust for gold and women leads to them committing sexual assaults on the native population and consequently to a rebellion led by Dulcanquellín, which is only prevented by an act of divine intervention. Finally, the natives yield to Catholicism, and Columbus is hailed in Barcelona as the bearer of Christ. The play thus mixes a range of diverse *comedia* subgenres, e.g., the history play, the *comedia de santos*, the *comedia morisca*, and the *drama de honor* (Kluge 98; see also Ortega Robles).

John Lyly's play *Midas*, which was first performed at court on Twelfth Night in 1590, uses the Ovidian myth of folly and greed to allegorize the Spanish conquest and search for gold overseas.

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of composition between 1598–1603, suggesting that this is one of the author's earliest dramas. For the date and sources of Lope's play, see Shannon (43–44).

<sup>55</sup> The island and its inhabitants are, of course, the product of stereotypical colonial fantasies with little resemblance to the actual historical people of the Caribbean.

The Phrygian King Midas acts as a cipher for Spain's King Felipe II, whose *Armada Invencible* had recently been defeated by the English in 1588. Critics have consequently tended to regard the anonymous ruler of Lesbos, the defiant island kingdom that resists an invasion by the Phrygian tyrant, as a symbol of Queen Elizabeth (Connolly 1–2; Hunter & Bevington 132–133). Like Lope, Lyly mixes comic and tragic elements, classical and popular traditions, rhetorical eloquence, and proverbial sayings in a plot whose “tragedy” results in a *felix culpa* of forgiveness and redemption. In his famous prologue, Lyly explicitly links generic ambiguity to overseas colonialism and trade, stating:

Traffic and travel hath woven the nature of all nations into ours, and made this land like arras, full of device, which was broadcloth, full of workmanship. Time hath confounded our minds, our minds the matter, but all cometh to this pass: that what heretofore hath been served in several dishes for a feast is now minced in a charger for a gallimaufry. If we present a mingle-mangle our fault is to be excused, because the whole world is become a hodgepodge. (ll. 13–22)

Despite its apologetic tone, Lyly's poetics of tragicomedy foreshadows the type of mixed audience that would prove to be so crucial to both English and Spanish drama of the time. Furthermore, his mixture, or “gallimaufry,” suggests a more complex relation between tragedy and comedy, in line with Lope's “mezclado” from his poetics *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*.<sup>56</sup> This resonates with Valerie Forman's notion of tragicomedy as a “dialectical relationship”—rather than a hybrid—the result of which is a “productive contradiction” between the two genres (8). Tragicomedy, thus, is not understood as tragedy plus comedy or vice versa, but instead as a complex generic structure in which each genre formally depends on, and, thereby, becomes a means for the other. This consequently affects the audience's response to the genre, or in the words of Tzvetan Todorov, their “horizons of expectations,” be it laughter, tears, engagement, or detachment (163).

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<sup>56</sup> Here, Lyly differs from his compatriot John Florio, whose English-Italian dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598) describes tragicomedy as “halfe a tragedy, and halfe a comedy” (427), suggesting a much more static conceptualization of the genre.

This ambiguity between tragic and comic elements also constitutes one of the critical trademarks of the *comedia*, along with its staging of the mechanisms of power (Simonsen 280). Albeit their apparent topical differences, I argue that both plays engage in a problem-oriented discussion of gold's corrupting influence on the body politic, which is conditioned by tragicomedy's critical potential. Genre, as stated by Verna Foster, functions not only as a categorization—it “communicates,” “enables comprehension,” “conditions response” (1)—and, we may add, can strategically manipulate or play with its audience's expectations. By focusing on the celestial court scene and Terrazas' speech in the first and third *jornada*, and the lament of Midas in act three, I propose a re-reading of the dramatic interrogation of European conquest as it plays out on the Spanish and English stage.

In the first *jornada* of Lope's play, we find a troubled and frustrated Colón, who, after several failed attempts at procuring financial aid for his voyage, falls asleep under a tree, only to be transported in his dream on the wings of Imaginación to a heavenly court, presided over by Providence. Here, allegorized versions of Christian religion (i.e., Religión) and idolatry (i.e., Idolatría) debate who has the legal right to the New World and the souls of its inhabitants. The scene plays out as a spectacular meta-theatre that draws on the imagery of the religious *auto sacramental*. Idolatría accuses Colón of wanting to steal the New World (i.e., her “property”) only to hand it over to Religión. Conversely, Idolatría is accused of stealing the New World, which was bequeathed to Religión by Christ: “El testamento de Cristo / a la Iglesia presenté, / ella la heredera fue, / como en el traslado has visto” (1.744–747). To this, Idolatría comically replies “¡Que no entiendo testamentos!” (1.747), which prompts Religión to retort:

Está en sangre firmado,  
con siete sellos sellado  
de los siete sacramentos.  
De la Fe las Indias son.  
Dios quiere gozar su fruto;  
vuélvele, infame, el tributo. (1.749–754)

It is noteworthy how several disparate discourses—religious, legal, and economic—are intertwined in this scene. Thus, the conquest is fashioned in both heavenly and worldly terms, the latter of which provide an ambiguous if not downright critical angle on the conquistadores. In a similar vein, *Idolatría* accuses the Spaniards of using religious zeal as a cover for their true motivation, i.e., their lust for gold: “No permitas, Providencia, / hacerme esta injusticia, / pues lo lleva la codicia / a hacer esta diligencia. / So color de religion, / van a buscar plata y oro / del encubierto Tesoro” (1.768–774). *Idolatría* thus voices a critique of the *Conquista* that echoes Bartolomé de Las Casas’ infamous and influential *Brevisima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (1552)—a gesture that is, however, contained by being uttered by a heathen, if not a downright diabolical character. Providencia’s reply to this accusation is telling and deserves particular attention:

Dios juzga de la intención  
Si El, por el oro que encierra,  
gana las almas que ves,  
en el cielo hay interés,  
no es mucho le haya en la tierra.  
Y del Cristiano Fernando,  
que da principio a esta empresa,  
toda la sospecha cesa. (1.775–782)

Here, the future exploits of the conquistadores are excused by the potential salvation of the natives—a cause that gains further legitimacy by the famed piety of King Fernando. However, as in the earlier quotations, the religious discourse of salvation is interpolated with a language of economics and trade (e.g., “gana,” “interés,” “empresa”), which ultimately “commodifies” the souls of the natives. The messianic element of the *Conquista* is thus fashioned as a simple commercial transaction. The parodic use of mixed discourses thereby serves a critical function in the play’s interrogation of the conquest. According to Mikhail Bakhtin, parody juxtaposes “two languages [...] as well as two styles, two linguistic points of view, and in the final analysis two speaking subjects” (76). Thereby, the court scene becomes polyphonic, which allows for several potentially conflicting interpretations of the legitimacy

of the conquest. Providencia’s initial remark that “God will be the judge” further adds to the ambiguity of the scene. Thus, the play does not give a clear answer, and, indirectly, the final judgment is left with the audience.

Gold’s negative connotations are further emphasized by the arrival of Demonio, who reiterates Idolatría’s claim that Fernando and his conquistadors are spurred by avarice rather than religious fervor: “No los lleva cristiandad, / sino el oro y la codicia” (1.798–799). Demonio then states that the Spaniards already have gold *sub terra* but lack the skill to extract it; something his diabolical servants can teach them:

España no ha menester  
oro, que oro tiene en sí;  
sépanlo buscar allí,  
que aun yo lo hare parecer.  
Mis subterráneos ministros  
lo mostrarán. (1.800–805)

Thus, in this scene, gold acquires at least two negative attributes, being both the price of salvation and the product of the devil’s machinations. If we consider the heavenly court through the lens of the *auto sacramental*, what we are witnessing is an allegorization of the conflict that will later play out in the main drama (Kluge 101). The stage is thereby set for a clash between religion and gold/wealth, the latter of which severely discredits the legitimacy of the *Conquista*.

In a similar fashion, Lyly’s *Midas* stages the corrupting influence of gold—not on the conquistadores but on the sovereign himself. The eponymous Midas acts as an allegory of the Spanish King Felipe II and is consequently portrayed in unflattering terms as a covetous and tyrannical sovereign, whose ambition and subterfuge have given him an overseas empire and “made the sea groan under the number of [his] ships” (3.1.35–36). The play is structured around two Ovidian tales of King Midas: his golden touch and his divine punishment of having his ears turned into those of a donkey. The beginning of the play shows a triumphant Midas being awarded a wish by Bacchus for his service to the gods. He seeks the advice of his counselors, with the symbolic names Eristus (Love), Martius (War), and Mellacrites (Sweet Judge). Eristus tellingly suggests that



Midas gains control of his mistress, “for what sweetness can there be found in life but love, whose wounds, the more mortal they are to the heart the more immortal they make the possessors?” (1.1.26–28). To this, Martius mockingly replies that love breeds “nothing but folly” and that Midas should instead wish to be the “monarch of the world” and “commander of the whole earth” (1.1.32–35). Mellacrites, however, advises the king to wish that everything he touches turns to gold, since he would then both gain his mistresses’ love and become lord of the world. He then embarks on an eloquent appraisal of gold’s qualities, a word that holds “all the powers of the gods, the desires of men, the wonders of the world, the miracle of nature, the looseness of fortune, and triumphs of time” (1.1.49–52).

Further, the ardent counselor underlines gold’s regal symbolism despite its base and infertile source: “Such virtue is there in gold that, being bred in the barrenest ground and trodden under foot, it mounteth to sit on princes’ heads” (1.1.72–74). In this passage, gold first becomes a Christological image, mimicking the humble and humiliated Christ ascending to the throne of God. Subsequently, the “earthly” or even abject associations connected to gold are repeated in Eristus’ reply to Mellicrites, when he states, “Gold is but the guts of the earth” (1.100). Similar to Lope invoking of the devil and his “subterráneos ministros” in relation to gold, the precious metal acquires related negative connotations (which are suggestively linked to the New World) when Midas’ daughter, the wise Sophronia, wishes that her father banishes Mellacrites, “with thy greediness of gold, to the utmost parts of the west, where all the guts of the earth are gold” (2.1.113–115). In Lope’s play, the corporeal quality of gold is further linked to erotic imagery, as seen in Act 3, where the conquistador Arana sexually violates the indigenous character Palca:

ARANA Palca, ¿cómo va de pechos,  
a ver?  
PALCA Que no tengo oro.  
ARANA De eso estarán satisfechos;  
solo estos vuestros adoro,  
que de oro major son hechos.  
No busco aquel oro aquí,  
de que ya tengo un Tesoro.  
PALCA Pues, ¿cuál oro?



ARANA El tuyo. (3.2293–2302)

In this extract, Palca’s body is inserted into a discourse of both economic and sexual desire. Furthermore, as noted by Melissa Figueroa in her reading of the scene, it is noteworthy that “pecho” (breast), according to Sebastián de Covarrubias’ famous *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611) also refers to a monetary tribute paid to the king (Figueroa 25).<sup>57</sup>

Gold, sex, and conquest, thus, are inscribed into the same metaphorical economy, where the latter takes on the form of exploitation. The connotation of Palca’s breast with a gold “tribute” further strengthens the “reification” of the indigenous characters, which was already at place in the court scene. The link between gold and sexual transgression is also present in Midas’ desire for his counselor’s daughter, Celia, who is now within his reach due to his “golden touch”: “Chastity will grow cheap where gold is not thought dear. Celia, chaste Celia, shall yield” (1.1.128–129). Gold thus becomes a means for promiscuity and improper liaisons, as Celia would be an unsuitable match for a king. Midas’ use of gold for sexual ends highlights the tension between the personal and the political and ultimately establishes the Phrygian king as a tyrant who has neglected his responsibilities as sovereign. Midas’ lust for gold becomes almost absurd, when Mellacrites describes how food and beverages turn to gold in the king’s throat, which is an image that once again underlines the metal’s corporeality and connection to the abdominal area or “guts”: “Your Highness sees, and without grief you cannot see, that his meat turneth to massy gold in his mouth, and his wine slideth down his throat like liquid gold. If he touch his robes, they are turned to gold; and what is not that toucheth him but becometh gold?” (1.1.51–56).

Gold and, by extension, empire are thus framed as unnatural and grotesque appetites that physically affect the sovereign’s body—even to the point to where Midas, on the brink of starvation, tells his counsellors:

My lords, I faint both for lack of food and want of grace. I will to the river, where if I be rid of this intolerable

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<sup>57</sup> “en otra significación, vale cierto tributo que se da al rey” (Covarrubias 810).

disease of gold, I will shake off that intemperate desire of government, and measure my territories, not by the greatness of my mind, but the right of my succession. (3.1.68–72)

Midas is here portrayed as a tyrant, whose claim to sovereignty is severely questioned. Regal authority, thus, does not gain its legitimacy through brute force but through royal succession. On a surface level, the Rabelaisian corporeality of the king ingesting gold is a part of the play's comic portrayal of Midas' (and, by extension, the Spanish king's) greed and intemperament, but this image has a deeper colonial resonance that connects Lyly's play to the Spanish *conquista* of the New World.

The image of the sovereign drinking gold shows a disturbing similarity to an event from the writer Pedro Mariño de Lobera's *Crónica del Reino de Chile* (1580). This early account of the conquest of Chile includes an episode, where the historical conquistador Pedro de Valdivia (1497–1553) is captured by the Mapuche people and forced to drink liquid gold as the culmination of a grotesque banquet, which ultimately kills him:

[...] Y es que estando los indios con extraordinario regocijo viendo en sus manos al gran capitán de los españoles, hicieron con él muchas fiestas por burla y escarnio, y por remate trajeron una olla de oro ardiendo y se la presentaron, diciéndole: pues tan amigo eres de oro, hártate agora dél, y para que lo tengas más guardado, abre la boca y bebe aqueste que viene fundido, y diciendo esto lo hicieron como lo dijeron, dándoselo a beber por fuerza, teniendo por fin de su muerte [...] (Lobera)

This strange account was, of course, disseminated in Europe through print and art and has, for instance, been depicted in the Flemish artist Theodor de Bry's famous engravings from the Americas during the 1590s. The story of Valdivia was also brought to England in 1587 by the Earl of Cumberland, who had financed an expedition to the Rio Plate region, where the crew met the Portuguese chronicler Lopes Vaz who told them the story of the unfortunate conquistador and his fabled greed—a tale that was later included in the geographer and ardent promoter of colonialism Richard Hakluyt's famous *Principal Navigations* (1589):

[...] but Baldivia having his horse slaine under him was taken alive. Whom the Indians wished to be of good courage, and to feare nothing; for the cause (said they) why we have taken you, is to give you gold ynough. And having made a great banquet for him, the last service of all was a cuppe full of melted gold, which the Indians forced him to drinke, saying, Now glut thy selfe with gold, and so they killed him. (276)

Furthermore, the image of Midas bathing in the river to rid him of his cursed golden touch bears a fascinating resemblance to the fabled myth of “El Dorado,” as noted by Annaliese Connolly. The original myth stems from the alleged rituals of a fabled Andean tribe, whose leader was ritually covered in golden dust (contrary to much popular belief, “El Dorado” originally referred to a person not a place) and would then make offerings to the gods at a sacred lake (Connolly 3). This myth resonates with Midas’ golden touch (which even turns his clothes and beard to gold) as well as the scene where he bathes in the river Pactolus to escape his curse—which ironically turns the water into gold (3.3.90–92). The myth of El Dorado was already in circulation when Lyly was writing his play, particularly through the marvelous accounts of the explorer Walter Raleigh, who, like Lyly, frequented the court of Queen Elizabeth. The Spanish conquistador Pedro de Sarmiento de Gamboa, who was a chief expert on Inca culture and on the myth of El Dorado in particular, was captured in 1586 and subsequently brought back to England, which sparked Raleigh’s interest in the golden legend. Furthermore, Lyly’s patron, the Earl of Oxford, was involved with Raleigh, which makes it even more probable that the playwright was aware of the Spanish myth (Connolly 4).

## Melancholic Empires

Thus, the Phrygian king embodies the Spanish greed for gold and, thereby, acts as a warning against intemperate government and illegitimate (imperial) ambitions. Interestingly, the fashioning of greed as a “hunger” for gold, as exemplified in the character of Midas, appears frequently in colonial sources from this period. In a telling anecdote from Stephen Greenblatt’s influential study

*Marvelous Possessions* (1991), the Aztec emperor Montezuma is said to have asked Hernan Cortés why the Spaniards had such a strange “hunger for gold” to which the conquistador replied that they had “a disease about the heart, for which the only cure was gold” (Greenblatt 170). Cortés’ reply points to a suggestive connection between gold and diseases of the heart/soul—or melancholy.

This interrelation was not unfamiliar in early modern Europe, where philosophical and medical tracts frequently cited the drinking of gold (an alchemical compound of questionable origins known as *aurum potabile*) as a cure for melancholy, e.g., in the medical writings of Paracelsus, the Florentine philosopher Marsilio Ficino’s *De Vita* (1480–1489), and Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), which makes the connection no less than five times (Gambin 280–283; Kauffman 75). This eccentric remedy is also referenced in Lope de Vega’s prose drama *La Dorotea* (1631) as well as in his *Arcadia* (1598) and in the palace *comedia Los torneos de Aragón* (1614), where the character Marcela states that gold is “antídoto dichoso / contra la melancolía” (2. 2380–2394).<sup>58</sup> Thus, gold serves a suggestive double function being simultaneously the cause and potential cure for melancholia, as a variation of Plato’s “Pharmakon,” famously analyzed by Jacques Derrida, who noted that the ambiguous Greek word can both signify remedy as well as poison (97–98). This multiplicity of meanings is at the center of *Midas*’s framing of gold as being both divine and abject, the cause of and remedy to melancholy.

In Lyly’s play, King Midas himself laments his thirst for gold as the cause for his troubled state:

Miserable Midas, as unadvised in thy wish and in thy success unfortunate! O, unquenchable thirst of gold, which turneth men’s heads to lead and makest them blockish, their hearts to iron and makest them covetous, their eyes to delight in the view and makest them blind in the use! I that did possess mines of gold could not be contended till my mind were also a mine. (3.1.3–9)

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<sup>58</sup> Covarrubias also includes an entry on ‘oro potable’ in his *Tesoro*, a remedy he, however, dismisses quite blatantly: “no creo nada desto” (790).

This negative effect caused by gold resonates with Lope’s play, where the conquistador and main antagonist Terrazas makes a similar lament in the final act:

Ahora ven mis recelos  
que no hay sin contento ricos;  
que en estos bárbaros suelos  
¿a qué efecto o causa aplico  
tantas barras y tejuelos?  
Tengo más o más;  
pero todo este tesoro  
dejo mi disgust atrás.  
Pues que no estás en el oro,  
o contento, ¿dónde estás?  
Al Cielo he sido importune  
por tener y más tener;  
ya tengo sin gusto alguno,  
de donde vengo a entender,  
que no te tiene ninguno. (3.2069–2083)

Like Lyly’s melancholic king, Terrazas realizes that the abundance of gold and wealth offered by the New World does not result in imperial splendor nor offer any salvation, but rather inflicts the soul with melancholy—which unavoidably leads to introspection—on an individual, and often a collective level. What is the cause of our sorrows? How did we arrive at this historical moment of decline, both characters seem to ask? The idea of imperial decadence was often voiced in medical metaphors by political thinkers of the period—for instance, in the words of the economist Sancho de Moncada, who in 1619 writes that “como hay principios ciertos y reglas infalibles que enseñan a remediar las enfermedades de los cuerpos y de las almas... hay remedios infalibles para remediar los daños que pueden venir a los reinos en común” (Maravall 148). The need to find the source of the current crisis is intrinsically connected with Spain’s own self-image as an empire imbued with a messianic mission, whose ultimate end would be the conversion of the infidels and the establishment of a kingdom of Heaven on earth (Elliott 47).

The imperial self-fashioning in cosmic terms, of course, leads to the natural conclusion that the crises were acts of divine

punishment caused by the degradation of morals, insubordination, and the greed and luxurious living made possible by the influx of gold and exotic goods from the New World. The image of the state as a sick body that needs to be remedied resonates with Lyly's melancholic Midas, whose greed has jeopardized his realm and even desecrated the value of gold, as he, in the end, becomes a "commander of dross" (2.1.60–63). "Dross" is the residual product thrown off from metals in the process of refining, which once again underlines the paradoxicality of gold being simultaneously divine and filthy or abject. While Terrazas' feeling of *desengaño* is related to a retrospective and melancholic view on the empire's decline, *Midas* acts as both a satire on Spanish tyranny and as a warning to the still nascent English imperium. This rhetorical strategy underlines the interconnections between the ways in which England and Spain fashioned themselves in relation to and against each other—through *imitatio*, resemblance, and difference. The triad of gold, melancholy, and empire thus highlights the complex literary, political, and philosophical connections between Spanish and English drama, and demonstrates the dialectics of early modern imperial formation.

## Conclusion

Both Lope and Lyly engage with the problematic relation between gold, melancholy, and *imperium*, although from very different viewpoints, as one was witnessing his country's empire fall into decline while the other was still only imagining the potential challenges ahead. Lyly's *Midas* clearly takes the form of a poignant satire of Spanish greed in the Americas and the resulting hubris, which will unavoidably lead to divine punishment. Melancholy is here the result of an unnatural appetite for gold and empire that can never be fully satisfied and ultimately leads Midas to neglect his regal duties as sovereign. Gold takes on an abject form as a substance that is simultaneously debased and divine, a cure and a cause for illness, as a Derridean pharmakon *avant la lettre*.

Furthermore, gold is framed in strong abdominal terms as the "guts" of the earth, underlining its impure provenance. This grotesque corporeality reaches its apex when food and liquids turn into gold in the mouth and body of the sovereign, which ultimately

demonstrates the unnatural appetite and greed of Midas—and, by extension, the Spanish king. In Lope’s play, this corporeality is less explicitly grotesque but rather finds its form through metaphor and reification of the female Amerindian body. However, *El Nuevo Mundo* also makes a strong connection between gold and melancholy, albeit in a less satirical vein given Spain’s historical context of crisis at the time. Both plays thus utilize the melancholic mode and feeling of *desengaño* in a both critical, and, for Lope’s part, redemptive reflection on history that is made possible by the productive contradictions and ambiguities of the genre of tragicomedy and the Spanish *comedia*.

The plays are, thereby, in line with the Italian renaissance humanist and dramatist Giovanni Guarini, who claimed that the purpose of tragicomedy is ultimately “the purgation of melancholy” (Forster 19). The corrupting influence of gold is not a *novum* in Western literary history—one can think of Vergil’s “auri sacra fames” (“the accursed greed of gold”), echoed by Dante in his *Purgatorio*, the writings of St. Paul, etc. Lope and Lyly’s plays, however, situate this discussion strongly within the context of early colonial politics, and in the case of Lyly within discussions of sovereignty and royal legitimacy. Furthermore, their dramatic interpretations of colonial conquest, despite their differences, propose a strong link between gold, melancholy, and empire. A comparative and transnational approach to Spanish and English drama thus demonstrates the generic, aesthetical, and political connections between the two nations and complicates our understanding of how these empires fashioned themselves in relation to and against each other. This analytical matrix not only reveals the cross-cultural connections between the worlds of Spanish and English literary history but also emphasizes the complex dialectics of empire as they play out on the stage and in the political thought of the early modern period.

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Elena Nicole Casey  
“Notable melancolía”: Writing American Illness from Imperial Spain  
in Calderón’s *La aurora en Copacabana*  
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## “NOTABLE MELANCOLÍA”: WRITING AMERICAN ILLNESS FROM IMPERIAL SPAIN IN CALDERÓN’S *LA AURORA EN COPACABANA*

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**Abstract:** “Notable melancolía” evaluates the melancholy of the Incan priestess Guacolda of Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s only play set in the *Nuevo Mundo*, *La aurora en Copacabana*. The investigation first identifies Guacolda’s symptoms and how they communicate her role as synecdoche for her society. The study then demonstrates how Guacolda’s melancholy, and that of her namegiver in *La Araucana*, reflects the intersecting medical and literary philosophies of the classical and early modern worlds, before relating Guacolda’s symptoms to those of other women in Calderón’s *comedia* in similar circumstances: elite women in pre-Christian civilizations, isolated from society, or threatened by male jealousy. Moving from symptoms to significance, the manuscript demonstrates how the astrological imagery of the play correlates Guacolda’s condition to the spiritual decadence of her nation, drawing comparisons between the *comedia* and the theo-political theory of melancholy expressed in the *auto sacramental* genre. The manuscript concludes by contextualizing Calderón’s representative decisions within the history of the cult of the Virgin of Copacabana in Spain and the author’s occupation as courtly playwright and priest, arguing that the Guacolda’s

Marian symbolism and Peruvian indigeneity deny her melancholy the attention afforded to her counterparts in the other worlds of Calderón's theater.

**Resumen:** “Notable melancolía” examina la melancolía de la sacerdotisa incaica Guacolda de la única obra de Pedro Calderón de la Barca que toma lugar en el Nuevo Mundo, *La aurora en Copacabana*. Primero, la investigación identifica como los síntomas de Guacolda demuestran su papel de sinécdoque por su sociedad. Entonces, muestra como la melancolía de Guacolda, y la de su epónimo en *La Araucana*, refleja las intersecciones entre las filosofías médicas y literarias de la edad clásica y la temprana edad moderna, antes de relacionar los síntomas de Guacolda con los de otras mujeres en la comedia de Calderón en situaciones parecidas: las mujeres de clase alta en civilizaciones pre-cristianas, aisladas de la sociedad o amenazadas por la envidia masculina. Al pasar de los síntomas al significado, el manuscrito prueba que las imágenes astrológicas de la obra asocian la condición de Guacolda con la decadencia espiritual de su nación, comparando la comedia con la teoría teo-política de la melancolía en los autos sacramentales. El manuscrito concluye con contextualizar las decisiones representativas de Calderón dentro de la historia del culto a la Virgen de Copacabana en España y el empleo de Calderón como dramaturgo cortesano y sacerdote, sosteniendo que el simbolismo mariano de Guacolda y su identidad indígena peruviiana prohíben que su melancolía reciba la atención otorgada a sus homólogas en los otros mundos teatrales de Calderón.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** America, indigenous, love, melancholy, mental illness, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Peru, religion, social elite, theater, women / América, amor, enfermedad mental, élite social, indígena, melancolía, mujeres, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Perú, religión, teatro

This manuscript studies the melancholy of the Incan priestess Guacolda of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's only play set in the *Nuevo*

*Mundo, La aurora en Copacabana* (ca. 1664–1669).<sup>59</sup> As an elite indigeneous woman conceived by one of Spain’s premiere playwrights and suffering an illness that is both psychosomatic and a “culture” of early modern Spain, Guacolda offers a unique opportunity to explore theories of the mind at the intersection of the many physical and metaphorical worlds of the empire.<sup>60</sup> Following a review of existing scholarship, the present investigation identifies the symptoms of Guacolda’s melancholy as they relate to the encounter between Old and New World societies and between Calderón’s *comedia* and Alonso de Ercilla’s epic, *La Araucana* (1569, 1578, 1589). The study then traces the symptoms of melancholy shared between Guacolda and her namegiver in *La Araucana* to the intersecting medical and literary philosophies of classical and early modern worlds, before exploring the dialogue across play-worlds between Guacolda’s symptoms and those of the other women in Calderón’s *comedia*. In moving from the symptoms to the significance of melancholy, the manuscript examines the play’s intersecting celestial, spiritual, and physical worlds, drawing comparisons between the *comedia* and the theo-political theory of melancholy expressed in Calderón’s *auto sacramental* genre. Finally, the manuscript connects the symptoms and significance of melancholy in the play with the historical world of the author at the time of *La aurora*’s production. Investigating the intersections between these worlds enables the evaluation of the ways in which Guacolda’s Peruvian indigeneity differentiates her illness from the conditions of her transatlantic counterparts, and, by doing so, explores how Spanish culture adapted its depiction of melancholy to encompass colonial bodies.

A broad and growing body of literary scholarship contemplates the phenomenon of melancholy’s proliferation upon Calderón’s stage. Florencio L. Pérez Bautista recognizes melancholy to be the most common ailment in seventeenth-century Spanish theater, including Calderón’s, in “La medicina y los médicos.” In keeping with the popularity of Calderón’s plays and the prevalence of me-

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<sup>59</sup> Quotations from and the date of publication for *La aurora en Copacabana* come from the edition of José Elías Gutiérrez Meza.

<sup>60</sup> For melancholy as “culture,” see Roger Bartra’s *Cultura y melancolía* (12). For other sources denoting the cultural impact of melancholy in early modern Spain and Europe, see Elena Nicole Casey’s *The Fracturing of Melancholy* (5n9).

lancholy within them, Fernando Rodríguez de la Flor identifies Calderón's theater as essential to the construction of the Spanish cultural psyche in *Era melancólica*. Beyond calling attention to melancholy's preponderance upon Calderón's stage and within the zeitgeist of seventeenth-century Spain, scholars have also analyzed its diversity, tracing the ways in which melancholy adapts to the various social identities of Calderón's characters. Pérez Bautista identifies melancholy as a common ailment of women in Calderón's theater, a finding that is corroborated by Isabel Hernando Morata in "Este paso ya está hecho." In "Calderón's Melancholy Wife Murderers," *Melancholy and the Secular Mind*, and "Melancholy, the *Comedia*, and Early Modern Psychology," Teresa Scott Soufas identifies patterns of masculine suffering that bifurcate between the jealous and violent love melancholies of the nobility and the saddened, hypochondriac melancholy of the lower-class *gracioso* or fool. Finally, Casey interprets melancholy as a universal condition, affecting the characters of Calderón's stage differently according to their gender, class, and ethnicity in *The Fracturing of Melancholy*. The present study is rooted in this existing field of scholarship, positing that social identity impacts the characteristics of melancholy in *La aurora en Copacabana* in the same way that the social identities of the other men and women of Calderón's corpus trigger distinct manifestations of internal distress. However, since the melancholy of Guacolda has never been analyzed, this study promises to grow the existing the field of research, bringing indigenous female American minds into the discussion of Calderón's social psychology.

*La aurora* is produced well into Calderón's theatrical career and after his ordainment as a Franciscan priest in 1651. The play dramatizes Spain's conquest and conversion of what is now called Peru, mixing fiction with history. Guacolda is not a historical figure. Rather, as observed by Esther Fernández in "Envisioning Guacolda" and Guillermo Lohmann Villena in "Las fuentes de inspiración," her character originates as a Mapuche woman in *La Araucana*, Ercilla's epic poem about the conquest of Chile (Fernández 151; Lohmann Villena 69).<sup>61</sup> Calderón transposes Guacolda to Tawantin-

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<sup>61</sup> See the Marco A. Morínigo and Isaías Lerner edition of Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (392–396; vol. 1, canto 13, stanzas 43–57).

suyu as an Incan priestess in *La aurora*. At the opening of the play, the arrival of Francisco Pizarro and the Spanish interrupts an Incan ceremony commemorating the civilization’s longevity. The arrival of the Spanish causes Idolatry, posing as the Incan sun god, to call for a human sacrifice, and Guacolda’s name is drawn, to the horror of Yupangui, Guacolda’s beloved and an Incan nobleman and confidant of the Inca Guáscar. The story arch of Guacolda and Yupangui, from evading sacrifice to conversion and life in newly Catholic Peru, is interwoven with Calderón’s retelling of the fall of Tawantinsuyu and the miraculous creation of the Virgin of Copacabana.

The first character to identify the priestess’s melancholy explicitly is Guacolda’s servant Glauca, who accompanies the *sacerdotisa* disguised as common villagers to avoid the latter’s sacrifice following the loss of Cuzco to the Spanish. Glauca remarks, “Notable melancolía / es la tuya”; to which Guacolda replies, “¿Cómo puedo / perder, Glauca amiga, el miedo / a la triste suerte mía?” (2.2159–2162). That which Glauca names melancholy Guacolda defines as an emotional condition between fear and sadness linked to her sense of fate. Calderón shares with his audience the nature of the “suerte” that Guacolda fears in the moment preceding the two women’s conversation. Idolatry declares:

... me atrevo  
a hacer que vuelvan de nuevo  
a vivir mis esperanzas.  
Y así, siguiendo el intento  
de que una amante pasión  
no quite a mi adoración  
lo horroroso y lo sangriento  
de mis sacrificios, hoy  
el Guáscar ha de saber  
de Guacolda para hacer,  
si al Sol este obsequio doy,  
mayor la vitoria mía. (2.2136–2147)

Idolatry frames Guacolda’s intended sacrifice as both a personal desire and victory, a gift to the sun god that dually venerates Idolatry. The chronological proximity of Idolatry’s declaration of intent to the exchange in which Glauca diagnoses the priestess’s melan-

choly creates for the audience a sequential relationship between the priestess's emotional state and the demon's machinations. However, Guacolda is not present to hear Idolatry's renewed commitment to her death. Therefore, the awareness of fate she exhibits in the subsequent scene is preternatural, transforming her melancholy from sentimental affect into a precognizant emotional response.

While not explicitly named until the second act, Guacolda expresses this saddened and clairvoyant variety of melancholy from her first moments on the stage. The priestess's first words "¡Ay, triste!" (1.117), which break the silence of Incan civilians listening to the far-off voices of the Spanish approaching their shore, add a sense of foreboding to Pizarro's arrival:

INGA. ¿Qué nuevo eco se lamenta  
ya en nuestro idioma?

TUCAPEL. El de una  
mujer y, según las señas,  
sacerdotisa.

YUPANGUI. Guacolda  
es la que diciendo llega.

*\*Sale Guacolda como asustada (1.118–122)*

As observed by Tucapel, Guacolda's emotional distress, the sadness in her voice, and the fearful agitation in her comportment act as behavioral indicators of her of social role as priestess and the foresight that comes with that position between the spiritual and earthly plains. Resembling Cassandra's foretelling of the fall of Troy, Guacolda foresees that Incan defenses will not withstand the "monstruo" (i.e., Francisco Pizarro and the Spanish) that she observes approaching the shore (1.153–228). Her sadness arises from her awareness of the impending demise of self and civilization, making the priestess a synecdoche for Tawantinsuyu.

Guacolda's clairvoyance and her function as representative of her people are characteristics that she inherits from *La Araucana*. In "Love American Style," Ricardo Padrón observes that the female gendering of the Americas in retellings of conquest and colonization allows for those stories to be told in the language of love (563). While Padrón cites Tegualda and Glaura as indigenous women-in-love who function as representatives of American geographies in *La Araucana*



(572), Ercilla's Guacolda, too, fits the pattern he identifies. In Ercilla's epic, Guacolda and her beloved, the warrior Lautaro, both dream of the latter's imminent death by Spanish forces. Guacolda laments, “¡Ay, que he soñado también cuanto / de mi dicha temí y es ya llegada / la fin tuya y principio de mi llanto!” (393; vol. 1, canto 13, stanza 46, lines 2–4). As summarized by Felipe Valencia in “The Gendering of Lyric,” “Guacolda grieves while her beloved still lives and lies in her embrace because a dream has foretold his death” (64). This dream becomes tragic reality shortly thereafter, when Lautaro falls in battle against the Spanish. Anticipating Calderón's priestess, the “llanto” of Ercilla's Guacolda forecasts Spanish conquest.

Including and beyond *La Araucana*, there exists in European culture a long tradition of aligning melancholy with visions that can be traced to the early Greek treatise on the melancholy condition, “Problem XXX, 1” (ca. fourth-third centuries BCE), written by Theophrastus, student and successor to Aristotle.<sup>62</sup> In the “Problem,” due to the proximity of “bilis caliente” or adust melancholy to the “sede del intelecto,” “se elevan las sibilas y los adivinos y cuantos están inspirados por los dioses” (Theophrastus in Klibansky et al. 48). Theophrastus situates melancholy as the sources of divine inspiration for the female oracles and diviners of ancient Greece. Building from the Greco-Roman philosophy and science of melancholy, “troubadoursque and Petrarchan traditions” develop a template of precognizant, “erotic melancholy” that situates lovers' tragic dreams and premature grief as the results of an overactive imagination (Valencia 72). Within the classically-inspired theory of melancholy that underpins this literary framework, imaginative excesses trigger and are hallmarks of melancholic imbalance, causing myriad symptoms including depression, anxiety or foreboding, and visions (hallucinatory or, less commonly, clairvoyant).<sup>63</sup> In agree-

<sup>62</sup> Klibansky et al. infer the authorship of “Problem XXX, 1” based on similarities between the text and others by Theophrastus (63–64, 47n57, 64n97).

<sup>63</sup> Teresa de Ávila in the 1573-1582 *Libro de las fundaciones* (102; ch. 8.6–7), Andrés Velasquez in the 1585 *Libro de la Melancolía* (100–102), and Jerónimo Gracián in the 1588 *El cerro o tratado de la melancolía* (488) all indicate that melancholy may produce imaginings and visions that are often false, harmful, or misleading, while Alonso de Santa Cruz in the ca. 1569 *Sobre la melancolía* and Juan Huarte de San Juan in the *Examen de ingenios*, published both in 1575 and 1594, provide scenarios for melancholy's clairvoyant potential. Santa Cruz

ment with Valencia, this template is imitated by *La Araucana's* Guacolda: “a dream of ill omen opens a melancholy void between her and Lautaro, the beloved object she presently possesses, by figuring him as lost. Lautaro remarks on the melancholy hypertrophy of her imagination: ‘siento el veros así imaginativa’” (Valencia 72–73). Through Lautaro, Ercilla diagnoses Guacolda’s emotional and intellectual experiences as the products of a melancholic imagination. His death confirms her melancholy condition as prescient.

Beyond her Araucanian namegiver, Calderón’s Guacolda shares her sibylline melancholy with the other priestesses and noblewomen whose societies are destined to be overthrown in the playwright’s theater. The Moorish Princess Fénix of *El príncipe constante* (1629) experiences a melancholy that is accompanied by dreams foretelling the fall of Fez-held Ceuta to the Portuguese.<sup>64</sup> The Jewish Queen Mariene of *El mayor monstruo del mundo* (ca. 1635)—also published as *El mayor monstruo los celos* (1667/1672)—experiences a profound sadness having anticipated her own death by her husband’s hand and his subsequent suicide, which later leaves Jerusalem to the Roman emperor Octavian.<sup>65</sup> Melancholy also appears connected to royal women who have lived lives in isolation from society in Calderón’s theater. For example, the Cypriot Princess Marfisa of *Hado y divisa de Leonido y Marfisa* (1680) and the Ethiopian Princess Climene of *Apolo y Climene* (1638) experience a melancholy related to their separation from society and the concealment of their royal identities: in an island cave in Marfisa’s case and as a priestess in the temple of

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cites Aristotle and Galen, stating: “algunos melancólicos han adivinado en sueños...tienen ensueños que versan sobre cosas futuras” (32). According to Huarte, the heat of adust melancholy is good “para la imaginativa” (460; ed. 1594, ch. 12). While Huarte warns that persons with an elevated imagination may be deceptive and malicious (460–461; ed. 1594, ch. 12), he also signals that imaginative types born in or tracing heritage to Egypt are well-disposed to professions involving preternatural forecasting, such as “quiromántico, judiciario y adivinador” (503–504; ed. 1594, ch. 14).

<sup>64</sup> See Fénix’s dream vision in *El príncipe constante* (2.992–1031), its accompanying critical analysis by editors Fernando Cantalapiedra and Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez (124–125n1004), alongside Aline Bergounioux’s analysis of melancholy in the play: “Remarques sur le theme de la melancolie.”

<sup>65</sup> See Mariene’s “tristezas” (1.3) and sorrowful and fearful foreboding (1.851–852, 865–866, 881–882).

Diana in Climene’s.<sup>66</sup> Guacolda of *La aurora* fits into this tradition of “Segismundas”—melancholic women hidden from society and their rightful roles within it, like the prince and protagonist of *La vida es sueño* (ca. 1628–1634)—in that she is both priestess in the temple of the sun god and a woman forced into divine servitude:

Desesperación  
de que mi padre su esquivia  
enemistad vengue altiva  
en los dos, pues, porque fuiste  
Tú quien a Huáscar seguiste  
Cuando él siguió a Atabaliba,  
Por no darme a ti, forzada  
Me trajo al templo... (1.967–974)

Guacolda’s father disapproves of her beloved’s (Yupangui’s) political allegiance to the Inca Guáscar over Atabaliba and commits her to a life of celibacy to avoid their union.

The romantic friction that surrounds Guacolda’s melancholy distinguishes her condition from that of her eponym in *La Araucana*, which excludes the love-triangles common to the *comedia de capa y espada* (Valencia 60–61). However, it relates to another characteristic shared between the priestess’s condition and that of other elite women upon Calderón’s stage: male jealousy. Like the Spanish noblewoman Mencía of *El médico de su honra* (ca. 1628–1629), the Grecian Campaspe of *Darlo todo y no dar nada* (1657), and Mariene of *El mayor monstruo*, Guacolda’s fate is ensnared in the conflict between the beloved or spouse and the ruler whose actions trigger the beloved’s jealousy.<sup>67</sup> The Inca Guáscar is enamored by Guacolda and

<sup>66</sup> See Ángel Valbuena Briones’s “Nota preliminar” to his edition of *Hado y divisa* for an analysis of how Marfisa’s condition resembles that of Segismundo in *La vida es sueño* (2096). The following excerpt from *Apolo y Climene*—from the perspective of the Climene’s lady-in-waiting, Cintia—provides a summary of the relationship between Climene’s melancholy and the denial of her royal inheritance: “De tus tristezas / la justa razón, señora, / de nacer a vivir presa, / cuando juzgó Etiopía que / naciendo única heredera / de los estados de Admeto, / nacías a ser su reina” (1821; Act 1, col. A).

<sup>67</sup> José Amezcua in “La mujer y enfermedad,” Hernando Morata, Alan KG Paterson in “The Comic and Tragic Melancholy of Juan Roca,” and Teresa Scott Soufas in *Melancholy and the Secular Mind*, “Calderón’s Melancholy

ignorant of the hidden relationship between the priestess and his noble confidant, Yupangui, resulting in the latter's internal conflict between personal desire and loyalty which Yupangui summarizes in the exclamation: "¿Quién en el mundo se ha visto / embestado tan a un tiempo / de celos, lealtad y amor?" (1.1107–1109). Yupangui is beset by a jealousy born of his conflicting social and romantic relationships, and, like many of the melancholic, elite women upon Calderón's stage, prior to the Spanish conquest of Perú Guacolda's fate hinges upon the actions of her jealous lover. While Guáscar's own motives vacillate between sacrificing and sparing Guacolda, Yupangui must decide whether to acknowledge his social responsibility and deliver the priestess to the Inca or to follow his personal desire and hide Guacolda from society.

Guacolda's melancholy, her sadness linked to a prophetic awareness of a fate which rests upon the behaviors of jealous men, is echoed by the iconography of her play-world. The black sun or Saturn, a common astrological symbol of melancholy, figures in the pre-Catholic world of *La aurora* through costuming.<sup>68</sup> Idolatry, masquerading as the Incan sun god, appears for the first time on stage "*vestida de negro*" (1.691sd), thus representing the black sun of melancholy. The black sun is also a false sun within Calderón's Catholic cosmovision for the play. In addition to Idolatry's duplicity and the false lineage of the Inca Guáscar (whose ancestor Manco Cápac deceitfully claims his son to be the offspring of the sun god), the playwright embeds numerous references to the impending arrival of another better sun with the Spanish. These references include Idolatry's acknowledgment following the downfall of the Incan forces

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Wife-Murderers," and "Melancholy, the *Comedia*, and Early Modern Psychology" identify the relationship between male jealousy, melancholy (male and female), and violence toward women in Calderón's *comedia*. While extensive, their analyses do not bridge Calderón's American worlds.

<sup>68</sup> Tayra M.C. Lanuza-Navarro identifies the astrological correspondence of melancholic dispositions to the planet Saturn and melancholic fevers to solar and lunar eclipses in "Medical Astrology" (64, 73). Beyond the early-modern texts of astrological science cited by Lanuza-Navarro—and of relevance to the present investigation due to its proximity in publication to Calderón's *Aurora*—the horoscopic relationship between Saturn and the melancholic humor is explicitly referenced by Baltasar de Vitoria's 1657 *Teatro de los dioses de la gentilidad* (23; vol. 1, bk. 1, ch. 6).

at Cuzco: “mejor sol en brazos / de mejor aurora nace” (2.2761–2762). In other words, the Spanish bring with them the true sun, the Catholic God, as opposed to the false sun of indigenous Incan society, Idolatry. In line with the humoral and astrological science of the time, which acknowledges the influence of regional and astrological conditions upon the human body, Guacolda’s melancholy arises from the influence of Idolatry upon her society: the deceitful black sun at once keeps the indigenous Peruvians in spiritual darkness and requires human sacrifice.<sup>69</sup> Whereas her namegiver in *La Araucana* preemptively mourns Spanish conquest, the Guacolda of *La aurora* mourns a threat from her own land.

The black sun of melancholy and the association of melancholy with pre-Catholic and spiritually corrupt societies are common tropes in Calderón’s theater. In “Icons of Saturn,” Frederick A. de Armas details how the sun god of *Apolo y Climene* becomes the *sol niger* of melancholy as his influence over Climene transforms from desirable to destructive (126). De Armas also identifies a relationship between Saturn and the astrologer-king Basilio in both “Segismundo/Philip-IV” (91) and “Papeles de Zafiro” (89). Resembling the black sun of Idolatry in *La aurora*, Saturn signifies the destructive, spiritually misguided influence of the characters with which the black sun is associated in each of these plays. With respect to melancholy’s association with pre-Christian civilizations, in *El mágico prodigioso* (1637), the protagonist Ciprian of Antioch, who promises his soul to a demon in exchange for love and training to become a magician, exhibits both scholarly and love melancholies (e.g.,

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<sup>69</sup> Prominent astrological texts concerning planetary influence upon the body and mind in early modern Europe include Marsilio Ficino’s *The Book of Life* (*De vita libri tres*, writ. 1480–1489, trans. to English by Charles Boer) and *De magnis coniunctionibus* (writ. ninth century) by Abu Ma’shar al-Balkhi (Latinized, Albumasar). As noted by Frederick A. de Armas in “*De magnis coniunctionibus*,” Juan de Sevilla’s twelfth-century Latin translation of Albumasar’s text—published in 1489 (Augsburg) and 1515 (Venice)—exerts widespread influence upon Spanish literary and astrological thought during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (229). Lanuza-Navarro explores the myriad roles astrological science plays on the early modern stage and in Calderón’s theater, including its relationship to representations of bodily health, illness, and medicine, in “The Dramatic Culture of Astrological Medicine.” Finally, Kathleen Mary Quinn-Miller recognizes the influence of astrological predictions upon the “emotional climate” of Calderón’s *Mayor monstruo* in *Astrology* (128).

mental states characterized by isolation, extensive study without rest, jealous sexual desire, illusion, and the potential for demonic possession).<sup>70</sup> Only after renouncing the demon and converting to Christianity does Ciprian's melancholic state lift. Similarly, as noted by Cantalapiedra and Rodríguez López-Vázquez in their introduction to *El príncipe constante*, the Moorish Princess Fénix's melancholy arises from the "ausencia de la gracia espiritual" within the kingdom of Fez (29). Her melancholy is the bodily manifestation of her nation's "péché" [sin], a condition of the soul that cannot be resolved unless she and her people accept the Catholic conquest of Ceuta by the Portuguese (Bergounioux 18).

So far, this manuscript has shown how Guacolda's melancholy—its symptoms of sadness and precognition and relationship to male jealousy and the black sun—resembles the other elite female and pagan representations of melancholy upon Calderón's stage. However, Guacolda's melancholy differs from her European, Asian, and African peers within Calderón's repertoire in one essential way: the superficial nature of both the condition and the character that suffers it. Guacolda's melancholy receives only one explicit mention in the play, whereas, the melancholy of the Moorish Fénix, for example, receives five, not including the many broader references to her sadness.<sup>71</sup> In addition and unlike Guacolda, other Old World female characters frequently receive treatments for their melancholies, such as baths and music for Fénix and Mariene of *El príncipe constante* and *El mayor monstruo*, respectively.<sup>72</sup> Further, the melancholy of elite female characters typically concludes—whether by marriage or death—at the end of the play, whereas Guacolda's disappears after the Spanish attack prevents her sacrifice.<sup>73</sup> While

<sup>70</sup> See Manuel Delgado, "La melancolía erótica de Cipriano en *El mágico prodigioso*."

<sup>71</sup> See in *El príncipe constante*: "cuartana" (1.82), "melancolía" (1.32 and 1.45; 2.1006) and "melancolías" (2.1667). As observed by Casey in "The *Cuartanas* of Lisis," the "cuartana" or quartan fever is a melancholic illness often treated as synonym for love melancholy in early modern literature (570).

<sup>72</sup> See *El príncipe constante* (1.5–7) and the opening song to cure Mariene's "tristeszas" in *El mayor monstruo* (1.1–22).

<sup>73</sup> For the conclusion of female melancholy in Calderón's *comedia* by marriage, see *El príncipe constante* (Fénix), *Darlo todo y no dar nada* (Campaspe) and *Hado y divisa de Leonido y Marfisa* (Marfisa); for death, see *El mayor monstruo* (Mariene),

any one of these facts—fewer mentions, missing treatments, or the early resolution of melancholy—is not necessarily remarkable, together they communicate that Guacolda does not have the same room to internally process, treat, or express her melancholy as her counterparts from other continents.

The inattention to the priestess’s melancholy corresponds to the superficiality of her character. Our first introduction to Guacolda is an expression of her grief—“¡Ay, triste!”—which becomes a single note for the character until her conversion. Fernández suggests that Guacolda’s grief “turns her into a pastoral heroine, purely ornamental and devoid of any psychological or ideological complexity” (151). The nature of Guacolda’s melancholy as a one-dimensional “grief” reflects the limited expressions of female melancholy available in the classical philosophy informing early modern medicine. Not only is divination characteristic of female melancholy in Theophrastus’s “Problem XXX, 1,” but also, as observed by Juliana Schiesari in *The Gendering of Melancholia*, the sibyls are “the only mention of a female melancholic” in the “Problem” (105). Whereas male melancholies are discussed at length and by name in both medical and philosophical terms, female melancholy is limited to “a generic category” (Schiesari 105). The reluctance of European culture to individualize women’s melancholy enables the repurposing of female suffering for “ornamental” or symbolic effect in Calderón’s theater.

In the case of Guacolda, her symbolic purpose as a prefiguration of the Catholic Virgin of Copacabana stymies her psychological development. Guacolda’s identity as a virginal priestess positions her for this transformation, which is carried out through a series of visual images and actions that, in agreement with Sabine McCormack in “Calderón’s *La aurora*,” “set” Guacolda on “the course of becoming Christia[n]” (466). Facing sacrifice, Guacolda clings to a tree trunk in the shape of a cross and prays to the yet unknown deity of the cross for salvation (2.2646sd, 2.2714–2716). After the Spanish victory at Cuzco and the priestess’s conversion to Catholicism, Guacolda takes “María” as her Christian name (3.3105), and, in

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*El médico de su honra* (Mencía), *La fiera, el rayo y la piedra* (Anajarte, turned to stone), and *Los cabellos de Absalón* (Tamar, death implied by enclosure in cave). For a list of Calderonian comedias with melancholic female protagonists not including *La aurora*, see Hernando Morata (243).



her capacity as the wife of Yupangui (now Francisco), she acts as a spiritual guide, reminding all how the Catholic Virgin Mary and God intervened to save their lives and souls (3.3197–3214). As observed by María Ferrer-Lightner in “*La aurora en Copacabana*”: “If in general her treatment shares the typical feminine profile present in the comedia, the plot’s resolution diminishes her socially and transforms her into a passive and tame being in the name of an imposed ethics and morality” (67). Guacolda’s melancholy represents the grief of pre-Christian Peru, but the priestess herself cannot be both a psychologically developed individual capable of sin and a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary.<sup>74</sup>

The treatment of melancholy in *La aurora* as that which is visually apparent but only superficially felt by American minds and civilizations resembles the depiction of the Americas in Calderón’s sacramental theater, namely, *La semilla y la cizaña*. Casey demonstrates:

The spreading of illness throughout each of the four allegorical parts of the world is staged in a process that mimics the phases of melancholic illness and correlates ethnic alterity to apostasy. First, Judaísmo and Asia’s religious doubt causes the formation of stone, which resembles the ember-like core of manic melancholy (vv. 1079–1082).

Then, África’s rage heats the stone, recalling the overheating that destabilizes melancholy’s ember-like core (vv. 1119–1124). Next, the clouds that obscure and confuse Europa are introduced, resembling the way in which the overly hot stone of melancholy ignites and creates the fumes that darken and delude the mind (vv. 1143–1148). As a result of this worldwide confusion, América falls in love with

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<sup>74</sup> In what Ángel Valbuena Prat identifies as “el único [auto] exclusivamente mariano de Calderón” (“Nota preliminar” 111), *La hidalga del valle* (ca. 1634), the playwright develops the theory of sin, melancholy, and the Virgin Mary that informs the *La aurora*. In *La hidalga*, Calderón depicts Culpa (the allegorical representation of Original Sin) as infected by the “cuartana” (melancholy, see n13) and unable to enter the house of Mary’s parents before her birth (lines 935–941). Thus, Mary is conceived and born free from the influence of sin and is exempt from the symptoms of melancholy associated with it (lines 1441–1443). Within the framework established by the *auto*, calling attention to the symptoms of Guacolda’s melancholy would problematize her function as a prefiguration of the sinless Mary.



Cizaña (the foremost demon of the play) and invites him to enter into and to control her lands (vv. 1185–1218). In other words, the international melancholic body is sickened and opens itself to demonic intervention (*Fracturing* 87).

Within this universal melancholic body, America is positioned as the culmination of melancholy, the body open to demonic intervention. However, the continent does not take part in the forming of melancholy within body and mind, and the curing of the play's universe includes American allegiance to Europe. As in *La aurora*, the America of *La semilla y la cizaña* experiences melancholy and the spiritual illness that it represents, but Europe is the mind of the universal body and responsible for facilitating its cure.

One reason why Calderón only superficially associates melancholy with the Americas could be the simple fact that he never visits the Americas and, consequently, doesn't know how to represent their inhabitants. Indeed, *La aurora* indicates a lack of familiarity with indigenous American peoples, replacing the historical last Sapa Inca Atahualpa with Guáscar and lifting Mapuche characters like Guacolda from *La Araucana* to represent indigenous inhabitants of Tawantinsuyu. However, Calderón's conflation of American peoples is more likely intentional given the evangelical purposes of his theater. In agreement with Ricardo Padrón in “The Empire of the Idol”: “The point of dramatizing the conquest and conversion of Peru by Spain is not to dramatize colonial places, people and events, but to magnify the accomplishments of the metropolis as militant defender of the one true faith” (14). Calderón preferences spiritual conversion over the exploration of American minds.

Historical context provides further reason for why Calderón would preference the dramatization of conversion over psychology in the case of Guacolda in *La aurora*. Urszula Aszyk reminds us in “*La aurora*”: “no olvidemos que en el período al que nos referimos Calderón sirve al rey y a la Iglesia como sacerdote y poeta-dramaturgo” (79). While writing *La aurora*, Calderón is in direct service to the Catholic king and faith, and, as demonstrated by José Elías Gutiérrez Meza in “The Worship of the Virgin,” the play dates to a time of abundant religious activity surrounding the cult of the Virgin of Copacabana in Spain. Many images of the Virgin were created between 1652 and 1664; in 1656, July 18th becomes the

national celebration day of the Virgin of Copacabana; and the play was likely commissioned by Friar Miguel Aguirre, who spent time in Lima and was a catalyst for the cult of the Virgin of Copacabana in Spain upon his return to Madrid (172–175). In addition, as observed by Enrique Eguiarte Bendímez in “América dentro de la obra de Calderón,” Calderón himself kept a silver image of the Virgin of Copacabana in his room (507). The popularity of the Virgin of Copacabana in Spain in the 1650s and 1660s functions as a motive for prioritizing Peruvian conversion and the miraculous creation of the Virgin of Copacabana over psychological drama.

One consequence of Calderón’s decision to champion the religious cause of the Spanish conquest of the Americas is that he must deny his American protagonists the intellectual depth and agency of their European counterparts. Unlike, for instance, *Darlo todo y no dar nada* or *La vida es sueño*, the governmental leaders of indigenous American societies can have no role in resolving their nations’ spiritual afflictions because this would negate the need for Spanish intervention.<sup>75</sup> Ricardo Castells in “From Crónica to Comedia” recognizes that the Incan royal line is founded by a false Segismundo, an heir kept from society as a means of hiding his falsified inheritance. Calderón refuses the Inca Garcilaso’s depiction of Incan beliefs and traditions as necessary precursors to Christianity and instead turns them into a sign of deception and reason for Spanish intervention (Castells 264–265). His depiction of Yupangui, the sculptor of the Virgin of Copacabana, as “no teniendo / ciencia ni experiencia a ser / escultor” without divine intervention furthers his argument that the Americas are incapable of independently achieving faith and therefore need the Spanish (3.3962–3964). As observed by Ferrer-Lightner, the intellectual inferiority of Incan society as depicted by Calderón fits within the contemporary theory of Amerindians as primitive, innocent, pre-Christian peoples (80). The Amerindian Guacolda cannot internalize melancholy as a spiritual and psychological struggle between reason and desire both because her mind is not capable of such complex thought and because possessing that intellectual capability would negate the reason for Spanish conquest.

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<sup>75</sup> See MacCormack’s argument that Incan law is “insufficient for just government” “without the Christian revelation” (451).

The melancholy of Guacolda, an indigenous priestess of Tawantinsuyu, corresponds to the melancholies of the women of her station and in pre-Christian societies in other worlds within Calderón's theatrical corpus. A female melancholy that manifests as precognizant sadness influenced by male jealousy and the black sun or Saturn's hold upon her society is common in the playwright's theater. What makes Guacolda's melancholy unique is also what makes it particular to her Amerindian identity. The priestess's psychological condition lacks the depth of her counterparts in other areas of the world because she prefigures the Virgin of Copacabana and because a mind possessed of the degree of spiritual reason needed to resolve its own melancholy is a mind that does not need the Spanish.

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## VINO LA COMEDIA: LECTURAS DECIMONÓNICAS DEL TEATRO BARROCO EN ARGENTINA Y CHILE

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**Resumen:** A partir de la lectura de Walter Benjamin acerca de la mezcla entre seriedad y juego en la comedia de Calderón de la Barca, recorreremos algunas miradas en el siglo XIX argentino y chileno ante la ambivalencia de la comedia barroca. Durante el proceso independentista, autores republicanos como Camilo Henríquez y Florencio Varela identifican la comedia barroca con el orden colonial que desean superar. Posteriormente, autores más cercanos al liberalismo, como Juan María Gutiérrez y Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, la leen como un momento necesario para la antigua historia española, y por tanto innecesario para la nueva historia americana. Finalmente, jóvenes críticos del carácter conservador de ese liberalismo, como Pedro León Gallo y Guillermo Matta, valoran la comedia como parte de la expresión literaria de la libertad que ha de guiar la construcción de un nuevo orden político, cuya crisis a fines del siglo XX permite a Raúl Ruiz, según concluimos, articular una mirada distinta, más lúdica, de la herencia del barroco español.

**Abstract:** Based on Walter Benjamin's reading of the mixture between seriousness and playfulness in Calderón de la Barca's comedy, we will look at some perspectives on the ambivalence of baroque comedy in nineteenth-century Argentina and Chile. During



the independence process, republican authors such as Camilo Henríquez and Florencio Varela identified baroque comedy with the colonial order they wished to overcome. Later, authors closer to liberalism, such as Juan María Gutiérrez and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, read it as a necessary moment for the old Spanish history, and therefore unnecessary for the new American history. Finally, young critics of the conservative character of that liberalism, such as Pedro León Gallo and Guillermo Matta, value the comedy as part of the literary expression of the freedom that is to guide the construction of a new political order, whose crisis at the end of the 20th century allows Raúl Ruiz, as we conclude, to articulate a different, more playful view of the heritage of the Spanish baroque.

**Palabras clave / Keywords:** Comedia barroca, literatura latinoamericana, romanticismo latinoamericano, liberalismo latinoamericano / early modern Spanish play, Latin American literature, Latin American romanticism, Latin American liberalism

“Cuando en un libro leo de mil fuentes  
que vuelven varias cosas sus corrientes,  
no me espanto si aquí ver determino  
que nace el agua a convertirse en vino.”

—Calderón de la Barca

*La dama duende* (vv. 721- 724)

## La comedia a través de los siglos

En su indagación acerca del *trauerspiel* alemán, Walter Benjamin afirma que la comedia adquiere su sentido más cabal en las obras de Pedro Calderón de la Barca, donde según el crítico, cohabitan con singular precisión *trauer* y *spiel*, tristeza y juego (286). Benjamin lee en la comedia barroca una apertura hacia el nuevo teatro, basada en una yuxtaposición entre la tristeza trágica y el juego cómico que se opone a la visión tradicional de los géneros teatrales. Según destaca, se trata de un drama abierto al humor como estrategia necesaria para soportar la pérdida moderna de la certeza clásica. La nueva comedia no se deja delimitar por los géneros o las categorías del



teatro clásico, pues expresa la incertidumbre de los nuevos tiempos. Sin un sistema que pueda devolver la noción perdida de la verdad, a Calderón y sus contemporáneos solo les queda el juego lingüístico para expresar su melancolía, en medio de un mundo que ya no responde ante Dios.

En ese sentido, la crítica a la soberanía política que puede leerse en el teatro barroco no pasa por los contenidos con los que representa, de forma más o menos contestataria, a uno u otro rey, como por ejemplo pensaban Vossler (137) y Maravall (436) al leer el barroco como un teatro fiel a los designios monárquicos. Frente a esa crítica conservadora, preocupada por los contenidos, la atención que presta Benjamin a la forma le permite leer la habilidad barroca de desestabilizar las maneras y géneros tradicionales utilizados para su representación. Antes que cuestionar a un determinado soberano, los juegos barrocos que fascinan a Benjamin eliminan toda certeza sobre la lengua con la que algún dramaturgo quisiera representar, o algún rey quisiera ser representado. La comedia barroca se caracteriza por desestabilizar la tranquilidad con la que la lengua quiere transmitir el mando político, o algún mensaje crítico.

En esa línea, el barroco pronto es criticado por las propuestas modernas de un teatro pedagógico, dispuesto a presentar contenidos a través de formas claras, bien jerarquizadas, funcionales para la mejora de las costumbres. Voltaire, por ejemplo, critica que el teatro barroco introduzca comicidad entre los temas más serios (XXXIX: 40).<sup>76</sup> El ilustrado francés nota algo de los juegos que ve Benjamin, y justamente por ello apela a un teatro que pueda asegurar una lengua seria, capaz de detener el juego y contribuir al progreso.

El romanticismo alemán se enfrenta al discurso de la civilización encarnado por Voltaire, proponiendo otra valoración del barroco español (cf. Meregalli 112 y ss; Sullivan 169 y ss). En particular, los hermanos Schlegel traducen y celebran a Calderón, situándolo por encima del también nuevamente valorado Lope de Vega (Tietz 152). El teatro de Calderón permite a los románticos defender otra herencia del drama europeo, ajeno a los marcos que Voltaire quería imponer al teatro. La creación romántica de la autonomía del arte

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<sup>76</sup> De aquí en adelante, cuando citamos autores cuyas Obras Completas se hallan en la bibliografía, indicamos en números romanos el volumen citado y luego la página correspondiente.

permite a los Schlegel festejar las invenciones formales de Calderón, en vez de evaluar cuánto y cómo se ajustan los contenidos del drama a la moral externa que se desea transmitir.

Es a través de esta mediación alemana que Calderón vuelve a situarse en el centro de la discusión española, en la llamada “querrela calderoniana.” Allí se enfrentan, a principios del siglo XIX, dos bandos, en clara oposición política. El primero consiste en el matrimonio alemán von Faber, cuyo esposo deja el protestantismo para reconciliarse con su esposa y transformarse en defensor de una versión supuestamente romántica de Calderón, cercana al discurso católico. El segundo es liderado por el ilustrado español José Joaquín de Mora, quien ve en esa lectura católica de Calderón una celebración reaccionaria del medioevo (cf. Álvarez 289 y ss; Carnero; Durán & González Echeverría 78 y ss; Manrique 42 y ss; Peers 159 y ss).

Tras perder el interés romántico por los juegos formales barrocos, los autores se dividen entre dos formas de leer el barroco, en función de su contenido. Por un lado, los Von Faber defienden el eco conservador del teatro barroco. Por el otro, el bando liderado por De Mora desarrolla una crítica progresista hacia esa lectura de la herencia barroca. De forma especular. Ambas tendencias se dirimen, sin la melancolía benjaminiana, entre la defensa de una tradición no perdida y la alternativa de avanzar sin necesidad de respetar la tradición.

## **La comedia entre continentes**

Este esbozo de los debates sobre el barroco en la teoría literaria europea muestra el carácter transnacional que rápidamente adquiere la discusión sobre la comedia española, como lo muestra el hecho de que la historia de los debates españoles sobre Calderón sea incomprendible sin incluir los debates en otras lenguas europeas. La teoría literaria europea también expone la temprana lectura política que se hace de sus obras, sobre todo a la hora de pensar en cierto teatro político español y su crítica a la monarquía.

De este modo, para indagar en las relaciones entre el teatro barroco y la cultura latinoamericana, no debemos limitarnos a recordar la importancia que brindan los dramaturgos áureos a los acon-

tecimientos americanos, que está ya bien documentada por distintas investigaciones (véase, por ejemplo, Arellano 1992; Mata Induráin 230–231). Junto a ello, es posible leer ciertas elaboraciones teóricas y políticas que toman posición alrededor de los debates que venimos presentando. En lo que sigue, intentaremos mostrar cómo los debates cosmopolitas sobre el teatro español y sus políticas se inscriben en medio de los debates acerca del rol del teatro que acompañan los procesos independentistas latinoamericanos. En una etapa de la historia de las letras latinoamericanas que no distingue del todo entre teatro y literatura, ni entre arte y política, las distintas posiciones ante la herencia española dan pie a diversas valoraciones del teatro barroco español. Mediante estos inexplorados debates, que han de rastrearse en gestos algo aislados, no del todo sistemáticos, mostraremos cómo se establecen distintas posiciones en el siglo XIX latinoamericano ante el fenómeno de la comedia barroca. Como veremos, la mayoría de estas posiciones busca contener, cuando no rechazar, sus facetas más radicales.

Con ello, no solo buscamos distanciarnos de algunas identificaciones instantáneas que se producen entre la escritura latinoamericana y el barroco. Además, nos interesa pensar en cómo la crítica hacia los juegos calderonianos forma parte de la construcción de un espacio público, poscolonial, que busca sustraerse de las formas más vertiginosas de la lengua y separar, de forma lapidaria, lo serio de lo lúdico.

## Barroco y República

Dentro de la actividad teatral irregular que tuvo lugar durante la colonia española, el teatro barroco parece haber contado con una posición central. En Chile, Pereira Salas refiere a cierta “impronta barroca” en el teatro en particular, o en las fiestas coloniales en general (56). En Argentina, por su parte, Knapp Jones documenta algunas representaciones de Calderón a finales del siglo XVIII (80). Ese afán por representar la comedia española será identificado después con el orden monárquico que se desea derribar. Según la historiografía del teatro argentino de la época, tras el proceso independentista, rápidamente se da un declive de la antigua primacía de Calderón en los escenarios bonaerenses (Arenz 225 y ss; Lena 306–307). Junto con ello, comienzan a cuestionarse las obras antes repre-

sentadas. Así, por ejemplo, un polemista rechaza desde la prensa, en 1815, las “disparatadas escenas de Calderón,” como dato de la falta de avance del teatro español (en Verdevoye 100).

La construcción de un orden posterior a la colonia española supone la construcción de otro teatro, liberado de los enredos barrocos. De ahí que los emergentes deseos de construir un teatro republicano vayan acompañados por una crítica transversal dirigida hacia el teatro español, según recuerdan variados estudiosos de la época (ej. Castagnino 67; Lena 307; Taullard 55). Tomando el teatro francés como modelo, se busca construir un teatro decoroso, sin excesos ni ambigüedades. En términos de Juan María Gutiérrez, se trata del paso de la antigua comedia de capa y espada a la construcción de espectáculos regidos por la razón y el buen gusto. Solo ese teatro podría transmitir las verdades que necesita el nuevo orden republicano, al punto de que Gutiérrez destaca, en ese entonces, un intento de reforma social a través del género dramático (*El coronel* 115).

En ese marco, podemos destacar la posición del sacerdote ilustrado chileno Camilo Henríquez. Durante el proceso independentista, Henríquez se burlaba de un público que no comprendía la virtuosa tragedia moderna, ironizando al presentarse como un vendedor de comedias, como lo habría sido Lope de Vega (“El ciudadano Horacio”). Posteriormente, exiliado en Argentina, Henríquez incrementa su anhelo de un teatro republicano. Para ello, debe transformar ese público ávido de la comedia, cuyo retardado gusto ve como otro de los efectos del criticado orden colonial:

Veían, que circulando en las manos de todos las obras teatrales de Volter, Boissi, Crebillon, Maffey, Moratin, Piron, Corneille, Molière, Racine, Shakespeare y Kotzubé, que habían excedido las glorias de los Sófocles y Eurípides de Grecia, y de los Plautos y Terencios de Roma, no se recogían los frutos opimos de su lectura, por ir detrás de los absurdos góticos de los Calderones, Montalvanes y Lope de Vega. (Teatro)

La nueva República debe entonces insertarse dentro de ese avance de los distintos géneros teatrales por el mundo, capaz de hispanizar los nombres franceses y así prometer un nuevo teatro en español. Debe forjar un teatro que no se preocupe por vender, sino por transmitir los valores necesarios para construir una República

que supere el legado español. Así busca hacerlo el ya mencionado De Mora, quien pronto llega a Chile para transformarse en un importante actor del emergente sistema educativo republicano. Una vez consolidada la Independencia por la que lucha Henríquez, De Mora asume que la comedia ha de tener su lugar como un momento de distensión, posterior a los asuntos serios que exige la construcción de la República.

Dentro de ese marco, De Mora celebra la jovialidad de la comedia antigua, o la más reciente de Lope y de Calderón, al lado de la de Molière (en Amunátegui, *Las Primeras* 138). De Mora acepta el teatro barroco si se encadena al teatro ilustrado, si se limita al tiempo que le corresponde, si no se mezcla con la tragedia. Existiendo una clara jerarquía de los poderes y de los saberes, el antiguo teatro puede colaborar con la nueva República, a la que De Mora busca darle un carácter más democrático que la mayoría de sus contemporáneos.

Pero esa tentativa pronto fracasa. Tras triunfar en la guerra civil, la aristocracia chilena establece cierto orden conservador que pronto lo expulsa, a la vez que confía la dirección de las instituciones educativas al liderazgo del intelectual venezolano Andrés Bello. Más mesurado que De Mora en su deseo de avanzar hacia un orden moderno, Bello apela a la construcción de una cultura que no corte bruscamente con la herencia española, así como a una literatura moderna que no busque romper con el legado clásico.<sup>77</sup>

En ese contexto, Bello defiende la comedia española como un momento necesario en la historia del progreso teatral. Se trata, para Bello, de una producción indígena del suelo español. Conectada con su cultura, en tránsito hacia el mundo moderno, la desarreglada fantasía del teatro barroco, parafraseando a Bello, es después corregida por el teatro francés (VII: 474). Como De Mora, Bello busca recuperar ambas tradiciones teatrales. A diferencia del pensador español, asume que el barroco puede enseñar, no solo aliviar. Bien conducido, el barroco puede ser parte de la herencia que recupere

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<sup>77</sup> Amunátegui dedica una biografía al intelectual venezolano, cuya infancia habría estado marcada por la lectura de Calderón (6), al punto de que a los 11 años Bello habría memorizado y recitado los versos que entonces no podría haber comprendido. Es fácil suponer allí cierta exageración, mas ella le permite a Amunátegui ratificar la imagen de un Bello adulto que jamás habría perdido la pasión por el teatro barroco español.

un nuevo teatro virtuoso, capaz de brindar la educación con la que soñaba Henríquez, cuyo dogmatismo le habría impedido valerse del ingenio español que, para Bello, el suelo americano ha de refinar y arreglar, nutriéndose del cristiano suelo español.

## Barroco y contrarevolución

Al igual que en los otros Estados emergentes en la región, en Argentina las guerras civiles marcan un proceso de construcción estatal que no resulta ni tan rápido ni tan republicano como Henríquez lo habría deseado. Otros autores ilustrados comienzan a subrayar la dificultad de transformar con tanta presteza el legado colonial. En el panorama literario, tras el barroco no llega la claridad, sino la nueva confusión romántica, según se critica. Así, en una carta a Gutiérrez, Florencio Varela refiere a ambas escuelas como patologías que recorren, en distintos siglos, la literatura europea (*Colección 171*).

Hasta los años treinta, el barroco y el romanticismo son leídos como manifestaciones de un catolicismo reaccionario, enemigo del progreso. Una y otra escuela aparecen entonces como posiciones solidarias del autoritarismo cuya expresión política ve reflejada Varela en el gobierno de Juan Manuel de Rosas, quien por cierto exilia a Varela en Uruguay. No es casual entonces que la recuperación de Calderón provenga del más relevante intelectual del gobierno rosista, el napolitano Pedro de Angelis. Al igual que los autores antes citados, de Angelis apela a un teatro que pueda transmitir los valores sin los enredos barrocos. A diferencia de ellos, no cree que ese teatro deba provenir de una Ilustración ajena a la cultura española, sino de aquellas formas de arte que puedan recuperar de forma correcta el talento de Calderón, sin necesidad de la mediación francesa.

Para ponderar a Calderón con justicia, de Angelis asume que no debe ser ni “rigorista” ni romántico. No se propone alabarlos ni censurarlos, como habrían hechos los sujetos de la colonia o de la independencia, respectivamente. Para valorarlos con mayor claridad, de Angelis busca leer a Calderón históricamente, dentro del marco del teatro áureo español. Tras los avances introducidos por Lope para lograr un encadenamiento ingenioso de los acontecimientos, Calderón prolonga la falta de reglas de la que este último se vale, al punto de caer en lo que de Angelis llama un género bastardo: la

tragicomedia. La ambivalencia de la comedia barroca impide, según de Angelis, que Calderón aproveche su talento, ya que ni alcanza la altura de la tragedia ni mejora las costumbres, como debe hacerlo la comedia. Al preocuparse más de la trama que de los personajes, según de Angelis, en las obras de Calderón se pierde la posibilidad de corregirlos, y así de educar mediante el teatro. La comedia termina resultando un arte frívolo incapaz de saber qué mensaje transmitir:

Seguro de cautivar el interés, y de arrastrar al espectador por la marcha rápida de la acción, pensó poco en instruir divirtiéndose. Renunció a la más noble prerrogativa del poeta cómico. Hizo más: a veces presenta como laudables, acciones contrarias a la sana moral. Es preciso atribuir este olvido del objeto principal del arte dramático, a las costumbres de su siglo, y de una corte donde la corrupción se mostraba cubierta de todos los encantos de la galantería. Esta falta es tanto más grave, cuando que la política exquisita, el barniz más elegante, y la gracia que reinan en sus escritos, contribuyen a hacer más seductores y peligrosos los funestos ejemplos que presentan. (211)

Desde el rosismo, lo que preocupa a de Angelis no es cómo superar el autoritarismo político a través de algún tipo de sabiduría moderna, sino cómo acompañar la autoridad política con cierto conocimiento de la virtud gobernante. En vez de colaborar con ello, Calderón confunde peligrosamente, al punto de que su talento puede desembocar en la celebración de aquello que debiera ser mejorado.

## **Barroco y liberalismo**

La preocupación de de Angelis se enmarca en su crítica general del esteticismo que, de forma muy discutible, ve en los autores jóvenes, como el ya mencionado Gutiérrez. Les atribuye cierto romanticismo, adjetivo que se mantendrá en posteriores lecturas de tales autores, como por ejemplo, la de Sarlo.

Sin embargo, Gutiérrez está lejos de defender cierta autonomía del arte. Antes, considera la literatura como un medio para construir los fines de una política que pueda superar el rosismo, mediante un saber

claro, distante de las confusiones y de los juegos que celebraba Benjamin en Calderón. En ese marco, Gutiérrez asume que el teatro barroco no colabora con la construcción de una nueva literatura republicana. Interpreta la literatura española como un tesoro escondido por un avaro bajo la tierra, incapaz de fecundar nuevas obras (“Fisonomía” 141). Lo que podía haber de ingenio en Lope o Calderón resulta artificial, impotente para los desafíos de un siglo más avanzado, necesitado de otras formas de inspiración, sobre todo de la filosofía de la historia tan en boga en Francia. Con tales ideas Gutiérrez asume que la construcción de una cultura liberal americana no pasa por la importación directa de las ideas consideradas más avanzadas, como podían haberlo deseado Henríquez o Varela, sino por la mediación de las ideas que se importan dentro de la particular historia de cada pueblo.

En esa línea, otros autores argentinos cercanos a Gutiérrez leen la comedia barroca como un teatro necesario en su momento para España, pero por lo mismo innecesario para la nueva América. Esteban Echeverría señala que España puede vanagloriarse de la literatura áurea, pero que justamente ese orgullo le hace desdeñar al resto de la literatura europea, y por ello no regenera su lengua o cultura (V: 118). Juan Bautista Alberdi, por su parte, destaca la posibilidad de esa regeneración en Larra, en la joven España que, contra lo que celebraría Schlegel, ya no admira ni a Lope ni a Calderón (I: 287). La nueva España ya no necesita del barroco, mucho menos ha de necesitarlo la más nueva América.

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento profundiza en este rechazo de la comedia áurea. Su crítica a la incapacidad de Echeverría y de Alberdi de construir una escritura que pueda efectivamente liderar la lucha contra el rosismo lo lleva a oponerse más directamente a la posición española, desde sus textos en su exilio chileno. El intento sarmientino de construir una ortografía americana, distante de la herencia española, va acompañado por una crítica más dura a la cultura áurea, como veremos a continuación. Sarmiento ve en ese momento español la vanidad propia de quienes habrían creído tener la verdad en política, religión, ciencia y literatura. La cultura áurea contiene y bloquea deliberadamente la transmisión del saber, pues decide cerrarse a los avances del resto de la Europa moderna. Así, en la descripción de Sarmiento, el teatro de Lope y Calderón desemboca directamente en la Inquisición (IV: 18).



Frente a ello, Sarmiento apela a la nueva verdad de la ciencia moderna, así como a una literatura que pueda transmitir esas verdades en medio de un orden que garantice la estabilidad política. Asume que el orden conservador en Chile puede liderar la *desespañolización* y construir una cultura liberal sin caer en la guerra civil, como habría sucedido en Argentina. Apoyando al mismo gobierno que Bello, Sarmiento busca acelerar el proceso modernizador que el venezolano deseaba desplegar de modo más pausado.

Para acercarse a la modernidad europea, Sarmiento propone separar la religión católica de las manifestaciones que vincula con la cultura española. Antes de la Semana Santa de 1843, interviene en un debate acerca de una propuesta de restauración de las procesiones para subrayar la necesidad de transformar el antiguo culto, que caracteriza de grotesco y bufo, explicitando que la representación de Calderón sería curiosa en el presente, al punto de especular que el público decimonónico vería en la comedia calderoniana una impía mofa de las creencias (II: 113). Sarmiento lee entonces el teatro barroco como parte de ese legado católico que puede haber sido coherente con la España áurea, pero que retarda el arribo de la América moderna a otra forma de catolicismo, compatible con el mundo moderno y su organización liberal. Para Sarmiento, una representación retardada del catolicismo, como la de Calderón, termina oponiéndose a la posibilidad de un catolicismo propio del mundo contemporáneo. Solo interrumpiendo el teatro barroco podrá advenir otra política, y con ello otra literatura, capaz de explicar a España y de superarla:

Nosotros no tenemos nada que nos sea propio, nada original, nada nacional; civilización, atraso, preocupaciones, carácter, y aun los vicios mismos, son europeos, son españoles; y cada vez que queramos explicarnos a nosotros mismos, debemos volver los ojos allá donde están todos nuestros antecedentes. Esto no solo se aplica a las costumbres, a las creencias, sino también a la política, a la literatura y a todo. (II: 114)

Con el deseo de colaborar en la construcción de ese nuevo carácter nacional, Sarmiento viaja a Europa para observar distintos sistemas educativos que puedan ayudar a mejorar el emergente sistema pedagógico republicano. Tal periplo permite a Sarmiento

pasar, entre otros países, por España. Allí busca comprender lo que concibe como la barbarie que subsiste en América, y así hallar la forma de superarla (Benítez 727). En ese marco, lee otra vez el teatro barroco como causa y expresión de la falta de civilización. En su esquema, la pasión barroca deriva en la corrida de toros, contrapuesta al teatro ilustrado y romántico (V: 134 y ss). Solo retomando y corrigiendo estas últimas corrientes dramáticas, gracias al saber moderno, un nuevo teatro podrá colaborar con la civilización que ha de superar juegos y religiones del pasado.

## Barroco y liberalismo radical

En las décadas siguientes, emerge en Chile cierta juventud rebelde que aspira a transformaciones más profundas que las propuestas por Sarmiento. Uno de sus líderes, Francisco Bilbao, apunta en su polémico ensayo “Sociabilidad chilena,” publicado en el diario *El Crepúsculo*, que España representa el pasado medieval, prolongado por los gobiernos autoritarios (166). Solo superando esos gobiernos podrá superarse la herencia española de la que Sarmiento creía estar ya liberado.

En ese marco, Bilbao reitera su distancia ante cualquier celebración del teatro español. Exiliado en París, se acerca a los intelectuales franceses para ratificar su crítica a la herencia hispánica, mas uno de ellos logra mitigar el antiespañolismo de Bilbao, según narra su hermano Manuel. “Me parece que Ud. ha ido como ilusionado por Calderón,” habría dicho Bilbao a Quinet, a lo cual este último replica que hay que levantar esos pueblos. Para la nueva generación de rebeldes, el ímpetu de la nueva libertad debe sobrepasar toda frontera. Según Manuel Bilbao, su hermano concluye agradeciendo esa magnanimidad: “Al momento la grandeza de su alma me dominó. Esto se lo agradezco porque salí de su casa más noble” (liv).

El afán antiespañol de Bilbao parece entonces moderarse frente a una lectura no conservadora del pasado español. Calderón puede volver a ilusionar a quien lo lea en una clave más libre, ya no sometida por la procesión. Esto es, dentro de un liberalismo que ya no piensa la literatura como un medio para los fines de la libertad, sino como la expresión de la libertad que ha de guiar la política. Ya no se trata de pensar la comedia en clave de exposición constructiva de

una moral ya dada, sino como literatura que puede anunciar nuevos valores, más libres.

*El Crepúsculo*, en efecto, brinda un nuevo lugar a la comedia, a través de los “boletines dramáticos” redactados por Francisco Paula de Matta. En variadas ocasiones, se refiere al teatro de Calderón y de Lope para ubicarlo en la evolución del teatro europeo, precisando el carácter más romántico que filosófico del arte surgido en un país católico. Esa falta de filosofía, según Matta, explica la popularidad de un teatro basado más en la intriga que en la psicología, capaz de ganar gran atención popular. De este modo, la comedia barroca parece una herencia que debe superarse, no suprimirse. Si la comedia barroca en su época logra llevar el pueblo al teatro, el nuevo teatro español ha de ganar adeptos entre el nuevo público. Así, Paula de Matta destaca el teatro de Breton, no sin señalar su continuidad con la primacía de la intriga en el teatro áureo (113). A través de un nuevo humor, según Matta, emerge una nueva comedia que ya no se ajusta a la antigua seriedad, y promete una nueva libertad. En esa clave, los distintos poetas, incluidos los barrocos, pueden aparecer como aliados en la expresión poética libre que los conservadores querrían censurar. El republicanismo decimonónico que, con Henríquez, rechazaba el barroco español, comienza a valorar la comedia en medio de una nueva relación entre literatura y república.

Uno de los líderes de la juventud radical chilena, Pedro León Gallo, dedica a Calderón un poema, inscribiéndolo en su lucha por una forma más amplia de la libertad. Allí Gallo subraya un genio que sobrevive pese al conservadurismo, no gracias a él:

Pero tu genio de eminente talla,  
oh, Calderón, al extender su mano,  
al universo prosternó que calla  
para aplaudir tu canto soberano” (77).

Calderón no resulta entonces una expresión de la barbarie, sino un aliado contra ella, y contra quienes creen, como Sarmiento, que deben controlar la pasión de Calderón para civilizar a través de la razón. En la mirada de Gallo y de sus contemporáneos, la historia ha de conciliar razón y pasión gracias a la nueva libertad soberana que expresa la literatura. Ya no la somete la comedia a las necesidades de construir un teatro de la política, de modo que puede leerla como

una escritura libre, capaz de cuestionar la soberanía política existente. Gallo y sus contemporáneos pueden soñar con otra alegría, ya no tan segura, capaz de jugar con sus tensiones para prometer una República que pueda hacer lugar a la vacilación en la lengua.

El nuevo liberalismo se permite entonces leer cierta historia de la literatura, cuyo avance moral se muestra en la creciente exposición de la libertad literaria. En efecto, el poeta Guillermo Matta presenta y celebra en poemas a distintos escritores, incluyendo a Calderón. Tras celebrar su rica y colorida imaginación, señala que su lengua no es disoluta, ni sus versos son perversos. Calderón tal vez es arrastrado por su ingenio, apunta Matta, acaso como pensaba de Angelis. Sin embargo, a diferencia de este último, Matta ve allí la virtud de un poeta que se libra a su lengua, sin someterla a ningún discurso moral. *Ciego por el arte*, el imperfecto y confuso Calderón, como lo llama Matta, logra una literatura inmortal que ya no busca ser recuperada por la política, sino por otros escritores que puedan perfeccionarlo y aclararlo, acaso como se propone hacerlo Matta. *Eres poeta!*, termina celebrando Matta (282).

La potencia política de la literatura ya no pasa por limitar la poesía, se juega en su capacidad de transmitir la nueva libertad a un público cada vez mayor. En el poema que dedica a Lope, Matta no solo reitera el tópico de un genio ya reconocido en su presente. Junto con ello, destaca en Lope una obra celebrada por ese pueblo español cuya falta de libertad en el presente solo ha de superarse con su pasado poético:

Y tus fáciles trovas populares  
Empapadas de amor y de poesía  
Las repite la España en sus cantares  
Y el pueblo las entona todavía” (281).

La memoria poética de España puede así nutrir, con Lope, al pueblo que los nuevos liberales desean levantar. El fracaso de sus rebeliones, lideradas por Gallo y Manuel Antonio Matta (hermano de Francisco de Paula y de Manuel), es así el fracaso de esa tentativa de una literatura más libre de las determinaciones estatales decimonónicas. El liberalismo económico transcurre junto al conservadurismo político que no hace lugar a la experimentación literaria. El carácter limitado de la democracia en la nueva Repú-

blica se replica ante la literatura, a través de los intentos de control de otras formas de experimentación y juego en la lengua, de otras formas de compartir un lenguaje que ya no vengan regidas por la autoridad de la República.

## Postdata. Calderón en el siglo XX

Las figuras más reconocidas de la literatura argentina y chilena del siglo XX intensifican el deseo de leer la tradición áurea, sin someterla a necesidades políticas inmediatas. Ya sea apelando a una política de literatura autónoma, o defendiendo una política autónoma de la literatura comprometida, se recuperan algunos autores del Siglo de Oro para construir una nueva escritura en español, muchas veces distante de la España contemporánea. En ese marco, Cervantes y Góngora parecen ser los autores más leídos. Los escritores vinculados a la comedia barroca, por el contrario, no son del todo valorados. Así, Borges cuestiona a Calderón y sus contemporáneos por una teatralización excesiva, al punto de que en sus obras no logra distinguir a los distintos personajes (en Sorrentino 133; cf. Arana & Caballero). Pizarnik, por su parte, establece en sus diarios una contraposición tajante entre la lectura de la literatura española clásica y su deseo moderno de literatura: “La literatura española clásica me produce ‘vergüenza’ de la literatura, de amarla, de vivir -de alguna manera tengo que llamar a mi ser sentado que lee para la literatura o por la literatura. Esto pienso leyendo a Calderón. Sin duda alguna, he encontrado versos muy hermosos, pero el conjunto me provocó una especie de náusea” (278).

La consolidación de la distancia entre teatro, poesía y cuento permite que en el siglo XX exista el deseo de una escritura literaria sin procesión, así como de una teatralidad propia de la prosa o del poema. A saber, la de quien se escribe como personaje, yuxtaponiendo juegos y melancolías que no requieran de confusiones entre personajes ni de juegos de palabras. Y justamente por ello una excepción al desinterés por el teatro barroco puede hallarse en la creación cinematográfica de Raúl Ruiz. Si bien es ya un lugar común describir un carácter barroco en su extensa producción (por ejemplo, cf. Buci-Glucksmann, de los Ríos), queda pendiente el análisis de sus lecturas del barroco español, sobre todo de Calderón,

autor que lo obsesiona desde su juventud, según indica en variadas entrevistas (cf. Cortínez & Engelbert, 87 y ss).

En efecto, uno de los filmes dirigidos por Ruiz en Francia, *Mémoire des apparences*, cuenta la historia de un profesor chileno de literatura que debe recordar los nombres de militantes que resisten a la dictadura de la Pinochet gracias a la versificación de *La vida es sueño*. La trama del filme abunda en escenas equívocas, acaso oníricas, como tantas otras de Ruiz. La herencia del barroco se entremezcla con la resistencia a la dictadura y su intento de claridad, de conocer los nombres al servicio de la represión. Ante la nueva articulación chilena entre conservadores y liberales, esta vez en su versión neoliberal, Ruiz recupera la comedia áurea frente a las ruinas del proyecto republicano. Contra cualquier discurso liberal del progreso, o de la libertad individual en el arte, apela a una memoria confusa por estar compartida, rebelde por ser inapropiable.

De esta manera, Ruiz rescata los juegos del lenguaje como otro modo de habitar la lengua. Según indica en una de sus entrevistas, la inventiva que puede hallar en la cultura nacional no pasa por la elaboración individual de algún discurso, sino por una lengua que piensa en medio de un juego anónimo, en la que Calderón no ha de faltar:

Una parte de la poesía chilena se hace solamente con esos mecanismos. Tú tomas la palabra, por ejemplo, vida, y la transformas en viuda ... y empiezas a jugar ... di todas las cosas que se dicen de la vida a propósito de la viuda. Entonces puedes preguntar ¿Hay viuda en otros planetas? O después de esta viuda no hay otra. La viuda es sueño ...” (Entrevista, 06:35 en adelante).

Contra cualquier intento de estabilizar o superar el significado de la comedia, para Ruiz allí aparece la posibilidad de una lógica del significante que ya no permite separar del todo el humor del duelo, la lengua del juego, el agua del vino. A partir de otra política de la comedia, la resistencia a la autoridad emerge en medio de esa lengua productiva en su incertidumbre, fiel a la herencia incierta de la comedia barroca entre mundos.

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Ben Gunter, Susan Paun de García, Anthony Grubbs, Kathleen Costales, Ian M. Borden, Carmen Ruiz Sanchez, Alejandra Juno Rodríguez Villar, Kerry Wilks  
Calderón Onstage in Spanish Florida: Context, Text, and Reconstruction  
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## CALDERÓN ONSTAGE IN SPANISH FLORIDA: CONTEXT, TEXT, AND RECONSTRUCTION

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**Abstract:** In 1789, amateurs in Florida performed Calderón de la Barca's *Amigo, amante y leal* (1630). This *comedia palatina*, the first Spanish play recorded by name in Florida's chronicles, proved the

most popular feature in St. Augustine's coronation celebrations for Carlos IV. In 2025, Translation Lab and Theater with a Mission will reconstruct *Amigo, amante y leal* in English, to commemorate the American War for Independence, which marks its 250th anniversary that year. The reconstruction seeks to connect contemporary audiences with Calderón's rarely-performed *comedia* via an exploration of Florida's little-known role as the colony that remained loyal to Britain during the American Revolution. This article reports work in progress to prepare the 2025 revival, focusing on context, text, and reconstruction. Contextual research into East Florida Governor Zéspedes's detailed records sheds light on how *Amigo, amante y leal* connected imperial Spain with multiethnic, polyglot, provincial St. Augustine. Textual analysis of prompt scripts approved for performance in 1774 provides evidence about how the play's suspensefully constructed plot captivated audiences with an ever-tightening battle between competing loyalties. Reconstructing these connections between cultures is inspiring new ideas about how *comedia* can involve present-day Floridians in a centuries-old intersection of worlds. Through multidisciplinary, collaborative approaches, Translation Lab addresses questions that all fans of reviving *Comedia* must confront.

**Resumen:** En 1789, Florida asistió a la exitosa representación de la comedia de Calderón, *Amigo, amante y leal* (1630). Esta comedia palatina, representada por un grupo local de aficionados, es la primera obra en español cuyo nombre aparece registrado en las crónicas de Florida, y resultó ser el elemento más popular entre los actos dedicados a celebrar en San Agustín la coronación de Carlos IV. En 2025, con motivo del 250 aniversario de la Guerra de Independencia de los Estados Unidos, Translation Lab y Theatre with a Mission pondrán en escena un espectáculo en inglés basado en aquella representación de *Amigo, amante y leal*. Esta reconstrucción dramática tiene como objetivo conectar al público contemporáneo con esta comedia de Calderón, a través de la exploración del poco conocido papel de Florida como la única colonia leal a Gran Bretaña durante la Revolución Americana.

Este artículo versa sobre el trabajo en curso del nuevo montaje de 2025, centrándose en el contexto, el texto y la reconstrucción. Los detallados documentos escritos por el gobernador Zéspedes del

Este de Florida ponen de manifiesto la forma en que *Amigo, amante y leal* logró conectar la España imperial con el San Agustín provinciano, políglota y multiétnico del siglo 18. Por su parte, la copia del apuntador aprobada para su representación en 1774 evidencia la forma en que la trama, llena de suspense, fue capaz de cautivar al público con la interminable pugna entre las varias lealtades del galán, don Félix. La reconstrucción de estas conexiones entre culturas es la inspiración para nuevas ideas sobre cómo la comedia puede involucrar a los floridanos de hoy en día en esta antigua intersección de mundos. A través de enfoques multidisciplinarios y colaborativos, Translation Lab aborda las preguntas con las que todos aquellos trabajando en reconstruir la Comedia deben enfrentarse.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Calderón de la Barca, Florida, festivities, performance, historical revival / Calderón de la Barca, Florida, festividades, puesta en escena, reconstrucción histórica

In 1789, a troop of soldiers in St. Augustine, Florida, presented three performances of Calderón's *Amigo, amante y leal* as part of a community-wide celebration, carefully choreographed to salute Carlos IV's ascension to the Spanish throne. In 2025, a US-based cross-disciplinary collaborative called Translation Lab (TLab) and a Florida-based production company called Theater with a Mission (TWAM) plan to reconstruct Florida's 1789 encounter with *Amigo, amante y leal* in English, to stimulate public engagement with the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. This article reports preliminary work in progress to center Calderón's *comedia*<sup>78</sup> at the intersection of imperial Spain with colonial Florida,<sup>79</sup> in ways that open opportunities for twenty-first century popular audiences to reflect on Florida's multicultural makeup.

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<sup>78</sup> We use *Comedia* (upper case) to indicate the genre and *comedia* (lower case) to indicate an individual play.

<sup>79</sup> Through most of its long history of governing Florida (1513–1763 and 1783–1821), Spain regarded Florida as part of a viceroyalty of New Spain rather than a colony. US historians, however, characterize Florida's pre-territorial status (and its time under British rule) as “colonial.” Because this project connects *Amigo, amante y leal* with US audiences within the context of a colonial war for independence, we adopt US terminology to describe Florida's standing.

As we trace *Amigo, amante y leal*'s transposition from 1630 Madrid to 1789 St. Augustine, from a professional-theater production under the oversight of court censors to a provincial production selling the idea of Spanish sovereignty to a polyglot, multiethnic frontier community, we are discovering new insights into how *Comedia* appealed to different audiences in different times and places in the past. A multi-faceted reenactment of colonial Florida's experience with Calderón's *comedia* will explore promising approaches to how present-day performers can defuse postcolonial resistance to the *Comedia* and incorporate debates about cultural dominance directly into the drama. Through context, text, and reconstruction, then, this project sheds light on a Calderonian *comedia* that stands at an illuminating intersection of worlds.

### ***Comedia* in Context: Calderón in Polyglot, Transcultural St. Augustine**

We begin with context, since it was the richly-documented, culturally diverse context of *Amigo, amante y leal*'s 1789 production in St. Augustine that first captured TLab's attention. We encountered this little known *comedia*—the first play that historians have found noted by name in chronicles from Spanish Florida—in Wiley Housewright's *History of Music & Dance in Florida*. Housewright describes how Golden Age Spain met post-Revolutionary Florida when “the aging governor Zéspedes ... decided to conclude his Florida career with a celebration of the coronation of Charles IV as king of Spain. The event, he hoped, might tend to absorb the polyglot St. Augustine populations into Spanish cultural patterns and loyalty to the new king” (81). To us, Zéspedes's gubernatorial swansong reads like a transoceanic echo of a *fiesta de comedias*, with music, dance, pageantry, and exotic representations of indigenous culture contextualizing the performance of a central play. While “windows, balconies, and doorways were hung with brightly colored fabrics, flags, or flowers,” portraits of the new king and his queen, “canopied and draped with red and white damask and taffeta,” were hung in the plaza. After “cheers for the house of Castile,” a “military band set the cadence” along a “grand parade” route before

giving way to “clerks from the financial supply offices improv[is]ing their version of Indian-style dances” around bonfires in the plaza. All this was capped by a *comedia*, as “on a large stage the Havana regiment gave their premier performance of the Pedro Calderón de la Barca drama *Amigo, amante y leal*” (Housewright 81–82).

Housewright’s description is sparking productive lines of inquiry for contextual research into St. Augustine’s social, archaeological, and political history, providing evidence that 1789 marks a period of defining transition in the life of the “America’s Oldest City.” Aided by specialists in Florida history, we are sifting through the detailed documentation that Governor Zéspedes compiled for St. Augustine’s coronation celebration, finding indications that performing *Amigo, amante y leal* effectively promoted loyalty to Spain among central constituencies in a Florida only recently repossessed from Great Britain.

### **“America’s Oldest City” in 1789**

Established on Timucua tribal lands by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in 1565, St. Augustine, Florida, is the oldest continuously occupied city founded by Europeans in what is now the United States. During Spanish rule, this military outpost generated commerce through mercantilism, trade, and privateering. Eminent archaeologist Kathleen Deagan documents the diverse population of the city, which included people with European, African, Indigenous, and Mestizo backgrounds. After a 1693 royal edict granted freedom in Florida to enslaved Africans who escaped from British colonies, converted to Catholicism, and swore allegiance to Spain, this Spanish territory became a sanctuary for Free Blacks and self-liberated slaves, which intensified tension between Spain and England (and later the United States).

St. Augustine was under Spanish rule twice. The first Spanish period concluded when Britain took control of Florida as part of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which ended the French and Indian War and started a sea change in St. Augustine’s demographics. Before cession to Britain, the population of St. Augustine was predominantly Spanish in origin and military in occupation. Deagan estimates population totals at 3,104 inhabitants: 82% European, 10% Black,

5% Mestizo, and 3% Indigenous (30–31), while Juan Marchena Fernández reports that documents from 1763 put the population at 3,124; 535 were military personnel and of the 2,589 civilians, about half were directly dependent on the presence of the military (109–110). Since most Spaniards and Free Blacks left Florida for Cuba in 1763, St. Augustine was poised to become markedly more polyglot and multiethnic in the second Spanish period.

St. Augustine's second era of Spanish rule ran from 1783–1821, but our focus is on the first six years, immediately following the American Revolution and the US Constitutional Convention. Vicente Manuel de Zéspedes was named the *Gobernador* and *Capitán General* of St. Augustine and the province of East Florida on October 31, 1783, but the formal transfer of power took place on July 12, 1784, with much pomp and circumstance, a predilection of the governor (Landers, *Black Society* 68). Despite the restoration of Spanish rule, most of the Free Black population stayed in Cuba, indigenous people who had lived in St. Augustine before British occupation stayed away, and the original Spanish families were hesitant to return.<sup>80</sup> This resulted in a pronounced shift in the population as compared to the 1760s. In 1790, the population of 3,500 was divided as follows: 17% Spanish (including troops and dependents); 13% Italians, Greeks, and Minorcans;<sup>81</sup> an undetermined number of British, and the remainder were Free Blacks, Mestizos, and slaves (Landers, *Creoles* 35–36).<sup>82</sup> Zéspedes's rule in St. Augustine proved tenuous due to a lack of resources, ongoing border conflicts, and a ragtag military force (Landers, *Black Society* 204). At the end of his tenure, Zéspedes saw the coronation of Carlos IV as an opportunity to cement his legacy in the annals of Florida history and entrench his son in the political scene (Housewright 81).

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<sup>80</sup> Jane Landers remarks that financial incentives were offered to encourage people to return to the area, but Florida was still considered by some to be a backwater with a stagnating economy, restrictive mercantilism, political instability, and an unruly military force, despite evidence that St. Augustine was actually a thriving community (*Atlantic Creoles* 68).

<sup>81</sup> The survivors of a failed Indigo plantation in New Smyrna, Florida.

<sup>82</sup> Slavery was permissible in Spanish Florida but differed markedly from the race-based chattel slavery practiced in British America. See [pbs.org/wnet/secrets/secrets-spanish-florida-slaves-escaped-florida-asylum/3647](https://pbs.org/wnet/secrets/secrets-spanish-florida-slaves-escaped-florida-asylum/3647).



## Reglementary Festivity: Spanish America Salutes Carlos IV's Accession

In her reports on extensive Spanish records of Saint Augustine celebrating Carlos IV as new king of Spain, Helen Hornbeck Tanner refers to Vicente Manuel Zéspedes's account of the festivities that took place from the 2nd through the 4th of December, 1789.<sup>83</sup> In addition to the prescribed elements of the celebration—proclamation with portraits standing in for the royal couple, processions through the town, with stops for the required vocal acclamations—ancillary entertainment is mentioned, consisting of bonfires, fireworks, and the performance of Calderón de la Barca's play *Amigo, amante y leal*.

Tanner reports that during the summer of 1789, "soldiers of the garrison ... were casting and rehearsing" the play ("Fiesta" 198), although it is not clear whether the soldiers were themselves the performers or whether they were supervising the rehearsals. The official account of the festivities, submitted by "Don Domingo Rodríguez de León, escribano interino de gobierno, Guerra, y de Real Hacienda único en esta ciudad de San Agustín, y provincia de Florida Oriental," states:

Los sargentos y cabos de los Piqueros del Regimiento de la Habana, ya relevado por el antedicho tercer Batallón de Cuba, y estando para embarcarse discurrieron representar a sus propias expensas y en testimonio de su amor y apego a SS. MM. la comedia titulada *Amigo, Amante y Leal*, que repitieron segunda y tercera noche con general aplauso de los concurrentes. (*East Florida Papers*)

The celebration of Carlos IV's coronation in St. Augustine was not unique but followed a prescribed pattern. In fact, as Antonio Bonet Correa observed, "quien ha leído una Relación puede decir que ha leído todas," and it is precisely this quality that is of maximum interest (260). Victoria Soto Cabo notes that, while some of the

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<sup>83</sup> According to Tanner, "entry of Charles IV into the capital was scheduled for 23 September 1789. Originally, Governor Zéspedes planned the celebration in Saint Augustine to coincide with festivities in Spain, but in October he had to postpone local ceremonies because official portraits and royal ensigns of the new monarchs had not arrived. The ship from Cuba did not bring these necessary items until 23 November 1789" ("1789" 284).

ingredients of these official celebrations were optional and varied from place to place, whether they were architectural ornaments, *cabalgatas*, *mascaradas*, *músicas*, *combates*, or *fuegos artificiales*—and we should add *corridos de toro* or *comedias*—what never varied were the reglementary steps of the proclamation itself. Commenting on the *fiestas* in honor of Carlos IV in Lima, Santiago Jiménez Losado notes that strict adherence to protocol served a fundamental purpose: to achieve social cohesion (80).

The mechanics of the proclamation were similar, if not identical, in all cities and towns. A purpose-built wooden platform was constructed for the formalities. There the governor and a lieutenant read the proclamation that officially named Carlos IV as King, the *Pendón Real* [Royal Standard] was waved, and the *Vivas* [Long live the King and Queen] were shouted. Normally square-shaped, the platform often was adorned with rich carpets or hangings, and might be decorated with statues, columns, or even a triumphal arch. The procession started from the Casas Consistoriales headed by the governor, or *corregidor*, and a lieutenant who was charged with carrying the Royal Standard. Near the Casas Consistoriales, in general in the Plaza Mayor, the first proclamation was performed, consisting of a *tremolación del Pendón*, or waving of the Pennant. Next the group headed to a second designated place of the proclamation, and finally a third, during which it was usual to stop at the cathedral to bless the Standard. All of this formed a background for one of the essential elements: unveiling the royal portraits of Carlos IV and Maria Luisa, which presided over the proclamation from a place of honor on the platform, and which received acclamations and *vitores*.

The performance of *comedias* was a commonplace occurrence within celebrations surrounding royal proclamations (as well as in religious festivals) in both Spain and Spanish America. Ángel López-Cantos notes, from the seventeenth century onward, performances of plays were standard practice in civic celebrations: “Siempre las hubo, por pequeño que fuera el lugar...” (207). Saint Augustine, seat of the government of East Florida in 1789, was one such “pequeño lugar” with a civilian population of 200 families, only five of which were native Spaniards, according to Tanner’s account in “The 1789 Saint Augustine Celebration”:

Active participation in the celebration was limited to the scant one thousand people comprising the civilian population of the capital: approximately 35 Spaniards, 25 Canary Islanders, 60 Floridanos, 460 predominantly Minorcan, 100 Anglo-Americans, and 300 Negroes and Mulattoes. [...] Civilian diversity was balanced by the presence of 460 uniformed Spanish soldiers of the garrison, and the families of officials on the governor's staff, the royal hospital and the treasury and supply department, totaling about 1,800 people with government connections. (283)

### **Comedia and Calderón in Spanish America**

Just as celebrations were uniform across all of Spanish America, so was the taste in plays. *Comedias* performed in Spain were the same as those performed in Lima, México City, or Bogotá, and playwrights from the *Siglo de Oro* held sway: “Los autores del Siglo de Oro pervivirán en los escenarios hasta la independencia. Serán representadas las obras clásicas reiteradamente, como si se tratara de la recreación de unas modas nacidas muchos años antes” (López-Cantos 212). In particular, as Sergio Adillo has documented, Calderón de la Barca's plays predominated on the stage in Spain, accounting for 25% of performances in the eighteenth century (25). Everett Hesse observed that Calderón “reigned supreme as the most popular peninsular dramatist in the Spanish Indies during the colonial period, if the number of performances of his plays is any indication,” in addition to the documented importation of *sueltas* purchased, one assumes, for purposes of private performances and individual reading pleasure (12).

While larger cities had purpose-built theaters, smaller towns like St. Augustine enjoyed theater on special occasions, and constructed stages generally in the *plaza mayor*. Similarly, larger cities had professional actors, whereas smaller towns relied on the *vecinos*. While chroniclers note that plays were performed, usually the details are minimal, recording simply the number presented, without indicating their titles, and sometimes revealing the place where the performance took place or who paid for the expenses entailed.

Tanner tells us that, awaiting their return to Cuba, the sergeants and corporals from the Havana Regiment of Pikemen underwrote the performance of *Amigo, amante y leal* for the celebration in December of 1789, maintaining that they in fact rehearsed and acted the parts. This would not be unusual by any means. According to Tanner, soldiers in Saint Augustine often amused themselves by putting on plays in the town square, and “the entire community was looking forward to the farewell production of the Havana regiment whose ships were waiting in the harbor to sail for Cuba (“1789” 287).

## Imperial Text for Colonial Performance

For an outdoor production, possibly performed by amateurs, practical factors would recommend a play with modest production requirements. In this respect, *Amigo, amante y leal* provided theatermakers in St. Augustine with an ideal choice. First of all, the cast is reasonable in size: three *galanes* (the Príncipe Alejandro, Don Arias, and the hero, Don Félix), plus a *gracioso* (Meco), with two *damas* (Aurora and Estela), each with her own *criada* (Laura and Jacinta, respectively). The simplicity of the settings, as well as minimal requirements for props and costumes, lend themselves to performance on a platform constructed in the main square. The special effects would be simple and actor-driven. The language is consistently clear, with effective rhetorical embellishments during soliloquies and moments of suspense, and the situations are compelling.

Storyline and theme augment the attractions that this *comedia* contains for deepening Floridians’ commitment to the Spanish crown and promoting East Florida Governor Zéspedes’s ambition to unite a potentially ungovernable post-Revolutionary populace under the banner of Spanish sovereignty. The title acts as a plot summary, foregrounding the conflicting loyalties that bedevil the hero, Don Félix. Returning to Parma (the birthplace of Carlos IV’s queen) after accomplishing a government mission in Spain, Félix finds his best friend Don Arias (*amigo*) and his Prince Alejandro (*leal*) both paying court to his love interest Aurora (*amante*). Every step that Félix takes to balance competing loyalties to his lady, his alter ego, and his lord makes his situation seem more impossible. Thus

the basic structure of the plot underscores the growing suspense and the ultimate brilliance of Félix's success in remaining loyal to his lord, his lady, and his friend, while remaining true to himself.

The theme of loyalty to the sovereign would seem appropriate for the proclamation of a new monarch, yet for most of the play Prince Alejandro (mis)behaves as a self-serving, jealous, libidinous cad. Nevertheless, Paula Casariego Castiñeira notes that despite his despicable intention of taking Aurora by force during the play, the prince's nobility is confirmed in the end by his ceding the lady to his subject, "acciones virtuosas esperables de un buen superior" (461). Significantly, in her introduction to Tanner's volume *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784–1790*, Patricia C. Griffin states that "To an aristocrat such as Zéspedes it was unthinkable that the notion of liberty as a national ideal could replace loyalty to a monarch" (xxvii). In the context of St. Augustine, 1789, it is possible to read Alejandro's character as an expression of the principle that loyalty attaches to the office rather than the office-holder, and that loyal subjects can reform errant rulers through the self-sacrificial suffering that arises out of their loyalty.

### **Prompt script: Eighteenth-century Vision of Performance Text**

Although infrequently performed, *Amigo, amante y leal* was in print almost continuously from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth, both in collections (*partes*) and as a *suelta*, printed separately for individual sale.<sup>84</sup> Given the popularity of *seltas*, it seems likely that the Saint Augustine performance was based on a *suelta* text. Taking into account the number of editions available and the considerable variants among them, we considered the possibility of basing TLab's translation on a *suelta* published close to the date of the celebration.<sup>85</sup> Fortunately, upon consulting the

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<sup>84</sup> Germán Vega García-Luengos observes that in Spain "la recepción como lectura de Calderón seguirá dependiendo casi exclusivamente de las sueltas" (18), a phenomenon likely to be applicable to viceroalties, including Florida, as well.

<sup>85</sup> For his 2010 edition of the play, Ruano de la Haza opted to merge both the early 1653 and the Vera Tassis versions to produce a text that is "más largo

Biblioteca Histórica de Madrid's collection of prompter's copies of plays performed in the eighteenth century, we found that our play was among those that have been digitized and made available online.

The advantage of prompter's copies is we know that they were performed, and the many notations indicate not only manipulations of the text but also performance information. Some of the text is cut, perhaps as a result of censors' requirements, perhaps to trim lengthy passages, or perhaps to showcase (or camouflage) actor strengths (or weaknesses). Typical stage managers' notations signal a change of scenery or the placement of actors for their entrances. The censors' signatures of approval to perform in Madrid were from 1774, some 15 years before the Saint Augustine event, so the approach to the text (in terms of censorship) would probably be similar. The idea that we could settle on this text to translate, knowing that it would be reflective of the period's performance practice, was enticing. After discussing the pros and cons, we agreed that this would be the text we would translate.

We are discovering the prompt script's potential for shaping performance text as we test provisional translations of pivotal scenes. In the turning point at the center of act two, for example, when Prince Alejandro makes Félix his unwilling co-conspirator in a plot to abduct Aurora, the 1774 prompter's copy cuts eight lines, effectively eliminating an inner monologue in which Don Félix expresses the growing pain he feels, due to intensifying conflict among his increasingly divided loyalties. *Suelta* No 41 provides an aside for Don Félix to confide that not only is he pronouncing his own death sentence but also that he is now forced to provide the knife and noose to carry out the sentence. The 1774 prompter's copy of this *suelta*, however, marks a cut (reproduced here via strikethrough) that reduces Félix's response to "¡Ay de mí!" - a speech of three short syllables before he proceeds to suggest (sarcastically?) that the Prince break into Aurora's house to rape her:

1774 Prompter's Copy of *Suelta* (No 41)

PRÍNCIPE                      Dame un modo con que pueda  
vivir: tu ingenio conceda

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y más complejo" (xxxiv), not ideal for our purpose, which is to attempt to approximate the 1789 performance.

FÉLIX                   este alivio a mi cuidado.  
A qué más puede llegar (*aparte*)  
esta celosa violencia  
que yo he de dar la sentencia  
de mi muerte; ¿yo he de dar  
el cuchillo y el cordel?  
¿Pues no basta dar la vida,  
cuando a mi honor ofrecida  
sufro pena tan cruel?  
¡Ay de mí!

PRÍNCIPE               ¿Has, Félix, hallado  
alguna industria?

FÉLIX                   Señor,  
¿a qué se extiende tu amor?

PRÍNCIPE               A morir desesperado;  
[...]

FÉLIX                   Pues entremos en su casa  
esta noche, y fuerza en ella  
a Aurora divina y bella. (2.20)<sup>86</sup>

Looking at how cuts changed this scene led us to consider the other cuts indicated in the prompter's copy and the ways in which those cuts would affect the performance as a whole. A total of 402 lines were cut from six of the eight characters.<sup>87</sup> The breakdown of the shortened roles is as follows:

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<sup>86</sup> Since *suelta* 41 (and the prompter copies made from it) do not have line numbers, we cite the act, followed by the page number of the PDF copy.

<sup>87</sup> Jacinta and Laura, the maids, are functional characters, and none of their lines were eliminated.

<b>Character</b>	<b>Lines Cut</b>
Estela	47
Meco	51
Aurora	52
Félix	57
Alejandro	57
Arias	138
<b>Total Lines Cut</b>	<b>402</b>

It is clear that Arias is the biggest loser in this condensation process, which raises the question why his role was shortened so dramatically. It seems that many of the cuts serve to minimize the subplot and the secondary characters. An example of this is a 107-line scene in the first act (1.9–10) between Estela and Arias in which they express the heartache of discouraged love. This scene is literally cut in half, with 54 lines eliminated, leaving only 53 lines uncut, which dramatically shortens dialogue related to the overall storyline’s intersecting love triangles. A second example occurs in the second act (2.19), in which Arias laments the Prince’s behavior and his own unrequited love for Aurora. This 23-line speech is reduced to three lines in which Arias simply exclaims, “¡Ay cielos! / viendo tan claros mis celos, / ¿qué tengo que esperar más?” Limiting the stage time devoted to Arias foregrounds Félix, the main character, and his divided loyalties.

## **Reconstruction: Production Partner and Concept, Proof Scene, Preliminary Scripting**

Reconstruction commits us to cutting significant portions of the *comedia* text. TLab’s production partner TWAM envisions a 90-minute immersion-experience performance in 2025, featuring selected scenes from *Amigo, amante y leal* and framing those scenes with strategic elements suggested by Zéspedes’s other coronation festivities. Consequently, reconstructing a 1789 encounter with *Loyalist, Lover, and Friend*—our working title for the translation—also commits us to including activities that contextualize and talk back to the *comedia* text, much like the lineup of *loas*, *bailes*, and *entremeses* that provided an intertextual framework for staging Calderón’s *comedia* in 1630. Experiments aimed at including Native dance in



the reconstruction's frame, foregrounding sexual predation in the *comedia's* storyline, and incorporating postcolonial debate within the acting script will serve to illustrate how TLab and TWAM are developing a partnership to design a dynamic reconstruction.

Collaboration between Theater with a Mission and TLab, it should be noted, has long-standing roots. TWAM has produced field-tests for several TLab scripts, TLab scholars have served as research consultants for several TWAM ventures, and TWAM's Artistic Director Ben Gunter is a founding member of TLab. This shared experience makes both groups more conscious of the challenges inherent in reconstructing a 1789 coronation-celebration performance of *Amigo, amante y leal*. TWAM brings to the project a decade of experience in touring translations of Golden Age plays to “accidental audiences”—people who turn up to enjoy community gatherings at historic sites, seasonal parades, school libraries, church fellowship halls, soccer fields, or civic festivals, and end up experiencing theatrical time-travel through face-to-face encounters with turning points in Florida's multicultural history.

An example of this work is TWAM's 2013 adaptation of Lope de Vega's *Nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón* into *Lope's (small) New World*, a nine-scene, 70-minute exploration of Columbian exchange between American natives and newcomers from Spain. This production used one of Lope's primary sources, Jacques LeMoyne's *Brevis narratio* of life among Florida's Timucua in 1565, enriched with 40 illustrations, as the foundation for building a multidimensional performance which featured evidence-based reconstructions of indigenous song, dance, masks, customs, and costumes. The 17-member cast, approximately the size of the acting companies that Lope wrote for, featured a Historian character who introduced audiences to each act of *Lope's (small) New World*, via speeches that TWAM designated as a *loa*, an *entremés*, and a *jácara*. This framing character also moderated the production's recurrent audience-participation activities and challenged the audience to wrestle with the unresolved ending, which leaves characters whom the audience has learned to care about, Native and newcomer alike, teetering on the brink of genocidal warfare.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Judith G. Caballero's review of *Lope's (small) New World* and two scenes from the script are available in *Southern Quarterly*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2014, pp. 122-53.

## Production Concept

To reconstruct *Amigo, amante y leal*'s 1789 performance in St. Augustine, TWAM has mapped out a production concept for TLab's translation, as seen below:

- **Production Time:** Target the reconstruction for presentation in 2025, to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, in which Florida played the little-known role of two British colonies (East Florida and West Florida) which remained loyal to George III.
- **Performance Place:** Set the reconstruction in St. Augustine, where civic, religious, and military structures from 1789 still stand, and where the polyglot, polyethnic cultural roots that shaped the performance in 1789 still thrive.
- **Framing Device:** Contextualize the reconstruction as a dress rehearsal of target scenes from *Loyalist, Lover, and Friend* for Governor Zéspedes, a final polish of critical junctures in the performance that takes place on the night before the coronation celebration commences.
- **Dramatic Rhythm:** Combine selected developments in the *comedia*'s action with strategic interruptions, reminiscent of the *loas*, *entremeses*, and *bailes* that made up a *fiesta de comedias*.
- **Dramatic Content:** Showcase scenes from *Amigo, amante y leal* that capitalize on the play's present-day appeal, combined with sneak previews of coronation activities chosen to foreground multidimensionality and foster audience involvement (e.g., Native American dances by clerks from the finance office, music for parading the *Pendón Real* [Royal Standard], and proclamations for unveiling the portraits of Carlos IV and Maria Luisa of Parma).
- **Language:** Craft English that is 1) peppered with extracts from the original Spanish, 2) enriched with exchanges that feature Native and Black languages, 3) translated to transmit performance information encoded in Calderón's polymetry, and 4) structured to echo iconic documents from the American

Revolution (e.g., the Declaration of Independence), setting up a three-way conversation among 1630, 1789, and 2025.

- **Themes:** Foreground balancing community and personal obligations, achieving success through suffering, and pursuing upward mobility through behaving nobly—core values, historians tell us, among the soldiers who sponsored the 1789 performance in St. Augustine.
- **Performance Shape:** Create a 90-minute show presented without intermission, incorporating 12 actors (including musicians), staged in  $\frac{3}{4}$  round, suitable for touring, constructed in freestanding units that allow compressions or expansions in performance time, featuring audience-participation activities that encourage first-person engagement, pique hunger to learn more about Florida's multicultural past, and stimulate critical thinking about cultural values in the present.

TLab is currently working with TWAM to field-test this production concept and assess how it helps us address specific challenges in the reconstruction. Both TLab and TWAM, for example, find it fascinating that East Florida officials in 1789, like Florida historians in the twentieth century, stress the inclusion of Native American dance in St. Augustine's coronation celebration (Housewright 82). To include indigenous presence in the 2025 reconstruction, TLab and TWAM have launched an interdisciplinary, multifaceted process of investigation to explore how we might build an authentic, culturally sensitive representation of eighteenth-century Native dance in the twenty-first century. Findings so far are encouraging: Ethnographic research on Native cultures in Florida—for example, Louis Capron's observation of Florida Seminole corn dances for the Smithsonian, reported in 1953—are providing provocative parallels to Housewright's summary.<sup>89</sup> Even more promisingly, TWAM's connection with Native dancers who participate in reenacting other

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<sup>89</sup> Parallels between Capron's description of Seminole dances in 1953 and Housewright's mention of "Indian-style dances" in 1789 include patterning the dance in a circle, locating the dance around a fire, and presenting the dance as a community-building event. Additional performance details reported by Capron—the "double step" choreography, counterclockwise direction, rhythm supported by a

seminal events from Florida's history are opening access to indigenous perspectives on activities that European officials documented in 1789.<sup>90</sup> Marrying targeted historical research to first-person input from experts like Misty Penton, Florida State University-trained cultural anthropologist who is also the tasked traditional storyteller for the Muscogee Nation of Florida, maps a path for our reconstruction to transport audiences into post-Revolutionary Florida while teaching respect for the Peoples who inhabited Florida long before European monarchs staked any claim to St. Augustine.

## Proof Scene

TWAM's production concept calls for TLab's collaboration to identify scenes from *Amigo, amante y leal* with the potential to establish dialogue between Spain in the 1630s and St. Augustine in 1789, while also speaking to twenty-first-century sensibilities. A useful passage for proof of concept can be found in the second *jornada*, when Prince Alejandro instructs Don Félix to develop a plan to abduct Aurora, even if that abduction means acting "con poder o con violencia" (2.20). This scene proves dramatically pivotal, because it reveals Alejandro's self-serving nature, while also raising the stakes in Félix's conflict of loyalties. For audiences in 1789, the Prince's abuse of power must have raised questions about monarchy as a desirable form of government, especially in the wake of the American Revolution and the formation of a Constitution to govern thirteen former British colonies as a republic. For audiences in 2025, aware of the #MeToo movement, the Prince's abuse of power promises to strike a triggering discord. TLab is experimenting with strategies to translate this provocative scene in ways that support TWAM's reconstruction.

Experiments in translating this proof scene are teaching us the transferability of translation skills we have been honing on *teatro*

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rattle, and the palmetto fan held in the left hand between each dancer's face and the fire—suggest performance possibilities for the reconstruction.

<sup>90</sup> TWAM's network of Native dance reenactors includes participants in the Founding of St. Augustine (1565), solstice at Mission San Luis (1703), the Battle of Bloody Mosé (1740), and the flag-changing ceremonies that marked Florida's transition from Spanish colony to US territory (1821).

*breve* while giving us a primer in special skills we will have to master to make a reconstruction succeed. Re-dressing *entremeses* in English, for example, we have found it useful to articulate the subtext that underlies spoken dialogue. When we expressed the subtext of Calderón's rape-planning scene in twenty-first-century American terms, here is what we heard Prince Alejandro saying to Félix:

<p>Félix, I can talk to you          man to man, straight from the hip.          No need for a horny bastard to          beat around the bush with you,          making a big song and dance out of          how frustrated he's feeling          or how bad he needs relief.          I've reached the point of desperation.          Help me, man!          Put on your thinking cap          and figure out some way to get me some.</p>	<p>Don Félix, tu eres discreto,          no he menester licencioso          encarecer neciamente          lo que un ofendido siente,          lo que padece un zeloso.          Yo estoy ya desesperado,          dame modo con que pueda          vivir, tu ingenio conceda          este alivio a mi cuidado.          (prompter copy No. 41, 2.20)</p>
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We field-tested this subtextual translation with an audience of *Comedia* fans on July 7, 2022, during the Association for Hispanic Classical Theater's symposium in Almagro, Spain. The lively discussion that followed told us that pitching our translation in this register might connect Calderón to #MeToo, but it yanked the audience out of the conversation between 1789 and 2025 that TWAM's production concept seeks to spark.

On September 17, 2022, during the Comedia Practices Conference affiliated with LA Escena 2022 Festival, we field-tested a newly-focused translation of this scene—one designed to involve twenty-first-century audiences in discovering how an eighteenth-century coronation celebration in Florida worked, and why the questions that Calderón's *comedia* raises about loyalties still matter. This translation approaches the abduction-scheming scene through poetic structure rather than through subtext and speaks about divided loyalties in three registers, representing 1630s Spain, 1780s Spanish East Florida, and Revolutionary North America. The seventeenth-century world expresses conflicting loyalties through a strategically-placed metrical shift (*redondillas* to *romances*), reflected in the translation's transition from rhymed verse to rhythmically racing prose at the point where

the Prince has a brainstorm. The late eighteenth century explores competing loyalties through a colonial debate about kingship that interrupts the dress rehearsal with dramaturgical context, both shortening the scene and underscoring its significance. Post-revolutionary perspectives on loyalty find expression through recurrent echoes of the USA's foundation documents, echoes inserted into the translation and into the dramaturgical debate. Feedback from LA tells us that this recalibrated translation is on the right track. Here is our most recent experiment in finding a range of registers wide enough to let present-day audiences hear all of these voices from the past.<sup>91</sup>

*Loyalist, Lover, and Friend*

act 2 abduction plot

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Príncipe, Félix

Governor Zéspedes

Estella actor, Aurora actor

\*\*\*\*\*

**DRAMA** (scene culled from the *comedia*)

PRÍNCIPE        Don Félix, in you I trust.  
                    With you, no need to inflate my lust,  
                    Itemizing (like some low-born idiot)  
                    The list of slights, sustained and hideous,  
                    That she administers, to make me jealous.  
                    I've reached the point of black despair.  
                    Show me ways and means to save  
                    My sanity! Your ingenuity I crave,  
                    To forge a plot that foils this fair betrayer.

FÉLIX            Woe is me – Confounded!

PRÍNCIPE        You've found it? Speak, Félix - share  
                    The fruit of your fertile invention.

FÉLIX            My prince,

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<sup>91</sup> Translated lines from *Amigo, amante y leal* (**DRAMA**) are the work of TLab. The contextual lines (**DRAMATURGY**) are the work of TWAM. Interested parties are encouraged to comment on the reconstruction's progress by visiting [www.theaterwithamission.com](http://www.theaterwithamission.com).

PRÍNCIPE You'll indulge this lust ... to what extent?  
 To death, to hell - that far I'll dare!  
 My obsession to possess  
 Knows no limit, obeys no law.  
 Bloodshed, rapine, royal awe:  
 Use any means that promise me success.

FÉLIX This, then, be our plan: Break into  
 Her house tonight. We'll make her yours  
 There upon the battered doors.

PRÍNCIPE ... Although my craving, Félix, true,  
 Bursts all bounds of politesse,  
 I seek finesse; I want a plot  
 To make her mine – ingenuity, and not  
 Brute force. Thus your presence in the business.

FÉLIX ... No ideas, my lord.  
 Abducting Aurora? Unthinkable!

PRÍNCIPE Abduction! Yes!  
 Listen, most loyal of my vassals, and you shall hear  
 The brightest idea ever devised  
 By most devious brain of most royally jealous lover.  
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**DRAMATURGY** (crafted as an *entremés* intrusion)

FÉLIX ACTOR [*stepping out of the scene*]

¡Señor Gobernador!

ZÉSPEDES Sí, mijo.

FÉLIX ACTOR No es posible representar este enredo.

ZÉSPEDES ¿Qué dices?

FÉLIX ACTOR We, the soldier-actors in this militia,  
 we find this Prince disgusting!

ZÉSPEDES Sí, pero ... es de Calderón.

PRÍNCIPE ACTOR To form a more perfect union  
 between La Florida and España,  
 our play should honor the king.  
 But the Prince in this play,  
 this representation of royalty –  
 he has no honor.

ZÉSPEDES Patience – the playwright will untangle this knot.  
 Tomorrow, we celebrate the coronation of

Spain's King Carlos IV.

FÉLIX ACTOR ¡Viva el Rey!  
Our play, señor, should show  
the English, Irish, African, and Indigenous  
residents of St. Augustine  
what it means to pledge allegiance  
to the Spanish Empire.

PRÍNCIPE ACTOR To insure domestic Tranquility,  
to provide for the common defense,  
to promote the general Welfare, and  
to secure the Blessings of Monarchy  
to ourselves and our Posterity,  
we must needs have a noble prince.

ESTELLA ACTOR But Carlos IV is no noble prince!  
Henpecked by his Queen,  
he shows no talent whatsoever for statecraft.  
Hunting is his ruling passion.  
“Carlos el Cazador” they call him.

ZÉSPEDES Comediantes, I applaud your acting!  
I hear your concerns.  
And I assure you that our script  
passed the royal censors in Madrid.  
We take our text from a prompter's copy  
officially approved in 1774 –  
just 15 years ago.

FÉLIX ACTOR Amigos, we stand at an impasse.  
Can loyalty to the king  
and love for nobility of soul  
share stage-space with this scene?

AURORA ACTOR [*cutting the Gordian knot*]  
Gobernador, compañía, comediantes,  
may I speak?  
Unsettling as this scene must be,  
I see it as our honor  
to stage the dishonorable action of this Prince.  
Our calling is corrective.  
We theater-makers make men better –  
even men who serve as kings –  
by showing them their flaws.



ALEJANDRO ACTOR Mil gracias, Aurora – a new idea dawns!  
 Amigos, I will embody bad behavior in a Prince,  
 so that our King ... and all our leaders ...  
 can look into the mirror of my acting  
 and learn to act more honorably!  
 Agreed?

ZÉSPEDES Victor! Victor!  
*[enter the clerks, costumed for Native dancing]*  
 Now what?

LEAD CLERK Clerks from Finance and Supply, Señor,  
 here to petition your approval for the  
 Native dances we've prepared  
 to perform around the Plaza bonfires.

ZÉSPEDES *[to clerk]* Maravilloso!  
*[to Aurora actor]* Señora autora,  
 will you and your company hold us excused?

AURORA ACTOR Por supuesto, Señor Gobernador.  
 Comediantes, ¡que disfruten de los bailes!  
 Stage management, kindly prepare  
 final dress rehearsal for act 3!  
*[Native dance]*

The above scene is one example among many that inspire TLab to work on this translation, digging into context to select performance text for a targeted reconstruction of *Amigo, amante y leal*. This preliminary report is designedly brief and necessarily incomplete. Nevertheless, we hope that these selected highlights not only demonstrate our work in progress but also reveal the multiple points of intersectionality that make this play, with its 1789 performance, a rich source for adaptation to reach today's audiences. Utilizing descriptions of the eighteenth-century production as the cornerstone for the TLab's translation will enable us to link multiple worlds, speaking to Now through the lens of Then. We can think of no better way to showcase *Comedia* between worlds than working with the Calderón play that connected Madrid in 1630 with St. Augustine in 1789 and reconnecting that *comedia* with Florida in 2025.

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POLÍTICAS DE LA  
REPRESENTACIÓN / POLITICS  
OF PERFORMANCE



## AMERICAN SUEÑO

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**Abstract:** Among the many versions of Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño* that stand out is José Rivera's late-1990s adaptation (and English translation) simply titled *Sueño*. This adaptation, which premiered in Connecticut in 1998, positions itself as a deliberately New World reworking of Calderón's classic *comedia* by resetting the play in Madrid in 1635 and by transforming most of its central characters into Spaniards. Through a close reading of *Sueño* (both on the page and in performance), this article examines Rivera's adaptation not just as a "post-colonial Calderón" (per María Cristina Quintero), but also as a particularly "American" variation that reinscribes notions of "the American Dream" into its exploration of Segismundo's nature-versus-nurture struggle. By stripping away virtually all traces of the Counter Reformation theology that was so central to *La vida es sueño*'s original context (replacing this theology with a kind of amorphous "prosperity gospel" that masquerades as manifest destiny), *Sueño* emerges as a "rags to riches" tale in which its central character not only rises to the top of his society, but also winds up happily married to Rosaura, the very woman that modern (American) audiences always want to see him paired up with in the end.

**Resumen:** Entre las muchas versiones de *La vida es sueño* de Calderón de la Barca se destaca la adaptación (y traducción al inglés) de José Rivera de fines de la década de 1990, titulada simplemente

*Sueño*. Esta adaptación, que se estrenó en Connecticut en 1998, se posiciona como una reelaboración deliberada del Nuevo Mundo de la comedia clásica de Calderón al reiniciar la obra en Madrid en 1635 y al transformar a la mayoría de sus personajes centrales en españoles. A través de una lectura atenta de *Sueño* (tanto en la página como en la interpretación), este artículo examina la adaptación de Rivera no solo como un “Calderón poscolonial” (según María Cristina Quintero), sino también como una variación particularmente “estadounidense” sobre un tema que reinscribe las nociones del “sueño americano” en su exploración de la lucha entre la naturaleza y la crianza de Segismundo. Al eliminar virtualmente todo rastro de la teología de la Contrarreforma que fue tan central en el contexto original de *La vida es sueño* (reemplazando esta teología con una especie de “evangelio de prosperidad” amorfo que se disfraza como destino manifiesto), *Sueño* emerge como un cuento de “pobreza a riqueza” en el que su personaje central no solo asciende a la cima de su sociedad, sino que también termina felizmente casado con Rosaura, la misma mujer con la que el público moderno (estadounidense) siempre quiere verlo emparejado en el final.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** José Rivera, *Sueño*, American Dream, Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*, adaptation, Mikhail Bakhtin, chronotope / José Rivera, *Sueño*, American Dream, Calderón de la Barca, *La vida es sueño*, adaptación, Mikhail Bakhtin, cronotopo

Several years ago, I saw a college production of Federico García Lorca’s *Blood Wedding* in English translation. As I watched the play, I was struck by a disquieting sense that Lorca’s characters had somehow been possessed by the ghosts of teenagers who, until recently, had been haunting the local shopping mall. This was partly due, of course, to the fact that twenty-year-old actors usually have not yet developed a worldview ample enough to understand the perspective of dramatic characters who are based on the experience of young, rural Spaniards from the early twentieth century (even if these characters are roughly the same age as the actors who play them), and partly because twenty-first-century US college students have developed a sense of “realistic” acting based more on what



they see on television and at the movies than the kind stylized representation called for by Lorca's 1931 *Bodas de sangre*. For this reason, the first two acts of this college production of *Blood Wedding* had a kind of weirdly disjointed quality about them—existing “between worlds” as it were—as the young actors tried to render Lorca's heightened poetic language into an English register that they thought was appropriate to the characters (at least, as they imagined them). Ironically, to my ear, the US college actors only “found” the real Lorca after *Blood Wedding* finally shifted into its very surrealistic third act, when the discourse of the play would no longer sustain their misguided sense of Hollywood realism.

I begin with this anecdote because I recently saw a college production of José Rivera's *Sueño*, a 1999 English-language adaptation of Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño*, which brought to mind my earlier experience with *Blood Wedding*. Again, this was partly due to the fact that, as scholars have pointed out, there are recognizable connections between Lorca and Rivera. For instance, Rivera himself mentions that early in his career he read “a lot of Lorca” (qtd. in Jenckes 26), and, indeed, one of Rivera's very first plays is titled *The House of Ramón Iglesias* (which clearly echoes the title of Lorca's *La casa de Bernarda Alba*). Moreover, Caridad Svich argues that Rivera's 1993 play *Marisol* recalls “the more surreal elements of García Lorca's work” (84), while Miriam Chirico continues to find symbolic connections between Rivera's 2000 play *References to Salvador Dalí Make Me Hot* and *Blood Wedding* (300). But there was more to my recent theatergoing experience with *Sueño* than just literary connections between Rivera and Lorca. Watching this college production of *Sueño*, I suddenly found myself mentally back in the same weirdly disquieting space that I had encountered previously in the college production of *Blood Wedding*. In this case, however, *Sueño*'s oddly American teenagers were not a product of some misguided sense of “realistic” acting styles, but are, in fact, part and parcel of Rivera's adaptation itself. As Rivera himself explains in the introduction to his published playscript (titled “A Dance with Calderón”), “In attempting to invent an internal reality for *all* the characters, I reconstructed the language of the play. I cut the lengthy asides; I trimmed the long speeches. And I did away with most of Calderón's metaphors and created new imagery

with a contemporary feel” (7; original italics). Chirico describes Rivera’s reconstruction as follows: “His contribution consists of modernizing Calderón’s florid, seventeenth-century language by incorporating such anachronistic references as a minimum wage and by inserting occasional vulgar street talk into the mouths of [the play’s] royal characters” (296)—a point I will return to later.

Having previously read Rivera’s *Sueño* script, I had already developed a general sense about this reconstruction going in to see the performance. Still, I was unprepared for how the adaptation would affect me. As I sat watching the play unfold, I grew increasingly agitated as the memories of my prior experience with *Blood Wedding* involuntarily came back to me. By the time intermission arrived, I was already mentally blaming my agitation on the presupposed acting techniques of the production’s young actors. My discomfort, however, dissipated to a large extent when, at some point shortly after intermission, I experienced an epiphany: I realized that the problem was not the actors, but was, in fact, me. Despite (or perhaps precisely because of) everything I know about *La vida es sueño* as a scholar of early modern Spanish theater, I had somehow persisted in thinking of Rivera’s *Sueño* as a *translation* of Calderón’s play rather than as an independent *adaptation* in its own right. Once I experienced this epiphany mid-performance, everything else fell into place, and I came to see that what I was watching on this college stage, in fact, really was—to quote the title of a well-known David Bowie song—“young Americans.”

Rivera, who is perhaps best known for his screenplay for the 2004 film *Motorcycle Diaries*, expressly created *Sueño* because he had been commissioned to do so by the Hartford Stage Company in Connecticut for a 1998 premier. Again, as he notes in his introduction to the published script, he was initially “terrified” by the project (5). However, after experiencing an epiphany of his own (not unlike the one I just described for myself), he says he finally found his voice:

When I actually *did* start to write, I was faced with an undeniable fact: I had never adapted a play before and I didn’t know where to start. I asked myself: What do I have to contribute to *Life is a Dream*? The obvious answer was: Nothing. I was stuck (again) until I shifted the question slightly: What do I have to contribute to a modern North

American audience's appreciation of *Life is a Dream*? That was the shift in perspective that finally got me going. (6)

Later, in the same introduction, Rivera elaborates on this point: "As a Latino writer aware of the relationship between ancient Spain and the New World, it was exciting to me to imagine this play springing from a society simultaneously obsessed with honor at home and genocide and conquest of indigenous people abroad" (6). Thus, Rivera made the deliberate decision to create a Latinx adaptation of *La vida es sueño* by making a number of significant changes to Calderón's original script (this, despite hewing very closely to Calderón's original plot). Among several other changes, including the invention of a brand new opening scene (in which we are witness to the decision by Basilio to lock the infant Segismundo away) and the insertion of a number of comments on the Spanish conquest of the Americas, Rivera relocates Basilio's court to 1635 Madrid, refashions most of the characters into Spaniards rather than Poles, and even changes the final scene so that Segismundo now marries Rosaura in the end (a change that, as anyone who has taught *La vida es sueño* knows, is something most contemporary US audiences always want and expect to see).

Most critics, at the undeniable invitation of Rivera's published introduction to the play, examine *Sueño* through the lens of the playwright's Latinx identity. In his 2013 dissertation titled "Wrighting Back to Spain: Constructing Latina/o Identities through Translation, Adaptation, and Staging of Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño*" (which examines Nilo Cruz's 2008 *Life is a Dream*, Rivera's *Sueño*, and Octavio Solis's 2010 *Dreamlandia*), Johnathan Boyd expressly invokes "Latinidad" to frame his discussion:

*Latinidad* provides a lens through which I view Spanish Golden Age culture as a distinct historical era with a set of values or worldviews, yet also as a way of life that both impacted the New World and remains relevant today, and as a source of artistic, literary, and theatrical activity that has influenced Latina/o identity. These three playwrights' shared cultural heritage offer[s] a point of departure for my comparison of how they define Latina/o identity through the act of adapting Spanish Golden Age *comedia*. (1-2)

Thus, Boyd argues that “whereas Cruz affirms his identity by seeking to assimilate and establish a connection between Spain and the United States, Rivera highlights uniqueness or difference from Spain as a Puerto Rican” (37). Writing of what he calls the “Old World/New World binary” of *Sueño* (112), Boyd insists that Rivera “fashions the character of Rosaura as a product of the New World” (116), whose initial anger when we first meet her is an expression of “her hostility towards Spain” (117). In this regard, when Segismundo weds Rosaura at the end of the play, Boyd argues that this marriage “effectively binds both Old and New Worlds symbolically” (138).

Continuing this geographical focus, and speaking more generally of Rivera’s overall dramatic production, Jon Rossini notes that Rivera’s theater “foregrounds the environment in part because of the interpretive discourses in and around his work (and the work of other Latino playwrights)” (“*Marisol*” 2). He later argues that within the ideology of neoliberalism, Latinx voices (like Rivera’s) attempt to “both articulate the material conditions of lived existence and give voice to individual and communal identity formations” (“Neoliberalism” 42)—an opinion Rivera himself would seem to endorse when insisting that one component of his work has always been “to write plays for otherwise voiceless people, to tell stories that transcend the speaker’s ability to reach an audience, to be a platform for the invisible and inarticulate” (Rivera, “Another Word for Beauty” 17). And while his 2008 book *Contemporary Latina/o Theater: Wrihting Ethnicity* includes no specific discussion of *Sueño*, Rossini does nonetheless remind us that “Rivera is fascinated with home, with the idea of the local, and with the way space itself shapes and forms an identity” (151).

Returning to *Sueño* itself, María Cristina Quintero, for her part, examines the play through the lens of post-colonial theory. To accomplish this reading, she positions Rivera’s play within the context of Aimé Césaire’s *A Tempest*, a 1969 post-colonial reworking of William Shakespeare’s well-known play in order to explore the way in which Rivera’s change of Calderón’s original title to a simple, one-word *Sueño*—comparable the way in which Césaire’s change of *The Tempest* to *A Tempest* signals a significant reframing—exemplifies Rivera’s project of asserting his “authorial

control over the original” (130). Still, Quintero would seem to disagree with Boyd’s aforementioned reading of Rosaura as a figure of the New World when she argues that Rivera’s decision to shift the locale of Calderón’s original Poland to Hapsburg Madrid does not go far enough:

[I]f he means to provide a commentary on the conquest, colonization, and genocide associated with the Imperial Spain he so insistently invokes, it is surprising that his Rosaura and Clarín hail from, of all places, Poland. Although this may have been a playful nod to the original’s setting, it would have been much more coherent, for example, to present Rosaura as newly arrived from the New World. She might have been a *criolla* or perhaps even a *mestiza* (at one point she refers to herself as a “hybrid woman”), a once virginal body violated by a cynical Spaniard (or maybe an *indiano*), forced subsequently to disguise herself as a man and travel to Spain (in a reverse itinerary of the famous lieutenant nun, Catalina de Erauso, for example) in order to seek revenge and restitution. (131)

Indeed, Quintero insists that the character most associated with the New World is Segismundo himself (133), whom the play calls the “Subduer of the Maya! Tamer of the Taino! Sovereign of the Old World, the New World, and the Next World” (Rivera, *Sueño* 2.39), even if these associations position him as overlord rather than as subaltern: “Segismundo has thus gone from wild man and noble savage to the supreme representative of the Spanish empire, from slave and ‘Aztec’ to conquistador and oppressor of other American tribes” (Quintero 133). Still, Quintero concludes her post-colonial reading of *Sueño* by arguing that the play succeeds as a Latinx critique of European colonialism and imperialism in spite of itself: “In *Sueño*, Rivera has appropriated and reconstructed a text that may be seen to stand as symbol of the Spanish imperialist project, not because *La vida es sueño* overtly deals with hegemony and oppression, but because its very canonicity metonymically represents the prestige of Golden Age Spain and its language” (140). In this regard, the play forces audiences to “re-examine certain categories: high culture vs.

popular culture, original vs. copy, and the ideological dimension of art in general” (140).

Which brings me back to the “Americanness” of *Sueño*, a term that I deliberately use here in the delimited US meaning of the word—that is, as an English synonym of the Spanish word “estadounidense”—rather than in any kind of more expansive hemispheric sense. Svich has argued that Rivera’s work is “syncretic” in so far as it seeks to “syncretise a Latino (indigenous, African, Spanish, Creole) and ‘American’ identity” (83). Thus, in addition to relocating the setting of *La vida es sueño* from Poland to Madrid (and changing the nationalities of most of the characters in the process), there are two main ways that Rivera “modernizes” Calderón’s play for contemporary US audiences. First, his modern dialogue includes mention of concepts and ideas that were developed long after the original time period of the play in the mid-seventeenth century. For instance, when we first meet the grown-up Segismundo in the (now) second scene of the play, the character struggles to understand his captivity as a necessary precaution against contagion: “I must have something that will infect the body of the world, that’s why I must be quarantined like this, like a *secret medical experiment*, God’s wild new virus kept under strict control. I am the soul of *polio* and *anthrax*!” (1.16-17; my emphasis). Likewise, as Segismundo introduces himself to Rosaura, he says, “This box is my crib and my grave. This sewer pipe is all I’ve ever known. I’ve been a bag of guts, *a storm of chemical responses* pretending to have a soul, eating and shitting and waiting to die!” (1.18; my emphasis). Later, in act 1, scene 3, Astolfo calls Estrella “wiser than the Joshua tree” (1.24), a common name for the *yucca brevifolia* plant, which is native to the desert regions of the Southwest US, and that was neither scientifically described nor even called a “Joshua tree” until the mid-nineteenth century. And in the first scene of act 2, Astolfo describes Estrella as being so bright that she is “an eclipser of the crab Nebula!” (2.49), a supernova that was not discovered until 1731 and was not actually called the “Crab Nebula” until 1842. For his part, Basilio makes reference to “Braille,” which was not invented by its namesake (Louis Braille) until 1829, and then later suggests that Segismundo might turn out to be a “one-man holocaust” (1.29)—a metaphor that largely derives its meaning from the Nazi atrocities committed during World War II. Likewise,

at the end of act 1, as Clotaldo administers a sleeping draught to Segismundo, he says, “It’s going to be a dark night, my prince. And all I can see in this terrible darkness are clouds and eclipses and amnesia. It’s like a calming, *killling gas* is blanketing the sky” (1.33; my emphasis)—a turn of phrase that modern audiences are likely to associate with the use chemical weapons of World War I (if not the Nazi death camps of World War II). Not to be outdone by all this anachronistic and bellicose discourse, Segismundo himself accuses Basilio of having waged a “dirty war” against him (a sly reference to the Argentine dictatorship of the 1980s) and having treated him as a “political prisoner” for the past two decades (2.42).

The second way that Rivera “contemporizes” *La vida es sueño* is to update the play’s language into what is an unmistakably twentieth-century “American” idiom. In other words, *Sueño* is not simply a modern English translation that attempts to maintain the original register of Calderón’s Baroque Spanish (as is Eric Bentley’s mid-twentieth-century translation). Instead, Rivera does to Calderón what the college actors of my initial anecdote about *Blood Wedding* did to Lorca; although, in Rivera’s case, this is not a function of him somehow misunderstanding the text, but instead is a deliberate choice made to enable Calderón (in some way) to speak to contemporary North American audiences by placing *Sueño* between worlds. For instance, in what would be Calderón’s original opening scene, Clarín compares himself and Rosaura to “a pair of starving *bobos*” (1.15; my emphasis). Later in act 1, Estrella says to Astolfo, “I have to say your eloquence on behalf of love is contradicted by the *sexy girl’s* picture you wear around your neck” (1.26; my emphasis). In the first scene of act 2, Clarín refers to Rosaura’s decision to shed her male wardrobe with: “Rosaura’s decided, since she’s *come out of the closet*, that she’ll now raid that closet for the finest girl’s clothes in the kingdom” (2.35; my emphasis). On the very next page, Clarín refers to “the *revenge thing*” and also says, “I’m gonna sing like a *friggin* canary” (2.36; my emphasis). A few pages later, Astolfo wishes Segismundo “a kind of *orgasmic happiness* a thousand times a day” (2.39; my emphasis), while Segismundo himself later calls Astolfo a “blowhard” (2.41). Still later, Estrella whines that “All the girls around here hate me” (2.49)—having just exclaimed, “Oh, give me a break” (2.49)—and also attributes her love of Astolfo



to the “really wacky” things he does to her “personal chemistry” (2.50). Rosaura, for her part, refers to the picture of Astolfo’s “sexy ex-lover” (2.54), and the *gracioso* Clarín declares himself “screwed” when he is captured by a company of soldiers (3.61).

Perhaps one of the most startling of Rivera’s insertions of a contemporary English patois into Calderón’s play, however, occurs when Astolfo—talking to Rosaura, who has decided to call herself Astrea—says the following:

Very well. If you want to play games, we’ll play games. “Ass-trea,” was it? Ass-trea, as the Duke of Warsaw, I command you to trot your tight little *Ass-trea* over to the princess, immediately, and tell her I honor her so much, I refuse to send her a mere *copy* of the beautiful Rosaura. Instead I’m going to send her the *original*: you. (2.52; original emphasis)

If this speech sounds a bit like lines from reruns of *Friends* or *Seinfeld*—what Rosaura might call a “tortured soap opera” (2.51), and what Rivera elsewhere calls “the pale, cool language” of television (“Split” 90)—this is clearly on purpose. Indeed, Segismundo talks to his father Basilio as if he were some kind of petulant teenager: “It’s absurd to ask me to respect old age! It’s even more absurd to ask me to respect you. Some day soon, as I walk to the throne room, I’ll walk on a carpet made of your gray hair, old man. That’s the only way to repay you for the way you raised me” (2.48). One can almost hear the door slam as Segismundo—whom Boyd calls a “spoiled tyrant” (109)—storms back into his poster-covered bedroom in order to brood away his frustration while playing first-person video games until he finally falls asleep on his bed. It is perhaps not coincidental—if, nevertheless, unintentional—that Rivera probably wrote these lines not long after the release of the 1997 film *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery*, in which Dr. Evil’s teenage son, Scotty, makes similarly petulant complaints to his own father.

Of course, I am not the only critic to comment on *Sueño*’s late-twentieth-century discourse. Chirico, for instance, notes that journalistic theater reviewers Bill Marx (of *The Boston Globe*) and Alvin Klein (of *The New York Times*) complained “that the play suffers from this ironic treatment, which renders the characters



shallow and the issues superficial, [thus] eroding the intellectual and psychological core of the piece” (296). And Quintero argues that Rivera’s anachronistic dialogue seems “to be written by a native speaker of English trying to approximate the ‘otherness’ of a different language by making his own discourse alien in some way” (137). Be that as it may, the issue goes well beyond just a question of linguistic register; Rivera’s forcing of Calderón’s characters to speak in a clearly recognizable American idiom is merely the tip of the iceberg. There are other ways in which contemporary US culture invades and pervades Rivera’s representation of early modern Spain. For instance, the playful banter between Astolfo and Rosaura (a portion of which I cited earlier) evokes the witty repartee between Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn brilliantly on display in films like *Desk Set* or *Adam’s Rib*. Thus, Rivera’s dialogue here is not just a “modernized English rendering” of Calderón. What really plays out over the course of Rivera’s text is a complete overlay of what Mikhail Bakhtin would call one “chronotope” on top of another. Rivera may have overtly transposed the location of *La vida es sueño* from some temporally ambiguous Poland to a very specific Madrid of 1635, but at the same time, his numerous references to twentieth-century American culture suggest that hovering just inches above *Sueño*’s seventeenth-century Madrid is a phantasm of twentieth-century Washington, DC. How else to explain Clarín’s reference to the (deliberately capitalized) “West Wing” of Basilio’s palace (2.45)?

In his influential essay, “Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel,” Bakhtin defines chronotope as “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically represented in literature” (84). These chronotopes, he says, help to explain “the simultaneous existence in literature of phenomena taken from widely separate periods of time” (85). Over the course of nearly 200 pages, Bakhtin demonstrates his point by surveying the history of Western literature (touching on several canonical texts along the way) and exploring just how these chronotopes move, shift, and evolve across the centuries. He speaks of the chronotope of “biographical time,” of “the chronotope of nature,” of “the family-idyllic chronotope,” and even of “the chronotope of the labor idyll” (249-50), and concludes that “language, as a treasure-house of images, is fundamentally chronotopic” (251). In this way, Bakhtin

argues, “chronotopes are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex interrelationships” (252). Moreover, as he insists,

real people, the authors and the listeners or readers, may be (and often are) located in differing time-spaces, sometimes separated from each other by centuries and by great spatial distances, but nevertheless they are all located in a real, unitary and as yet incomplete historical world set off by a sharp and categorical boundary from *represented* world in the text. (253; original emphasis).

And this, I think, explains much of what we see in *Sueño*, where Rivera has created his “more complex interrelationships” by superimposing what I would call the “chronotope of the American Dream” on top of Calderón’s Counter Reformation world.

Consider the character of the King’s servant who in Calderón’s original text is defenestrated by Segismundo. In Rivera’s reconstruction of this scene (which borrows heavily from act 3, scene 7 of Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, where Cornwall violently plucks out the eyes of Gloucester), Segismundo violently puts out the eyes of this servant during a moment of unrestrained rage: “SEGISMUNDO grabs the SERVANT. He sticks his thumbs into the SERVANT’s eyes until they bleed. Blinded, bleeding, the SERVANT staggers out of the room. [...] ASTOLFO stares at SEGISMUNDO whose hands are bloody” (2.40-41). Later, in trying to intimidate Rosaura into yielding to his demands, Segismundo insists that any resistance from her will make him “insane” (2.46). And to prove that he means business, he follows this up with: “I blinded a man today, a nice man, a family man, probably had a house full of grandkids—kids he’ll never see again—just to prove that I could do it! (2.46).

Everything about this short speech (including its abandonment of defenestration) is not just anachronistic, it represents a complete cultural transference. In the first place, the whole concept of a “family man”—which is often contrasted to the idea of the “bachelor playboy” who lives a carefree life untethered to any sort of nuclear family—is an idea closely connected to the US tax code category of “head of household”; that is, a white cisgender

male—think 1950s sitcoms like *Father Knows Best*—who lives in a modest, but freestanding home, complete with a nice green lawn and a white picket fence. Thus, when Segismundo calls this blinded servant a “family man,” and then invokes a very idyllic “house full of grandkids,” he is decidedly not referring to anything like a genuine early modern Spanish “commoner” (read “subaltern”) whose life in the king’s service would hardly have been so serene. By calling this character a “family man,” Rivera’s Segismundo conjures up images of a twentieth-century middle-class American who probably works 9 to 5 (and is, perhaps, even a dues-paying member of the local chapter of the International Brotherhood of Royal Valets), and who spends his weekends teaching his grandkids how to fly-fish on the Manzanares River. One might argue, of course, that I am reading too much into this single line of dialogue, but I do not think so. Indeed, Rivera himself has said that “each line of dialogue is like a piece of DNA: potentially containing the entire play and its thesis; potentially telling us the beginning, middle and end of the play” (“36 Assumptions” 22). To my ear, the genetic code metaphorically contained in this single strand of *Sueño* dialogue begets a world much more closely related to *Ozzie and Harriet* than to *Persiles y Sigismunda*.

Now, I do not mean to suggest in any way that the chronotropic interpretation I am offering here supplants other, Latinx readings of *Sueño*. On the contrary, what I would like to suggest instead is that also hovering just inches above these various Latinx readings is one in which Rivera’s Segismundo can be read—in the vein of Horatio Alger’s *Ragged Dick* or F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Great Gatsby*—as a version of the archetypal American figure of the “self-made man” pursuing his American Dream birthright. In this way, while *Sueño* is an unquestionably Latinx adaptation of *La vida es sueño*, its status as such positions Rivera’s play precisely in the liminal space that exists between worlds, as Rossini notes when he says of *Marisol* (but which is equally true of *Sueño*): “Rivera foregrounds [...] notions of the border, borderlands and borderscapes whose topographical and metaphorical existence place them in a different relationship to the real” (“*Marisol*” 2). And let us not forget, as Rivera himself mentions in a 2001 interview with Norma Jenckes, that he grew up with a “fairly standard American childhood” on Long Island (Jenckes 31), nor that “he moved to the Midwest [Ohio] to attend

Denison University” (Chirico 282). Moreover, as he himself states in an earlier interview with Lynn Jacobson (in response to a question about magic realism): “To be a true magic realist, I would have to have a different life, essentially. I think a lot of magic realism [...] comes from a real rural, Latin American life experience—poverty, superstition, the Catholic Church. I had that as a very young kid, but it’s not my experience. So to be purely a magic realist, in that sense of the word, would not fit me because I am North American as much as I am Puerto Rican” (Jacobson 53). In other words, Rivera himself—as a Latinx playwright—occupies a hybrid and liminal space that is every bit as “between worlds” as the space occupied by his post-colonial Segismundo in *Sueño*.

Quintero has argued that Rivera’s adaptation introduces “many more overt references to Catholic dogma than Calderón himself deemed necessary” (135). This may be true, but I read this play as one in which Calderón’s Counter Reformation theology seems to have been almost entirely stripped away. As many critics have noted, one of the more radical changes that Rivera makes to Calderón’s early modern original text is to posit a very post-modern God at the end of Segismundo’s famous soliloquy, where, in place of the soliloquy’s original ending, “que toda la vida es sueño, y los sueños, sueños son” (Calderón 2.2186-87), Segismundo says: “To live is to sleep, to live is to dream, all who live are dreamers, all dreamers are the dreams of God, and what is God Himself, but the greatest dream of all?” (Rivera, *Sueño* 2.58). What emerges from this radical change is not a Segismundo who epitomizes the theological importance of Catholic free will and good works in contrast to Protestant notions of pre-destination, but a Segismundo who is animated by a kind of early modern “prosperity gospel” masquerading as manifest destiny. Rivera’s addition of an opening scene in which we see Basilio consign his newborn son to the prison tower serves to emphasize that Segismundo’s “fate” is really nothing more than an accident of birth, something completely out of his control, something, indeed, to be *overcome*. Thus, as the play moves inexorably toward its foregone conclusion, *Sueño* becomes a “rags to riches” tale in which, having learned from his prior mistakes, Segismundo ultimately achieves his true destiny through the sheer power of “bootstrapping” himself into better circumstances.

As Westgate notes in a comment that is very apropos of *Sueño*, “upward mobility, the promise of improving one’s socioeconomic standing by ascending the class structure, became a defining crux” in Rivera’s earliest plays (“Between” 257). Moreover, Segismundo not only rises to the very top of his society, but he also gets the girl—the “right” girl—in the end. For, where Calderón’s original final pairing of Astolfo with Rosaura and Estrella with Segismundo merely shifts the weight of destiny from “the stars” to social class, Rivera (who summarily matches up Astolfo with Estrella in order to quickly dispatch them), not only gives Rosaura sufficient *modern* agency to choose her own mate, but also assigns to her (rather than to Segismundo) the final lines of the play: “Perhaps all this is my dream, with you in it. Either way, we can let our dreams teach us about the brevity of life and the fleeting nature of happiness. If life *isn’t* a dream—and I don’t think it is—even better. We make it what we want. We stay and build on the past. Or we forego royalty and go to the New World to start over” (3.75; original emphasis). In this succinct summary of what Barbara Mujica has called Rivera’s “anthem to self-fulfillment” (200), we hear echoes not just of Horace Greeley’s famous exhortation to “Go West, young man, go West,” but of also of Dale Wasserman’s central conceit in *Man of La Mancha*. For, Rosaura’s character arc in Rivera’s *Sueño* is just as much a “rags to riches” tale as Segismundo’s, and *both* narratives are built on the very American idea—as I have argued elsewhere (158)—that success comes precisely from dreaming impossible dreams.

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## BE MY GUEST: THE WORLD OF HOME AND THE POLITICAL SPHERE IN LOPE DE VEGA'S *EL VILLANO EN SU RINCÓN*

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**Abstract:** In Lope de Vega's *El villano en su rincón* of 1617, the king, disguised as a lost nobleman, enters a humble villager's home asking for shelter. Juan Labrador —the villager— amiably hosts the mysterious guest, treating him to music, a hearty supper, and a bed to sleep. Through a close reading of Lope's play, this chapter explores the home [*rincón*] as a space of resistance to excessive power, bringing to the fore the home's political dimension, in connection to its ethical connotations as a place of hospitality and negotiation. It suggests that Lope's portrayal of the monarchy reveals an emerging disciplinary and diffused power that does not kill but controls life, showing how the ravaging forces of politics can eventually come knocking at one's own door. Incorporating philosophy, critical theory, and a historical approach to hospitality, this chapter looks at our interaction with unfamiliar others, allowing the convergence of theatre and politics to shed new light on the meaning of what we may call home. This combined approach offers novel ways of understanding how this play stages the ethical undercurrents of interactions with the powerful, contributing to reflections on resistance, the self, and the different shades of tyranny.

**Resumen:** En *El villano en su rincón* de Lope de Vega (1617), el rey, disfrazado de noble perdido, entra en casa de un humilde aldeano pidiendo cobijo. Juan Labrador, el aldeano, acoge amablemente al misterioso huésped, obsequiándolo con música, una cena abundante y una cama para dormir. A través de una lectura detallada de la obra de Lope, este capítulo explora el hogar (rincón), como un espacio de resistencia al poder excesivo, resaltando la dimensión política del hogar, en conexión con sus connotaciones éticas como lugar de hospitalidad y negociación. Este capítulo sugiere que el retrato que hace Lope de la monarquía revela un emergente poder disciplinario y difuso que no dispone de la vida, pero la controla, mostrando cómo la fuerza implacable de la política puede eventualmente tocar la propia puerta. Incorporando filosofía, teoría crítica, y una aproximación histórica a la hospitalidad, este capítulo examina nuestra interacción con desconocidos, permitiendo que el teatro y la política se intercepten para arrojar nuevas luces sobre el significado de lo que llamamos hogar. Esta mezcla de aproximaciones ofrece formas novedosas para entender la propuesta que hace la obra del trasfondo ético de la interacción con los poderosos, contribuyendo a reflexiones sobre resistencia, el ser interior, y los diferentes tonos de la tiranía.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Hospitality, political power, home, resistance, Lope de Vega / hospitalidad, poder político, hogar, resistencia, Lope de Vega

*“We who are homeless... We feel disfavour for all ideals that might lead one to feel at home, even in this fragile, broken time of transition”*

Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, 377

*“Resistance is integral to power. The existence of power relationships depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance which are present everywhere in the power network.”*

Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 95-96.

*“¿Qué es ver al Rey? ¿Estás loco? / ¿De qué le importa al villano / Ver al señor soberano, / Que todo lo tiene en poco?”*

Lope de Vega, *El villano en su rincón*, 1.466-69

In Lope de Vega's *El villano en su rincón* (1617), the king, disguised as a lost nobleman, enters a villager's home asking for shelter. Juan hosts the mysterious guest, treating him to live music, a hearty supper, and a spare bed. But the inarguably amiable reception puts the king into a state of emotional turmoil. The villager's cheerful indifference to politics and worldly riches marks a quiet defiance of royal power; this humble host, in his little oak home, refuses to see the king, and regards himself as the king of his own modest corner of the world, boasting about the immaterial wealth of his family life and quiet existence: "Y allí contando de diversos modos / De la extranjera guerra, / Duerme seguro y goza de su tierra" (1.410-12). Within the walls of the home—and within the rituals for welcoming and entertaining guests—power dynamics can be profoundly altered: at the dinner table of his own home, it is the *villano* who rules. As the story goes, the king, notwithstanding the exemplary hospitality he has received, decides to punish the villager for living his life so independently of the court, highlighting the fragile tensions between hospitality and invasion.

Through a close reading of Lope's play, this essay explores the home as a space of defiance, bringing to the fore the home's political dimension, in connection to its ethical connotations as a space of hospitality and negotiation. I argue that between José Antonio Maravall's reading of Lope as a propagandist and Malveena McKendrick's interpretation of Lope as a seditious figure, there is another, overlooked possibility which sees Lope's play presenting us with the experience of hospitality—and the concept of "home"—as a space of resistance to excessive power. Incorporating philosophy, critical theory, and a historical approach to hospitality, this essay looks at our interaction with unfamiliar others, allowing the convergence of theatre and politics to shed new light on the meaning of what we may call home. This combined approach offers novel ways of understanding how this play stages the ethical undercurrents of interactions with the powerful, contributing to reflections about resistance, the self, and the different shades of tyranny.

## **The Villano's Home**

In his work on itinerant space on stage, Javier Rubiera has observed how, in the sequence of scenes that depict the king's arrival

at the *villano's* house, the king is always on stage but the space around him transforms and dilutes almost imperceptibly. In these scenes, Lope portrays the political sphere within the domestic sphere, and asks how the two can possibly interact when they come face to face. The king appears first in the woods, then at the *villano's* doorstep, and immediately after, inside the house, whose own domestic compartments seem already fused (Rubiera 105-07). Outdoor scenery and indoor intimacy are magically brought together, and only dialogue conveys the mutation of space. Yet, the presence of the monarch in the *villano's* humble oak home recreates the potential breach of boundaries which political power entails.

The idea of the king personally entering his subjects' households evokes a concomitant historical phenomenon, a particularly pervasive form of taxation known since the Middle Ages as *regalía de aposento*. This tax traditionally required residents to receive bureaucrats and members of the king's entourage when the itinerant court visited. In their *Razón de Corte*, written towards the end of the sixteenth century, Joan de Xerez and Lope de Deça offer an account of residents' complaints to the *regalía de aposento* as a form of coerced hospitality. They denounced the emotional burdens provoked by these policies, and the urban damage caused by the problematic proliferation of *casas a la malicia*. In their view, improvised interventions on the façades of houses ruined the beauty of the urban landscape, and they also condemned the "maleficios que se cometen y causan los huéspedes forzosos para las casas" (Cirnigliaro 38). The complaints expressed concerns for both single young women and widows, as well as married couples, whose honesty, peace, and quiet were at constant risk of great disruption.

In Madrid, this became a permanent burden when Philip II established the court in 1561 (Corral 5). As a result, many madrileños appear to have modified the façades of their homes to make them look smaller and thereby to absolve themselves of any obligation to host the king's guests. Noelia Cirnigliaro has explained the phenomenon of the *casas a la malicia* as a form of urban illusionism, a theatrical and staged approach to the city, and a defiant attitude to the law and the authority of the king. The *casas a la malicia* evoked theatre's fluid power to create an impossible world, an illusion or façade (25-26, 40). In addition, they expressed the tensions and constant negotiations

between the public and the private spheres, between the world of home and the world of politics. The home appeared as a microcosm of sovereignty, a kingdom in a *rincón*.

In Lope de Vega's play, the *villano's* home is described as a *rincón*, a source of contentment, and a "dulce abrigo" (1.410). The home is the place where there is no need to strive, no effort to come and go. The *villano* claims to be happy and grateful because he inhabits a safe place, away from the sadness of courtiers, whose unlimited ambition and appetite for honours control their hearts and thoughts:

Parezco un hombre opuesto  
Al cortesano triste  
Por honras y ambiciones,  
Que de tantas pasiones  
El corazón y el pensamiento viste (1.393-97).

The *villano* laughs at the sorrowful soldier whose life is always at risk: "Que como si tuviese / Mil piedras y mil brazos, va a perdellos" (1.414-15). Likewise, he pities the sailor who fills his life with uncertainties:

Y el otro desdichado,  
Que como si no hubiese  
Bastante tierra  
.....  
Las libres mares ara,  
Y aun en el mar no para. (1.416-18, 421-22)

The *villano* dismisses those who recklessly seek their own graves, and praises his *rincón* as a place of otherworldly peace and safety. In contrast with the external connotations of the term *esquina*, the etymology of the word *rincón* denotes a place within, an interior space formed by an angle (Malkiel 6). While the English word "nook" represents a diminutive of "corner," the Spanish *rincón* already contains a sense of interiority. In fact, Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* makes reference to the corner as "the space of our being," a place capable of offering safety and immobility (137).

In Lope's play, the *rincón* evokes a refuge, a joyful shelter from the world. Not knowing that his guest is the king himself, the *villano* answers the monarch's question of why he refuses to see him:

No soy de su bien capaz,  
 Ni pienso yo que en mi vida  
 Puede haber felicidad  
 Como es esta soledad. (2.825-28)

Forcione contrasts Juan's attachment with his *rincón* to Seneca's words: "I am not born for one corner, my country is this entire world," suggesting that the *villano* exhibits a form of anti-social behaviour, a separation from society and from Aristotle's description of man as a political animal (Forcione 75). But a closer look shows that the peasant's solitude does not imply isolation. He goes to church and helps the poor, and he is known and recognized in the village. His *rincón* can be juxtaposed with Levinas's reflections on the separation required for openness to take place: "the possibility for the home to open to the Other is as essential to the essence of the home as closed doors and windows. Separation would not be radical if the possibility of shutting oneself up at home with oneself could not be produced" (172). In fact, the character of the *villano* enriches the notion of cosmopolitanism, which proclaims that human beings belong nowhere but to the entire world. The *villano*, in contrast, belongs to his own *rincón*, but feels at home in the world. Nietzsche's approach to cosmopolitanism evokes this dichotomy, as he highlights cosmopolitanism's link to a sense of errancy and homelessness, to the rootless traveler who feels foreign in all places (241).

The *rincón* also appears as a spiritual kingdom, where happiness prevails, thanks to the richness and abundance of time that frees the *villano* from the agitated world of business and politics. He says:

Soy más rico, lo primero  
 Porque de tiempo lo soy;  
 Que solo, si quiero, estoy,  
 Y acompañado, si quiero.  
 Soy rey de mi voluntad,  
 No me la ocupan negocios,  
 Y ser muy rico de ocios  
 Es suma felicidad. (1.698-705)

The *villano* lives modestly, but has all he needs. He harvests the grapes for the wine he drinks and raises the turkeys for family meals, but he avoids excess and luxury, and lives in a humble oak house. A sovereign of his own will, the *villano* dictates who comes into his presence, and most valuable of all, has plenty of spare time. Life is sweet in the *rincón*. Even the food is tastier. Juan offers his guest the popular *olla podrida*, which literally means “rotten pot” because of its slow cooking process that makes the meat and vegetables fall apart like ripe fruit (Campbell, *At the First Table* 13, 212). As Juan introduces it:

Una olla, que no puede  
Comella con más sazón.  
Que en esto nuestro rincón  
A su gran palacio excede. (1.734)

During supper, the guest is serenaded by musicians who sing songs depicting the peacefulness and pleasantness of the place:

Caliéntase el enero  
Alrededor de sus hijuelos todos,  
A un roble ardiendo entero,  
Y allí contando de diversos modos  
De la extranjera guerra,  
Duerme seguro y goza de su tierra. (2.896-901)

The *villano* feels untouched by the horrors of war and sleeps undisturbed. Yet, contrary to Forcione’s perception, the *rincón* in the play is not so straightforward a place of isolation from the world. Juan’s dwelling is from the outset described as a space open to hospitality and the other. When the newcomer approaches his house, the *villano* is initially wary of the possibility that he is a thief, but when the disguised king claims to be a lost nobleman, Juan willingly offers him food and shelter:

Cena y posada os daré,  
No como allá en vuestra casa  
Con platos y vanidad,  
Mas con mucha voluntad,  
Al modo que acá se pasa. (2.628-32)

Underneath the loyalty that the *villano* professes to the king, there is a seemingly trivial —although finally catastrophic— detail: the refusal to see the king's face. The *villano* claims to serve, respect, and obey the king in all forms, including all financial requests, but does not want to see him:

Daré al Rey toda mi hacienda,  
Hasta la oveja y el buey;  
Mas yo no he de ver al Rey  
Mientras desto no se ofenda  
...  
Servirle y no verle quiero,  
Porque al sol no le miramos,  
Y con él nos alumbramos. (1.506-09, 512-14)

To this, the king responds:

¡Que viva un hombre aquí tan poderoso!  
¡Dichoso el que da leyes a su casa,  
Y en sus umbrales tan contento pasa!  
...  
Desasosiego me cuesta  
...  
Que en verle vivir así,  
Tan olvidado de mí,  
Confieso que me ha picado. (1.829-31, 2.1, 18-20)

The king's outrage is triggered by the villager's avoidant behaviour, but there is also the horror of knowing that there is a subject who does not fear him. The epitaph that the *villano* builds in anticipation of his death, reads:

Yace aquí Juan Labrador,  
Que nunca sirvió a señor,  
Ni vio la Corte ni al Rey,  
Ni temió ni dio temor. (1.736-39)

Reflecting on Levinas's observations on humility, the psychoanalyst Josh Cohen explains: "in opening myself to another person, and more specifically, another face, I am uprooted from



my secure habitation in my own self... The other's face, if I am properly receptive to it, signifies what he calls an ethical command, the absolute and irreversible priority of the other, over myself" (70). An unexpected face can shake the foundations of one's own home, and put the host in a position of exile, even if momentarily. When, at the end of the play, the king brings Juan to the palace and confronts him about his refusal to see him, the *villano* responds: "Me pareció que solamente el verte / pudiera ser la causa de mi muerte" (3.780-81). The end of the story shows that the king's power is not life-threatening, but that the death Juan fears has more to do with the end of his home and subsequent exile.

Juan's potentially seditious attitude is aggravated when he adds that he considers himself king of his own little corner of the world:

Yo propuse, Feliciano,  
De no ver al Rey jamás,  
Pues de la tierra en que estás  
Yo tengo el cetro en la mano. (1.496-99)

Juan refuses to see the king and claims to hold the scepter in the land he inhabits. A similar expression suggesting the possible recurrence of a narrative that associated the gaze with political attributes can be found in Juan de Valdés's *Diálogo de la lengua* of 1536: "Esse es rey, el que no vee rey." The *villano's* definition of his home, of his *rincón*, is loaded with political connotations. The domestic sphere becomes a boundary for the political sphere, recreating the ultimate space of intimacy where humanity and vulnerability are unavoidably manifested. To look at the king's face seems a trivial gesture, but the refusal to do so appears as a lack of acknowledgement and recognition, and in the long run, as outright defiance. This contrasts with the late sixteenth-century trend of monarchs to seek invisibility and reclusion, and opens up questions about the changing symbols of power. Since the mid-sixteenth century, beginning with Charles V, but more evidently with Philip II, Spanish monarchs adopted a greater sense of invisibility and reclusiveness (Elliott 148). As a result, the royal household and even the king's private chambers became the epicenter of political power and governance (Elias 119). As Geoffrey Parker observed, Philip II refrained from participating in public ceremonies, and a few people

could speak to him if they were given access to his private quarters (20—22, 82). Philip III, in one of his entries into Madrid in 1599, was concealed from the public and his person was replaced by representations in triumphal arches and statues that portrayed him as a deity and a hero (Feros 355). The idea of the king withdrawing from public view and ruling from the intimacy of his own household raised important questions about the shifting language of power, as well as changing expressions of defiance.

Even though seeing and facing the king was a declining historical practice, the king's urge to make sure he was seen by his subjects was particularly concerned with the notion of the *rincón*, that peculiar place that seemed to escape power's ubiquitous light (García Lorenzo, "Motif"). The *villano* claims: "¡Ay, mi divino rincón, / Donde soy rey de mis pajas!" (1.532-333), and the King, disquieted, responds:

Que le haya dado la suerte  
 Un rincón tan venturoso,  
 Y que esté en él poderoso,  
 Desde la vida a la muerte!  
 ¡Que le sirvan sus criados,  
 Y que obedezcan su ley,  
 Y que él se imagine rey  
 Sin ver los reyes sagrados! (2.33-40)

The *rincón* constitutes a dangerous rival kingdom that reverses hierarchies and makes subjects less governed. At the dinner table, the *villano* proclaims: "En mi casa estoy; / Obedecedme, / que soy El dueño" (2.842-44). As Forcione has pointed out, "Lope is in fact reversing the directions of royal portraiture and ceremony. Disrobing, uncrowning, unframing, casting his charismatic monarch into the shadows of an unknown, 'unofficial' world" (52). Not knowing that the unexpected guest was the king himself, the *villano* speaks frankly about his self-made, if humble, kingdom: "Yo tengo en este rincón / No sé qué de rey también; / Más duermo y como más bien" (2.695-97). Juan's exchange with the king has no flattering or adulatory comments, only the naked truth that comes from a less subjugated and less governed place. Writing about the function of theatre, Foucault emphasizes its capacity to turn ceremony around, and to show how "the sovereign, the possessor of public might, is gradually broken down into a man

of passion, a man of anger, a man of vengeance, a man of love, incest, and so on” (*Society* 176). Yet, in his reflections on the nature of political power, Foucault notes power’s relational character, showing how it requires a counterpart, an element of resistance in order to be asserted (*History* 95-96). The humanity of the king, the fear and anxiety he experiences in the presence of the disquieting power of the peasant, is only one preliminary step in Lope’s depiction of the role of the counterpart in reinforcing political power.

## The Palace Banquet

In Lope’s *El villano en su rincón*, the fragile boundaries between fraternally offering shelter and the performance of a theatre of power come to the fore in two separate scenes: the first, when the disguised king seeks the *villano*’s hospitality, and the second when the king orders the *villano* to come to court and sit at his table, appointing him *mayordomo* of the royal household for the rest of his life. A crucial—and less examined aspect—of the palace banquet is the extent to which the power dynamics on display echo historical shifts in the reception of guests and the changing nature of political power. In this regard, food historian Carolyn Nadeau has observed how “the table brings community together but also forces hierarchies, webs of inclusion and exclusion” (170). The experience of hospitality highlights the intimacies that can be forged through domestic interactions, but also reflects the wider frameworks of politics, diplomacy, legal systems, and ethics (Reinhard and Goldstein 4). Lope’s play presents hosting as a performance of liberality and generosity but also as a great theatre of power display, which in turn evokes hospitality’s historical variations. Reflecting on the end of the itinerant court that led to kings having fewer occasions to act as guests of their subjects, Jodi Campbell notes:

While generosity at the table was most frequently associated in medieval chronicles with bonding, association, and concord, by the sixteenth century, as the ruler came to be the principal host, it came to represent power and supremacy. Royal banquets became “elaborate acts of political theater,” including not just guests but spectators, in a kind of visual

spectacle that could win over the people and be written about afterwards. (*At the First Table*, 51)

In the fifteenth century, itinerant courts veered towards more fixed locations while growing in size and complexity. It became less frequent for the nobility to receive kings and their entourage, and instead the monarch came to play the primary role of hosting and entertaining the elites. To Campbell, “This shift echoed a change in the idea of kingship itself, from an emphasis on collegiality among the powerful to the supremacy of the monarch; with less commensality came greater symbolic distance between ruler and subjects” (*At the First Table*, 177). In the final scene of Act 3, the king forces the *villano* to come to the court and sit at his table, presenting him with three symbolic objects: a sceptre, a mirror, and a sword. At the end of his “act of hospitality,” the king dictates to the *villano*: “me has de ver, por lo menos, / lo que tuvieres de vida” (3.939-40). The *villano*, who believed he was king of his own *rincón*, is left homeless. He is “put in his place,” a place of submission and obedience forcefully defined by the whims of political power. A palace replaces his humble wooden shelter, but the destruction of his home comes about with the coerced abandonment of his emotional retreat, a space of quiet, happiness, and self-containment, sheltered from the upheavals and agitation of the political world. From Maravall’s perspective, the play conveys a message of veneration towards the king, implying that one should view him with utmost reverence. Even if the king attacks the honour of his subject, even if he is perceived as a tyrant, it is not possible to rise against him (Maravall 75, 81). In contrast, Jodi Campbell has rightly suggested approaching the character of the king in popular Spanish seventeenth-century plays as a warning sign of the dangers of the abuse of power (*Monarchy* 138).

When the king offers his new guest the sceptre, the mirror, and the sword in his banquet of symbolic objects, the initial impression is that these objects represent the monarch’s unquestionable power and its capacity to become manifest through violence. The mirror, however, conveys a more puzzling meaning. It aims at producing an image of the self, but one that must take place in the presence of the king. The subject is instructed to see himself through the royal figure:

Vasallo que no se mira en el Rey  
 esté muy cierto,  
 Que sin concierto ha vivido,  
 Y que vive descompuesto. (3.892-95)

In the king's theatre of power the mirror alludes to an idea of the self that cannot exist as independently, as the *villano* wishes it to. The self must be shaped by the king—seen through the resources that he makes available—and the home should not escape the ubiquitous sunlight of power:

Mira al Rey, Juan Labrador;  
 Que no hay rincón tan pequeño  
 Adonde no alcance el sol.  
 Rey es el sol. (3.896-99)

Before the palace banquet, the peasant gives the king a lamb with a knife attached to the neck, offering his own life as the maximum expression of subjection: “Deciros que a su rey está obediente / De aquella suerte el labrador sencillo; / Cortar podéis cuando queráis” (3.816-18). However, this was not the kind of power the king sought to display. Instead, he wished to keep a close eye on those who intently avoided his gaze. The palace banquet describes a shift in the manifestation of power, which was fully consolidated only a couple of centuries later. A look at this scene through a Foucauldian lens unveils a form of power that no longer seeks to put an end to its subjects' lives, but instead monitors their bodies, beliefs, and values, a power increasingly concerned with “the spatial distribution of individual bodies” (Foucault, *Society* 242). These transformations also echo a Foucauldian “inversion of visibility,” which imply a more secluded power accompanied by a growing infrastructure of visualisation: “the scarcely sustainable visibility of the monarch is turned into the unavoidable visibility of the subjects” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment* 187).

At the beginning of the play, the king is subsumed in deep anguish when confronted with a subject who refuses to look at him. Yet, his obsession to be seen overlaps with his frenetic desire for the power to oversee his entire kingdom, including all its elusive nooks. Addressing the *villano*, who wanted to die without ever visiting the court, the

king says: “No tuve condición esquivada en veros, / Y a visitaros fui y a conoceros.” (3.842-43) These lines resonate with Philip II’s unprecedented programme to create a network of information that intended to make his kingdoms and subjects more visible. He did not personally visit all corners of his territories, but through initiatives like the *Relaciones geográficas*, established an infrastructure of information which sought to describe and classify all his possessions. In his *Filipe Segundo, Rey de España*, published in 1619, the historian Luis Cabrera de Córdoba noted how the king “meneaba el mundo desde su real asiento” (5). His endeavours to implement a more bureaucratic and centralised government took shape in El Escorial, becoming one of the first European rulers to exercise power from a sort of “centre” (Brendecke 48-50; Latour 232-47). As Forcione eloquently observes, “Like the creating deity, the king is the supreme cartographer. There can be no realities beyond his gaze and his map, no hidden retreats, no protective nooks or pockets —*rincones* —” (33). To use Foucault’s terminology, sovereign power transitioned from the “right of death and power over life” to a biopolitical approach which focused on the administration of life and the body (*History* 139).

The final banquet scene suggests a transition to a more peaceful power who is also respectful of human life. Forcione and Thacker interpret the ending of Lope’s play as an instructive experience where the *villano* peacefully learns a civics lesson. In a reciprocal manner, Juan acquires his share of learning as a counterpart of the king descending to the *villano*’s forest of wisdom (Forcione 67; Thacker 40). However, it is also the case that the lack of physical violence is not less intrusive and harmful. Commenting on Levinas’s “use of the ‘face’”, Judith Butler highlights the precariousness of life in the presence of the Other, while adding that non-violent acts do not always exclude aggression (xvii). The difference between the two episodes of hospitality—the king as guest, and subsequently, the king as host—is the nature of what John Austin calls the illocutionary act whereby the king “rewards” the kindness of his elusive subject with an important and permanent position in the court (Austin 131). No longer king of his *rincón*, the *villano* gets a ruling role in the royal palace, but the message behind this is punitive. It implies the end of a form of selfhood, the end of a home, and the end of the *rincón*.

Hannah Arendt has referred to the rooted mistrust with which, since ancient times, the political sphere has looked upon the private space of the home, emphasizing the hostility against the disquieting mystery of individuals' singularity and uniqueness (251). In effect, when the king finds out about the *villano's* elusiveness, he insists on knowing face to face such an "hombre tan peregrino" (2.750). Presented as a "pilgrim" or "stranger," the *villano* raises questions about his position in the political community and his condition as an outsider. But additionally, the term *peregrino* suggests someone who appears as unique and unusual. In fact, Lope appears to have recurrently applied these connotations both in his work and to describe himself as special and odd, but also singularly perfect or excellent: "unicus aut peregrinus" (Entrambasaguas 70).

Feeling at home in the world is portrayed as being less governed, and therefore as a space of defiance which is ultimately punished with exile. To McKendrick, the meaning of the play is not a triumphant celebration of monarchy —as Bataillon would have it— but its message remains undetermined (McKendrick 206; Bataillon 329-372). The play ends with the king's words: "Aquí, senado discreto, / El villano en su rincón / Acaba por gusto vuestro" (3.959-60), and it is never entirely clear if what ends is the play *El villano en su rincón*, or the character of the *villano*. In effect, readers and audiences never get to know Juan's response to his indictment. A true wiseman and genuine dweller of the world would rebuild a home anew, but the placid kingdom where it was possible to turn the face away from the king is no longer in sight. In Machiavellian terms, the king's cruelty might appear as "salutary," or more benign, since there is no capital punishment (Forcione 66, 75). But the inflicted exile, followed by the disciplinary connotations of quotidian, face-to-face interaction, reveal the emergence of a more diffuse power that does not kill but controls life. Lope's play shows hospitality's profound potential to shake the balance of power, even if momentarily. The vulnerable interstices of hospitality also manifest a certain "individual sovereignty," and a fruitful emotional place to negotiate power whenever the ravaging forces of politics come knocking directly at one's own door. Lope's play forecasts, like Nietzsche two centuries later, that feeling at home in the world can be profoundly subversive.



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**RECURSIVE THEATER:  
PERFORMANCE AND CAPTIVITY  
IN MIGUEL DE CERVANTES'S  
*EL TRATO DE ARGEL* (1582)**

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**Abstract:** This essay explores the use of representations in Miguel de Cervantes's *El trato de Argel* (1582). These embedded performative instances contributed in two ways: by allowing the playwright to deal with his own experience as a former slave, and by bringing the predicament of Christian slaves imprisoned in North Africa to the attention of the audiences in Spain. María Antonia Garcés already remarked on the therapeutic value of these plays for Cervantes. This essay proposes that these theatrical snippets functioned as therapeutic tools for the captives who performed them as well as for the potential spectators who experienced captivity. This essay argues that this emphasis in theatricality within the plays is deeply connected to the experience of trauma itself. By doubling characters and staging theatrical acts, Cervantes uses metatheatrical recursively, in concentric circles that expand from the theatrical representations within the plays to show the theatricality of captivity itself. It also invited the spectators in the *corrales* into the harsh reality of slavery and made them aware of their own agency. This resource of recursive metatheatrical becomes a therapeutic tool inside the plays and expands as a political tool to channel a collective traumatic experience for political gain.

**Resumen:** Este ensayo explora el uso de las representaciones en *El trato de Argel* (1582) de Miguel de Cervantes. Estas instancias performativas integradas en la obra contribuyeron de dos maneras: permitiendo que el dramaturgo lidiara con su propia experiencia como antiguo esclavo, y avisando al público en España acerca de la situación de los esclavos cristianos encarcelados en el norte de África. María Antonia Garcés ya había explorado el valor terapéutico de estas obras para Cervantes. Este ensayo propone que estos fragmentos teatrales funcionaron como herramientas terapéuticas tanto para los cautivos que los representaban como para los potenciales espectadores que vivieron el cautiverio. Este ensayo argumenta que este énfasis en la teatralidad dentro de las obras está profundamente conectado con la experiencia del trauma mismo. Al desdoblar personajes y escenificar actos teatrales, Cervantes utiliza el metateatro de forma recursiva, en círculos concéntricos que se expanden desde las representaciones teatrales dentro de las obras hasta mostrar la teatralidad del cautiverio mismo. También acerca a los espectadores en los corrales a la dura realidad de la esclavitud y los hace conscientes de su propia agencia. Este recurso de metateatro recursivo se convierte en una herramienta terapéutica dentro de las obras y se expande como herramienta política habilitada para canalizar una experiencia traumática colectiva para el beneficio político.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Metatheater, captivity, recursive, trauma, theatricality, doubling / metateatro, cautividad, trauma teatralidad, desdoble

This essay explores the use and contributions of metatheatrical moments in Miguel de Cervantes's *El trato de Argel* (1582). These representations, where characters assume a role for others to see, embedded within the play, contribute to the main plot in two ways: first, by allowing the playwright to deal with his own trauma of being a former slave, and second, by bringing the predicament of Christian slaves imprisoned in North Africa to the attention of readers and audiences in Spain. Although María Antonia Garcés has remarked on the therapeutic value of captivity plays in the case of Cervantes, this essay proposes that these metatheatrical snippets functioned as

therapeutic tools for the captives who performed them within the plays, as well as for potential spectators who experienced captivity.

This emphasis in theatricality within the plays is deeply connected to the experience of trauma itself. By doubling characters and creating an audience within the play, Cervantes uses metatheater recursively, in concentric circles that expand from the theatrical representations within the plays to show the theatricality of captivity itself. It also invited the spectators in the *corrales* into the harsh reality of slavery and made them aware of their own agency. This resource of recursive metatheater starts as a therapeutic tool inside the plays and expands as a political tool enabled to channel a collective traumatic experience for political gain. This essay, therefore, will explore the world of captivity through the lens of metatheatrical interactions as they appear embedded in Cervantes's *El trato de Argel*. From this perspective, Cervantes's *comedia* becomes a crossroads where multiple worlds meet: actors and audience within the play itself, captivity and freedom and Islam and Christianity, amongst others. In the following pages, we will explore how this metatheatrical device allows characters to weave in and out of these spheres.

## Setting the Scene

In his book *Metatheatre*, Lionel Abel commented on “theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized” and studied characters who are conscious of their own dramatic position; in other words, people on stage are aware of their own theatricality (60). Drawing on Abel’s contribution, Richard Hornby, in *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*, describes metadrama as “drama about a drama” (31) and distinguishes five different types, depending on the degree in which the metadramatic devices are “consciously employed”: the play within the play (which will be used in Cervantes’s *Los baños de Argel*, a much later play (1615) in which the trauma of his enslavement is farther in time); the ceremony within the play, role-playing within the role, literary and real-life reference, and self-reference (32). Critics like Bruce W. Wardropper have applied this term to the Spanish *comedia*, whereas others like Thomas Austin O’Connor have called into question the use of the term in discussing Spanish early modern plays.

In the case of Cervantes, the device of a play within a play has already been explored by critics like Alfredo Hermenegildo, Miguel Zugasti and J. Dann Cazés Gryj, to cite a few. Although the topic can be studied from multiple points of view, for the purpose of this essay, I will focus on the use of metatheatre understood as Hornby's role playing within the role, a device that helps us by "delineating character, by showing not only what the character is, but what he wants to be." (67). This "voluntary role playing within the role is the most metadramatic type" (74) and it is intrinsically connected to the experience of captivity since captives perform roles for other to take notice. It also organizes captives into spectators and into actors who directly appeal to potential audiences within the play and beyond it. Lastly, it intentionally blurs the distinction between fiction and reality and limits in between.

In the context of the long struggle between Christianity and Islam in the Mediterranean, the use of metatheater to reflect on the struggles of captivity was not a coincidence. Only two months after the Cervantes's release from captivity in Algiers in October 1580, a truce was signed between Turks and Spaniards. However, as Enrique Fernández argues, it did not translate into the release of the captives in Algiers. This truce excluded the Mediterranean as a site of mutual conflict and avoided this hotspot that had been witness to multiple and renowned encounters, such as Lepanto, Tunis, etc. (8-9). This treaty left the North African Spanish lands, as well as the captives still imprisoned in Turkish prisons, known as *baños*, in a situation of utter abandonment:

Las pocas y mal abastecidas plazas fuertes o presidios que España aún mantenía en las costas norteafricanas se consideraban una obsoleta herencia de los tiempos de las Cruzadas. Ya a mediados del siglo, Carlos V avisaba en una carta a su hijo, el futuro Felipe II, que los salarios de los soldados estacionados en la plaza fuerte de Orán apenas eran cubiertos por los 25.000 ducados anuales de impuestos por comercio con Berbería. (Fernández 9)

Miguel de Cervantes was kept in one of these prisons during the five years he was imprisoned in Algiers, from 1575 to 1580. They are also the setting for *El trato de Argel*, also known as *Los tratos de Argel*, the raw account of the playwright's very recent experience of

captivity. Its temporal proximity to the actual events (the captivity, together with his four attempts to escape, his unheard, repeated pleas for ransom, and his final rescue) saw in the writing process an escape that allowed the author to process his personal experience as a captive. But it is precisely this proximity to the unprocessed trauma that leaves its footprint in the way the author brings us closer to his captivity. Instead of a third person account, removed from the facts, and written from a distant safe space, Cervantes brings us along as readers and makes us participants in the experience of his imprisonment in a very intentional dramatic dare. What Cervantes proposes in *El trato de Argel* is a play of doubles, an experiment in role playing within the role, in Hornby's words, in which he creates numerous sets of characters that face the same situation. Each character in the set reacts differently at the same crossroads, modeling for the other (and for others beyond the set) a particular behavior that will be taken as a point of reference for others to act in accord (or in opposition) within the play.

María Antonia Garcés had already noticed this peculiarity of *El Trato* where the doubling of characters created an emotional distance to events that were too traumatic to be re-lived in the first person (153). However, I want to emphasize the performative aspect of this feature, its recurrence, presenting the audience within the play, that is, the other captives, with multiple examples of what to do and what not to do, opening parallel scenarios that extend beyond each individual's actions. That way, Cervantes designs a choose-your-own-adventure kind of play in which different sets of Christian captives see their options and the possible outcomes begin to multiply. Each set, therefore, unconsciously and unknowingly, exemplifies for the others the choices and consequences of their recursive behavior. These characters, then, become unwilling actors in a tragic play-within-the role that encapsulates the collective suffering of the Spanish prisoners in Algiers.

Alfredo Hermenegildo reflects on this shift, when a character first understands that he is being observed by others and finds in those instances a new theatricality within the play itself that he describes with the help of Lionel Abel: "They themselves knew they were dramatic before the playwright took note of them [...] they are aware of their own theatricality" (80). Seen in this light,

this role-play within the role provided the ideal device to frame a cathartic experience for the author. María Antonia Garcés suggests that theater can thus be seen as the embodiment of the unconscious (134). In the same vein, Julia Domínguez argues that the dramatic genre turns into the perfect therapy for the purification and liberalization of Cervantes's experience in Algiers (2). While these studies emphasize the crucial role of theater in Cervantes's dealing with his own personal trauma, they overlook the importance of theater and spectacle as represented within these captivity plays. Religious parades and dramatic spectacles were indeed used as therapeutic tools for the captives who performed them and, in turn, served a double function: as entertainment under duress; but also, as an opportunity to share the social drama that captives suffered in Islamic lands. As an extension of this, Cervantes's play offers a glimpse into how these representations were carried out, allowing spectators to witness the recursive drama of their own captivity.

This layering effect is embedded everywhere in the play. As a result, form and content are presented fragmentarily. In fact, they deprive the spectator of a single focal point, offering a kaleidoscope instead. To explain this phenomenon, Tania de Miguel Magro identifies an *ideological fragmentation* that runs parallel to the textual one and that contrasts imperialism versus patriotism, that is, the disillusionment towards the empire Cervantes fought for versus his personal experience as a captive, which leads him to question his own sense of patriotism (187). In this sense, the grandeur of the Spanish empire seems to be at odds with the struggles that its implementation requires of the individuals who carry it out. This confluence of opposing forces finds its parallel also in the way the struggles of the captive are shared, as a fragmented mosaic, disjointed when looking at the individual pieces, but conveying as a whole the encapsulated experience of the Christian captives in infidel lands.

This theatricality appears in several episodes of *Don Quixote*, such as “El retablo de Maese Pedro” and the episodes related to the Dukes. Indeed, as Helen H. Reed observes, “theatricality is a constant organizing principle or mode of presentation for Cervantes' picaresque” (75). These theatrical elements emphasize the significance of theater as a political device to remember, spread the word, and move to action. In turn, the performances



represented on stage require the participation of spectators, making them complicit in the situation of thousands of captives. Alfredo Hermenegildo reminds us that “el TeT [*Teatro en el Teatro*] supone la transformación de ciertos personajes de la comedia-marco en público, en espectador, en personaje mirante, y la asunción, por parte de otras figuras, de una nueva función dramática que les da la categoría de personaje mirado” (81). Therefore, captivity plays in general and *El trato de Argel* in particular function as a parallelism to the experience of imprisonment whose ripple effects extend far beyond Cervantes’s personal experience.

## Playing Doubles

The first set of characters that experience this metatheatrical shift is Aurelio and Leonardo, who find themselves at the center of attention of their respective captors’ wives (Zahara and an anonymous slave owner who longs for Leonardo). They become the possible beneficiaries of a proposed deal (*trato*) that their respective mistresses desire. However, the two Spaniards approach this situation very differently. For Aurelio, Zahara’s propositions embody a triple threat and put in danger his loyalty to his wife, Silvia, (herself in the same situation with Yzuf, Zahara’s husband), his loyalty to his country, and finally his loyalty to his faith. All the pillars of his identity thus would be in jeopardy if he were to consent to a relationship with a Moor, a married woman, a triple infidelity with an infidel, a *trato* (deal) with no possibility of redemption. In fact, his moral dilemma is so overwhelming that it makes a physical appearance and comes alive on stage with the personifications of Necesidad and Ocasión, the embodiment of the opposites that Aurelio is forced to reconcile. These allegorical characters reinforce the importance of doubles in the play and emphasize the prominence of the theatricality that permeates the troubling interactions in the Mediterranean. By personifying allegorically the internal conflict that occurs within Aurelio, Cervantes transforms a personal choice, a moral conundrum, into a theatrical drop in the water that generates recursive waves (audiences), starting with Aurelio himself.

Succumbing to Zahara’s desires would have its advantages in the miserable life that Aurelio endures, and this is precisely what

makes the decision much more difficult. This is also what made the temptation so hard to resist for Leonardo and pushed him to choose differently. Leonardo reflects on his choice in front of Saavedra and, unknowingly, becomes a counterpart for Aurelio in his relationship with his mistress, Zahara:

LEONARDO: Si acaso yo tus obras imitase,  
 Forzoso me sería que al momento  
 En brazos de la hambre me entregase.  
 Bien sé que en el cautiverio no hay contento;  
 Mas no quiero crecer yo mi fatiga,  
 Tiniendo en ella siempre el pensamiento.  
 A mi patrona tengo por amiga;  
 Trátame cual me ves; huelgo y paseo;  
 “Cautivo soy”, el que quisiere diga. (1.354-62)

Leonardo thus decides that the way he is *treated*, that is, the improvement of his condition (access to better food and to certain privileges), is well worth his temporary indiscretion. Nevertheless, he still seems unsure of his choice and desperately craves the external approval that comes in the words of Saavedra: “Triunfa, Leonardo, y goza ese trofeo” (1.363). In his particular case, this change does not lead further, that is, the conversion to Islam is never presented as the next logical consequence of Leonardo’s relaxation of Christian orthodoxy. His transformation is only presented as an immediate improvement of his circumstances, but it never develops any further, although the fact that he has befriended a Moorish woman is, by itself, an overt attack on his Catholic beliefs.

However, this same situation takes a different turn in the last act when Pedro, a con artist in captivity, faces a similar choice. He mentions, in a very casual way, that he is considering faking his own conversion and making it his next scam: “¿Dónde se niega Cristo ni su Iglesia? / ¿Hay más de relajarse y decir / ciertas palabras de Mahoma, y no otra cosa” (4.2190-92). Willard King argues that the way Pedro presents this process does not seem to imply denial of the Christian faith or adherence to the Islamic one (283); rather, this conversion is packaged as a performance, as a theatrical act. This pretense, instead of a change of belief, becomes a play-within-a-play that would consist of keeping his Christian faith hidden while

Pedro pretends to be Muslim for the “inside audience,” that is, for his captors and the surrounding community. This reasoning, not uncommon amongst renegades, finds opposition in Saavedra who, as the moral compass of the play, begs for strength (“el cielo te dé fuerzas” 4.2277) and supplements his plea with a long monologue in exultation of Christianity (4.2215-56). Thus, Saavedra, the same character who had no qualms when it came to Leonardo taking advantage of his privileged situation, sees in the conversion to Islam that Pedro is flirting with the red line that Saavedra is not willing to cross and, instead of encouraging him, asks that Pedro think twice about his choices and that he stay firmly rooted in Christianity.

Regarding this same crossroads, Natalio Ohanna notices that, instead of threatening Pedro with the punishments of the legal system, Saavedra appeals to him with the words of the Gospels (156). He reminds Pedro of his role as contributor to the welfare of the whole world, starting with his near-by audience, and describes his actions as a point of reference for others watching his every move. In a way, this decision becomes the most important part of the role he plays:

SAAVEDRA: Si tú supieses, Pedro, a dó se extiende  
La perfección de nuestra ley cristiana,  
verías cómo en ella se nos manda  
que un pecado mortal no se cometa,  
aunque se interesase en cometerle  
la universal salud de todo el mundo. (4.2180-85)

Therefore, whereas Saavedra can understand Leonardo’s urge to improve his circumstances and does not censure his behavior, Pedro’s temptation to convert to Islam becomes a didactic moment for the audience as a whole, inside and outside the Algerian cosmos, to advocate for adherence to the Christian faith. It conveys a message of redemption through Pedro who, in the end, expresses his intention not to abandon the Church. By doing so, Cervantes intentionally blurs the distinction between reality and fiction to connect with the audience and to turn spectators into participants of the recursive drama of captivity re-presented on stage. However, nowhere in his deliberations does Pedro ask himself the difficult questions that Aurelio had grappled with:

AURELIO:           ¿Es éste el levantado pensamiento  
                          y el propósito firme que tenías  
                          de no ofender a Dios, aunque en tormento  
                          acabases tus cortos, tristes días? (3.1783-86)

As we can see in these lines, Aurelio does not rush into a decision but instead tries to consider his choice from every angle. The process that he goes through in front of the audience is not only a personal reflection, but rather, a testimony of the conflicts numerous captives are faced with for the sake of the audience in the *corrales*, a reminder of the hard conditions in Algiers for those far removed from the conflict zone. But it is also a play-by-play commentary on the consequences of either choice that will find an immediate impact in the way that Aurelio addresses the next set of opposing characters.

## Brothers at Odds

The next pair is formed by Francisco and Juanico, two brothers who are separated from their parents and sold into captivity at the slave market. Unfortunately, these brothers are also sold separately from each other, placed into different families, and their lives take them in very different directions. Francisco chooses to firmly keep his Christian faith whereas Juanico chooses to convert to Islam almost immediately. But it is the way that Francisco chooses to present this situation to Aurelio that is interesting, since the former knows of the unwavering faith of the latter. Francisco proclaims that “mi hermano ha dado / el ánima a Satanás” (3.1810-11) and follows the tragic news with numerous attempts on his part to appeal to the love of their family and tradition to rescue his brother’s soul. But Juanico, now Solimán, rejects his Christian past repeatedly and shows off his Moorish clothing and newly acquired privileges with complete disregard for the effects that this attitude has on his brother.

This display of his new identity has Francisco and Aurelio as the sole audience and although both of them are saddened by the spectacle, they choose to react very differently. On the one hand, Francisco can barely believe that the scene he is witnessing is real and is infuriated by his brother’s betrayal. Since they both

have been raised together, by the same family and with the same values, Francisco cannot believe that his brother has forgotten his upbringing so quickly and does not seem interested in looking back.

On the other hand, Aurelio is much more understanding of the dilemma Juanico faces. To the maturity of his age and his much longer experience in captivity, we can add the fact that Aurelio himself has just finished telling the audience about his own dilemma. He has gone through a very similar quandary and, although he chose differently, he understands the power of the temptation that Juanico has succumbed to, as it was common for a multitude of slaves. In fact, he saw Leonardo fall into the same trap earlier and he can now reflect on these experiences. Juanico, by displaying the privileges acquired by his choice, is signaling to Aurelio where the path he refused could have taken him had he chosen differently. Juanico is, therefore, the unwilling and unknowing actor who enacts for Aurelio what his life could have been like and, in turn, is sending the same recursive message to the other captives and spectators alike. Aurelio has had a front row seat to observe Juanico's transformation and is fully aware of the multiple dangers (physical and spiritual) that captives had to endure. At that moment, Aurelio breaks the fourth wall and directly addresses the audience to plead for help, since the only solution to their problems would come in the form of alms to fund the ransom of the Spanish troops forgotten in Algiers:

AURELIO:            ¡Oh, cuán bien la limosna es empleada  
                               en rescatar muchachos, que en sus pechos  
                               no está la santa fe bien arraigada!  
                               ¡Oh, si de hoy más, en caridad deshechos  
                               se viesen los cristianos corazones,  
                               y fuesen en el dar no tan estrechos,  
                               para sacar de grillos y prisiones  
                               al cristiano cativo, especialmente  
                               a los niños de flacas intenciones!  
                               En esta sancta obra así excelente,  
                               que en ella sola están todas las obras  
                               que a cuerpo y alma tocan juntamente. (3.1866-77)

Aurelio, therefore, distances himself from the details of the everyday life of the prisoners, to adopt a more detached perspective.

This bird's-eye view places Aurelio halfway between the captives in Algiers and the play's spectators in Madrid, making him a liaison between these two related but distant spheres. From there, Aurelio, who has personally suffered through this struggle, brings the reality of the captives closer to the only actors who can solve the situation: the spectators in the *corrales* back in Spain, in the hopes that they would contribute financially to procure ransoms to free these soldiers. With this innovative move, Cervantes creates a kind of Meninas effect, a perspectival illusion, in which we cannot be sure who is watching whom, who is the actor and who is the audience in a concatenation of concentric circles with ripple effects on both sides of the Mediterranean.

## Doubles on the Run

This same parallelism can be observed in the two captives who escape near the end of the play and who encounter very different results to their attempts. We are presented with Pedro Alvarez, a slave who succeeds in his escape to Oran, and an unidentified slave who fails in the same attempt, completing this set of doubles. As Garcés points out, Cervantes places the only character in the whole play with a last name in opposition to a nameless slave who represents all the anonymous prisoners (Cervantes included) who tried in vain to escape (153). These runaways would normally be returned and punished for their attempt(s), their hands manacled and their hopes in chains, directly evoking the playwright's experience and his multiple attempts to flee:

ESCLAVO 1:      Y que no hay modo que limosna alguna  
                          llegue a dar el dinero que él me pide,  
                          y la insufrible vida que padezco,  
                          de hambre, desnudez, cansancio y frío,  
                          determino morir antes huyendo,  
                          que vivir una vida tan mezquina. (3.1557-60)

This slave, who contemplates with desperation the uncertainty of his future, prefers to die fleeing his captivity rather than live a life of suffering. Therefore, he decides to be proactive, gain agency

and take control of his life. In the end, his attempt to escape is unsuccessful and he is returned to his point of origin, no doubt to try again and again, as did Cervantes himself, who tried to escape four times until he was finally ransomed in 1580.

But for Pedro Alvarez there is still a chance to make it. Near death from fatigue and thirst, he offers a desperate prayer to the Virgin of Montserrat (4.1976-93) and lies down to sleep in the brush. At that point, a tame, peaceful lion comes to lie next to him, followed by the unlucky slave mentioned above. He is soon after discovered by a Moorish boy who alerts the others of his presence. Of course, this scene with the lion requires the complicity of witnesses (as is the case of miracles) and spectators (as is the case of the theatrical miracles performed on stage) who marvel at the unimaginable circumstances of captives in North Africa.

In the meantime, Pedro Alvarez welcomes the lion as a sign of divine intervention, as the archetype of “Christian morality, in other words, a symbol of Christ” (Garcés 158), thus reinforcing the main message of the play: only the faith of a devout Christian is the path out of slavery and towards protection and freedom. At the same time, this scene where the lion is presented at the Virgin’s feet can also be read as a metonym for Spain overpowering Africa and Christianity conquering the infidels.

Finally, when the captured slave appears before the king at the end of the fourth act, Cervantes returns to the idea of the Catholic faith as the only path to freedom, except that, instead of the mercy that awaits Sylvia and Aurelio, the anonymous slave receives a punishment as cruel and repetitive as were his recursive, futile attempts to escape. With this sentence we stare at our last set of doubles that, in contrast to the previous ones, has a very public profile.

## Doubly condemned

If there is a set of doubles really at the center of the actions and the comments of the people around them on both sides of the conflict, it is undoubtedly the *morisco* in Spain and the priest in Algiers. We encounter these two characters when they have already been sentenced to die publicly, both for being representatives of the opposing creed. The first time we hear about them is from news that

had traveled across the Mediterranean Sea to the opposite shore. As Daniel Hershenzon remarks, it was customary that “information about each case was transmitted across the sea” (2) and even for slaves to maintain “some contact, in the form of letters, with their kinfolk and communities” (4). In following this tradition, one of the Spanish captives, Sebastián, summarizes the events and tells the other captives how a *morisco* had recently been executed in Sargel, in what he considered a just sentence. He also emphasizes how the story had been disseminated from coast to coast:

SEBASTIÁN:      Súpose del moro acá,  
    y la muerte que le dieron,  
    porque luego la escribieron  
    los moriscos que hay allá.  
    La triste nueva sabida  
    de los parientes del muerto,  
    juran y hacen concierto  
    de dar al fuego otra vida. (1.519-26)

As these lines reveal, the news traveled fast amongst the contenders, to the point that the actions taken on one side determined the actions taken on the other, as a backlash. In this case, the public fate of the *morisco* in Spain is perceived by the audience in Algiers as the trigger for the death of the Catholic priest, an action that in turn, would have been carried out for the audience on the other shore to see. Each side, therefore, is performing for the sake of the other; that is, they are putting themselves on display for the other side to see while both sides react accordingly. In the words of Bruce Burningham, Cervantes “deliberately creates a narrative ambiguity” (129) in which the process of narrating can also be experienced: “it may be ‘seen’ by a literate reader, or it may be ‘heard’ by someone who sits listening.” In other words, what the narrator does is “to fold the narrative back on itself placing himself in a position usually occupied by literary characters whose words must pass through the jongloursque performer in order to be ‘heard’” (130).

But Sebastian does not merely convey the news. He colors it by adding that the *morisco* had a fair sentence (“*justa sentencia*”) (1.493), whereas the pious priest died gladly in the name of God



amongst unjust people (1.559-62). This way, the priest is elevated to the category of a martyr, a person willing to give his life in sacrifice to others and, for that reason, worthy of the utmost respect and reverence. But, by the same token and with completely opposite results, the *morisco* incarnates everything that must be despised and eliminated. Both figures, therefore, seen by the Christian audience Cervantes was aiming at, become points of reference, examples for better and for worse. For Ohanna, this gesture establishes a contrast between the two societies: the Spanish, whose moral compass was under the care of the Inquisition; and the Algerian, portrayed as unruly and barbaric (146). Feeding the image of the barbaric Africans, the priest's agony is described in detail, whereas the execution of the *morisco* is presented as part of the inquisitorial routine. In contrast, the execution of the priest is a public spectacle: a multitude fills the streets, not a friendly face to be found and people attacking the priest, who was tied up in heavy ropes. He moved slowly to the place where he was to be stoned and burnt, while constantly praying and stoically accepting his fate (1.527-686). His execution, thus, is a public event, a perfect example of collective authorship, in which all the bystanders share in the blame and fuel each other, much like the traditional description of Christ's ascension to Mount Calvary, the place of his ultimate sacrifice.

SEBASTIÁN:      Los que estaban a miralle,  
                             la ira así les pervierte,  
                             que mueren por darle muerte  
                             y entretiénense en matalle. (1.647-50)

This representation emphasizes the public nature of the priest's execution as well as the collective spectacle that was made of it, much in the way that Henry Kamen describes the auto-da-fé that inquisitorial Spain had been known for:

It began its career as a religious act of penitence and justice and ended it as a public festivity rather like bullfighting or fireworks [...] The auto of 1610 at Logroño attracted, according to an official of the Inquisition, some thirty thousand people from France, Aragon, Navarre, the Basque country and Castile. Since the town had a population

of only around four thousand, the (evidently exaggerated) number of visitors would have created a memorable and historic impression. (204-6)

In both of these accounts there is a heavy investment in the participatory nature of the witnesses who not only enjoy the spectacle presented to them but also contribute to it with their reactions: screams, laughs, comments, applause, etc., making of the audience a member of the cast essential for the ensemble to work. This parallelism was also noted by Ohanna, who commented on “el público aficionado a los corrales de comedias, de cierta homogeneidad ideológica y probablemente el mismo que acudía con entusiasmo a los autos de fe” (148). In this sense, the public execution of the priest described in *El trato* works as if it were a theatrical performance and includes all the associated elements. Nevertheless, it is still not presented as an independent piece, such as we will see in Cervantes’s subsequent writings such as *Los baños de Argel* (1615), in which the playwright is able to distance himself enough from his captivity to make of these individual experiences plays-within-a-play in their own right.

## Final Considerations

Identifying metatheatrical moments within Miguel de Cervantes’s *El trato de Argel* allows us to explore how the playwright used theatrical instances to present the audience with the multiple quandaries and uncertainties that captives had to face in Islamic lands. Following Abel and Hornby, this resource, by which a character becomes aware of his own theatricality and sees the possibilities that he has to play within his role, has ample consequences. First, it draws a map for the other captives and explores their options for them; it becomes exemplary (although most of the time, unwillingly), as is the case of Aurelio with Leonardo, and that of Juanico with his brother Francisco.

Secondly, this intentional use of metatheatre is deeply connected to the experience of trauma, both within and outside of the play using doubles, proxies and other intermediaries to deflect the traumatic experience itself as well as to show its recursive ripple effects, as we can see in the exploration of the escape attempts of

the anonymous slave and Pedro Alvarez, and even in the public execution of the *morisco* and the priest.

Thirdly, this use of doubles that model behaviors for others to see allows us to look closer at the interactions between actors and audiences within the play itself and their connections beyond and helps us find recursive consequences that extend far beyond Cervantes's personal experience. What Cervantes proposes in *El trato* is an experiment in role playing within the role, in Hornby's words, an open invitation to develop a unique path, on occasions testing the boundaries between the play and the outside world. Maybe this intentional blurring of the limits of theatricality proved a little too innovative for the audiences in Early Modern Spain and might explain why Cervantes's plays were not staged until centuries later when theater practitioners were much more open to playing with perspective.

In conclusion, Cervantes's *El trato de Argel*'s use of metatheater starts as a therapeutic tool inside the play and expands as a political tool. It channels the collective traumatic experience of captivity and makes a direct plea for action, turning spectators into participants in the recursive drama of captivity re-presented on stage.

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## GHOSTS ACROSS BORDERS: DON JUAN DE CASTRO AND HIS GRATEFUL DEAD

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**Abstract:** *El mejor amigo el muerto* (co-written by Luis Belmonte Bermúdez, Francisco de Rojas, and Pedro Calderón de la Barca) and *Don Juan de Castro* (by Lope de Vega) both follow the same basic plot; they tell the story of Don Juan, a Spaniard, who is shipwrecked in England. Each play then follows the folktale of the Grateful Dead: a dead man's burial rituals are first neglected by those who should perform them and then carried out by Don Juan, a stranger, thereby indebting him to the living man. The dead man's ghost returns to save Don Juan's life and help him find love and rise to power in England. Multiple meetings of worlds occur in these plays. The first is the encounter of the living with the dead; the second is the confrontation between the Spanish and the English. Importantly, caring contact across one border (that of living and dead) is what allows the success of the other connection (of the English and Spanish). This paper examines the interplay between these two dichotomous contacts to understand this story's attitudes towards borders, crossings, and the necessity of compassionate contact between oppositional worlds.

**Resumen:** *El mejor amigo el muerto* (coescrito por Luis Belmonte Bermúdez, Francisco de Rojas y Pedro Calderón de la Barca) y *Don Juan de Castro* (de Lope de Vega) siguen la misma trama básica;

cuentan la historia de Don Juan, un español, que naufraga en Inglaterra. Luego, cada obra sigue el cuento popular del Muerto Agradecido: los rituales de entierro de un hombre muerto primero son descuidados por quienes deberían realizarlos y luego los lleva a cabo Don Juan, un extraño, lo que lo endeuda con el hombre vivo. El fantasma del muerto regresa para salvar la vida de Don Juan y ayudarlo a encontrar el amor y ascender al poder en Inglaterra. Múltiples encuentros de mundos ocurren en estas obras. El primero es el encuentro de los vivos con los muertos; el segundo es el enfrentamiento entre españoles e ingleses. Es importante destacar que el contacto cariñoso a través de una frontera (la de los vivos y los muertos) es lo que permite el éxito de la otra conexión (la del inglés y el español). Este artículo examina la interacción entre estos dos contactos dicotómicos para comprender las actitudes de esta historia hacia las fronteras, los cruces y la necesidad de un contacto compasivo entre mundos opuestos.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** ghost, haunting, kindness, friendship, England, Ireland, Spain / fantasma, apariciones, amabilidad, amistad, Inglaterra, Irlanda, España

The story of Don Juan de Castro, told by various Spanish playwrights in the early seventeenth century, plays with motifs of doubling, splitting, and joining throughout the action of the plays. The tale of the spectacular life of the fictional ancestor of the house of Castro was first told by Lope de Vega in a two-part play named after its hero. Robert Stone notes that Lope's version is "a dizzying display of Baroque doublings, beginning with its basic and perhaps unprecedented structure: it may be the first dramatic work to anticipate its own sequel. The complete title is *Las dos famosas comedias de Don Juan de Castro*, so doubling is built into the action that begins in Spain and ends in England" (259). Although the version of the story told by the trio of Luis Belmonte Bermúdez, Francisco de Rojas Zorilla and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, titled *El mejor amigo el muerto*, is only a single play and therefore does not have the same double structure, it too plays with the same motifs. In the life of Don Juan we see friends who are copies of

one another, enemies who are perfect foils, and the splitting and joining of oppositional worlds.

Each story retells the old folktale of the grateful dead. The most definitive study on this tale was undertaken by Gordon Gerould, who describes the plot thus:

A man finds a corpse lying unburied, and out of pure philanthropy procures interment for it at great personal inconvenience. Later he is met by the ghost of the dead man, who in many cases promises him help on condition of receiving, in return, half of whatever he gets. The hero obtains a wife (or some other reward) and, when called upon, is ready to fulfil his bargain as to sharing his possessions. (x)

However, Gerould also notes that “nowhere does a version appear in quite this form” (x) but instead the plot is typically found combined with other folk plots. In *Don Juan de Castro*, for example, the grateful dead story is combined with the tale of the two friends, in which one friend must sacrifice his children to save the life of the other friend (Gerould 92). In *El mejor amigo el muerto*, on the other hand, we find a rare instance of the grateful dead plot on its own, simplified and altered.

Morley and Bruerton estimate that Lope wrote his Don Juan comedies between 1604-1608 (314-16), while Antonio González suggests 1608-1610 as the most probable dates (17). González also believes that the plays were likely written together and performed within weeks of one another, due to the cliffhanger at the end of the first play, which finds Don Juan kidnapped by the Prince of Ireland on the night of his wedding to England’s Princess Clarinda (18). In his study, Gerould traces a long list of grateful dead plots from across Europe, including a French novel that is thought to be the source text of Lope’s two-part play, since the two follow almost identical plots. That novel is *Olivier de Castille et d’Artus d’Algarbe*, written by Philippe Camus in the mid-fifteenth century in Burgundy. Gerould points out that a 1499 Spanish translation was likely Lope’s source (95). From the novel, Lope takes the general plot and most of its detailed points; Antonio González traces the similarities and changes in the second chapter of his in-depth analysis of *Don Juan de Castro*, noting that Lope removed many of the supernatural

occurrences of the novel and added details to explain the ones he left in as miracles or workings of the ghost character rather than as vague or unattributed fantastic events. By reducing the supernatural elements to only those necessary, Lope directs our focus to the significance of those folkloric plots that he selects.

Belmonte, Rojas and Calderón reduce these folklore plots to one when telling their version of this story, *El mejor amigo el muerto*, eliminating entirely the folktale of the two friends. Gerould notes that this erasure means that the play has “suffered, in contrast to Lope’s play” (95), though not all critics agree. Bruce Wardropper argues that the trio were less concerned with the religious message of the play than Lope and were therefore more focused on dramatic artistry to the benefit of the play. The elimination of the two friends storyline permits the authors to emphasize the relationship of living to dead, and to situate that relationship as the primary one of the play. The trio reduces Lope’s two plays, with a total of six acts, to a single three-act play. In their reduction, they not only ignore the plot of the two friends, but they also simplify the plot of the grateful dead, removing the bargain made between the dead man and the living one to exchange his help for half of whatever the hero obtains. As Gerould notes, the similarity of names and details make it evident that the three playwrights use Lope’s works as their primary source, although some names have been changed. Tibaldo in Lope’s version is Lidoro in *El mejor amigo el muerto*. The trio also creates a new character called Tibaldo: Lidoro’s son, who, witnessing Don Juan’s generosity to his father, decides to serve him in return.

Historically there has been some confusion regarding *El mejor amigo el muerto* and its various versions, so it will be helpful to unpack the forms it has taken. There exist two essential manuscript forms of this play in the Biblioteca Nacional de España’s *Biblioteca Digital Hispánica*,<sup>92</sup> creating a new form of doubling in the history of this play as well. The earlier manuscript (Res/86) was written

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<sup>92</sup> There is a third manuscript that appears with the title *El mejor amigo el muerto* (MS/15761), written by Rojas alone. This is an entirely different play, in which a Protestant man, Jorge, is haunted by the ghost of his Catholic best friend, Enrique, and is eventually persuaded to convert to Catholicism. Despite the overlap in author and title, there are no true similarities between the plays and this play cannot be considered another version of the story of Don Juan de Castro or the grateful dead plot.



collaboratively between the three playwrights already cited, with Belmonte credited for Act 1, Rojas for Act 2, and Calderón for Act 3. It was written before 1636, since we know that it was staged that year, though perhaps not for the first time (Shergold and Varey 155).<sup>93</sup> Miguel Campión Larumbe and Álvaro Cuéllar believe that it was written sometime later in 1635 or early in 1636. The later manuscript (MS/15571) is a rewrite of the first, attributed only to “tres ingenios.”<sup>94</sup> There has been no clear dating of this second manuscript, whose composition Wardopper believes was motivated by a will to correct errors in the first, noting “Ligeras anomalías textuales en *El mejor amigo el muerto* atestiguan la precipitación con que fue escrita la comedia” (156) and that these anomalies are no longer extant in the second version. Wardopper posits that it was Calderón, the author responsible for the third act, where most of the changes from one version to the next can be found, who returned to rewrite the story after being forced to rush through the first version, perhaps to meet a performance deadline for a special event. Meanwhile, Campión Larumbe and Cuéllar are less comfortable with declaring any specific authorship and maintain that the author is unknown.

Despite the changes across versions of this story, both versions present a story that is decidedly concerned with morality and ethics, particularly in interpersonal relationships. These plays present to their audiences a question about kindness and generosity: What is it that we owe to our friends? To strangers? To the dead? Both plays present universal values, such as “piedad, caridad, amor y amistad a través de un héroe que refleja el idealismo, el patriotismo y la valía personal” (González 9). In each, the generous treatment of the dead permits the unification of friends and enemies, as well as the ultimate joining of opposing political spheres: by the end of both plays, a Spaniard is set up to sit on the English throne. The interplay between the various dichotomous encounters —between the living

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<sup>93</sup> This manuscript was later printed in the fourth volume of Hartzembusch’s *Comedias de Calderón*, and it is that printed version that has been referenced for this article.

<sup>94</sup> The second manuscript was later printed as an appendix to volume four of Hartzembusch’s *Comedias de Lope de Vega*, and it is that version that has been referenced for this article.

and the dead, or between the English and the Spanish— reveals the necessity, and the rarity, of compassionate contact across borders.

These plays present two primary types of friendship: one that is transactional and another that is a true or (near) perfect friendship. The nature of these relationships is reminiscent of Aristotle's description of three types of friendship, which he presents in Book XIII of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Each is based on a corresponding type of affection; there is friendship based on utility, friendship based on pleasure, and perfect friendship based on goodness. Of the latter, he explains: "Only the friendship of those who are good, and similar in their goodness, is perfect... And it is those who desire the good of their friends for the friends' sake that are most truly friends, because each loves the other for what he is... Also each party is good both *absolutely* and *for his friend*" (205; emphasis in original). The perfect friendship, based on goodness, is only possible when both parties are fundamentally good and can encompass the utility and pleasure derived from the two lesser friendships.

This exemplary friendship, the ultimate human bond, is staged in both *Don Juan de Castro* and *El mejor amigo el muerto*, but with slight imperfections. After all, men are imperfectly good and, as we see with the Don Juan character in each play, cannot be relied upon to uphold their moral goodness at all moments, no matter how profoundly rooted it is in their character. Donald Gilbert's recent study on the poetics of friendship in early modern Spanish literature finds that during this period, the "soft didacticism of literary representation" that depicts "the ideal friend as the ultimate representation of what friendship *should* be" (1) is supplanted by an interest in the imperfections of reality, what Gilbert calls "representational verisimilitude" (20) that shows flawed men and their imperfect friendships.

Don Juan de Castro's most meaningful friendships are clearly situated within this framework. Lope's *Don Juan de Castro* establishes a distinction between friendship of utility and friendship of goodness, representing them in two different relationships that act as the defining pillars of the pair of plays. Each of these relationships is attached to one of the folklore tales that Lope addresses: the tale of the grateful dead brings us to analyze the relationship of the dead Tibaldo with the living Don Juan, while the tale of the two friends

focuses our attention on Don Juan and his exemplary friendship with his stepbrother Rugero.

Rugero and Don Juan are so close that they are interchangeable. As González notes, “el amor de Amistad está fundamentado en el amor como una sola alma y un solo entendimiento” (189). When Don Juan is kidnapped by the Irish prince just before his wedding, Rugero is able to step into his brother’s place (entreated by the spirit of Tibaldo to do so) and wed the princess Clarinda on his behalf, as the two are so perfectly alike that they are easily mistaken for one another. He is also a trustworthy enough friend that he sleeps beside Clarinda for a month without a single sexual touch, offering the excuse that he has promised to make a pilgrimage to Rome before consummating the marriage. This is a classically ideal friendship; the two men are so close and so equal that they are mirror images of one another and, despite their lack of blood relation, are as identical as twins. When Rugero leads the charge in Ireland to recuperate his kidnapped brother, he is believed by all but Don Juan’s most loyal servant to be the one and only Don Juan. When the true Don Juan is found, his servant must explain to him that the battle is being led by “Don Juan, que hay otro también” (Vega, *Segunda Parte* 2.1210). This acknowledgement of the doubling of Don Juan in his friend is repeated by other characters, Rugero himself included, throughout the battle scenes.

Despite the apparent perfection in their devotion to one another, there are moments in which the friendship breaks down or is flawed. When Don Juan discovers that Rugero has saved his marriage to Clarinda by wedding her in his place, pretending to be Don Juan so that the wedding could go forth, the true lover is struck by jealousy. He believes it is impossible that his friend and brother could have married Clarinda and slept beside her for a month without sex, and sees this as an absolute betrayal. In his rage, he stabs Rugero and leaves him for dead. When it is later confirmed to him that Clarinda was untouched, he realizes his error in harshly judging his own friend, whose virtue he should have known to be unimpeachable. He acknowledges that Rugero “más me ama / que a sí” (Vega, *Segunda parte* 2.1938-9). The lack of trust that Don Juan exemplifies in this instance is evidence of the imperfection of their friendship, but also the imperfection of Don Juan as a man. We discover that

this is not a protagonist who always loves his friend above all and who is kind and generous nearly to a fault, but that instead he is suspicious of the intentions of those around him, even those that he claims to love and trust.

However, the exemplary nature of their friendship soon returns. Don Juan proves his devotion when Rugero, never wholly recovered from his near-fatal stabbing, suffers from a type of leprosy that Don Juan dreams will only be cured by drinking the blood of the latter's children. Don Juan cuts their throats in the middle of the night, filling a cup with their blood, to guarantee his friend's health. Although the children appear alive again in the next scene (After Don Juan confesses to his wife that he has murdered the children, she pulls back a curtain to reveal that they are playing together, unharmed.), Don Juan has proven himself willing. This fact is off-putting not only to the modern audience, who might, like Stone does, question Don Juan's status as a dramatic hero due to his "disturbing" willingness to sacrifice his children (260), but also to Don Juan's own father-in-law, who nearly banishes the man from England after he confesses what he has done. The filicide is so difficult to assimilate that González has even posited it as unreal; Don Juan, he argues, did not kill his children at all, but merely imagined or hallucinated that he did due to a melancholic humor.<sup>95</sup> The fact is that in order to conform to the most perfect friendship, in which one friend will perform acts of such perfectly selfless devotion only for the friend's own sake, an act that Gilbert calls "the defining gesture of friendship throughout the entire tradition" (11), necessitates the distasteful and selfish treatment of others, including loved ones. While this act confirms the friendship's perfection, it also confirms the impossible and perhaps unethical nature of perfection itself.

I hold this friendship, exemplary in many ways, in comparison with the relationship between Don Juan and the ghost, Tibaldo. It has been noted that when *Don Juan de Castro* appeared in Part XIX of Lope de Vega's complete works, it was with the subtitle "El hacer bien a los muertos" (González 14), marking the relationship between living and dead as a weighty one in this story. Wardropper

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<sup>95</sup> An in-depth analysis of Don Juan's humoral condition throughout the plays is the subject of the third chapter of González's *Análisis e interpretación de Don Juan de Castro de Lope de Vega*.

even notes that “Es evidente que Lope cree que los muertos y los vivos tienen unos derechos y unas responsabilidades recíprocos, y que la frontera que separa el mundo de los muertos del de los vivos es borrosa” (155). This play treats the theme of friendship (addressed through the folktale of the two friends) and the theme of what we owe to the dead (addressed through the folktale of the grateful dead) as two completely separate topics, while the three authors of *El mejor amigo el muerto* blend the two themes into one central relationship that is both a friendship and a living-dead connection. Here, the relationship between Don Juan and Tibaldo need not be a true friendship, and indeed it is not. While the relationship between Don Juan and Rugero is founded on love and likeness and any mutual kindness or generosity is born out of that caring foundation, the relationship between Don Juan and Tibaldo is incredibly transactional; mutual kindness or generosity is not a byproduct of their friendship but is in fact its only element.

The transactional nature of the relationship begins while both men are still living. Don Juan meets Tibaldo as he attempts to flee Galicia after his stepmother’s confession of her attraction to him. Don Juan is seeking passage abroad by ship, and although the ship’s captain is uninterested in allowing the Spaniard aboard, Tibaldo secures him a place. This immediately indebts Don Juan to Tibaldo in what I will refer to as an economy of kindness. Tibaldo has done Don Juan a favor, and, as a morally upright man, Don Juan now owes Tibaldo his kindness in return. These characters feel *indebted* to one another, which drives the continuance of their relationship. This is not unlike the friendships of utility described by Aristotle, in which a man loves his friend only so long as he can be useful to him. These men are friends because the other has already been useful to them, and they feel an obligation to repay that kindness. While utility is not the explicit motivation for Don Juan’s generosity in paying for Tibaldo’s burial and masses, his actions create an implication that a kind man deserves kindness in return. The small act of kindness of ensuring Don Juan’s passage on this ship begins the series of generous interactions (or transactions) between the men.

The repayment of this kindness engages what I will refer to as the economy of haunting, borrowing the term from Jodey Castricano, who notes that the French term *revenant* “bring[s] to mind the theme

of one returned from the dead and all that this implies as well as how that theme is bound to a certain economy: they have affinities with *revenue* and *revenir*” (11). The burial of the dead is something owed to them, something important that will ensure their eternal peace and prevent the unrest exemplified by a ghost. The irony of the grateful dead stories is that the dead man is so grateful to receive the proper burial that he is owed that the ghost is created anyway. We can therefore surmise that it is an imbalance in the economy that creates the ghost; the lack of burial when it is owed by a family member or friend (a debt of the living to the dead) is as likely to create a ghost as the unexpected burial by a party not responsible to the dead (a debt of the dead to the living). When Don Juan finds Tibaldo dying on the English shore where they have been shipwrecked, his determination to spend the last of his money on the man’s burial and masses for his soul ensures the dead man’s indebtedness to him in this economy of haunting.

Tibaldo’s repayment creates, again, a further transaction; he reappears as a ghost to strike a bargain with Don Juan, not merely to repay him with kindness. Tibaldo will help Don Juan in key moments, by providing him with what he needs in order to participate in a tournament for the English princess’s hand in marriage (and therefore the future inheritance of the kingdom), by ensuring that Rugero is able to step in and take Don Juan’s place in his wedding to Clarinda, and finally by ensuring his survival when Rugero invades Ireland to save him from Roberto’s kidnapping, *in exchange for* half of whatever material goods Don Juan acquires as a result of Tibaldo’s interference. The deal struck between the two, a typical moment in the grateful dead plot, emphasizes the transactional nature of their relationship. Tibaldo is not helping merely out of kindness, and he is especially not helping due to a sense of love or friendship towards Don Juan, but as a return of Don Juan’s generosity and with the intention of receiving future returns on his investment of kindness.

Tibaldo does not take his half of Don Juan’s achievements. He returns at the end of Part Two to remind Don Juan of their deal. The entirety of the two plays have proven that Don Juan is a man of his word, for whom an internal sense of honor and doing the right thing is so important that he is willing to do anything, including killing his own children, for those to whom he owes a debt of kindness, so it is

not a surprise that he is ready to give Tibaldo his due. This includes, of course, his wife. Don Juan has been able to marry Princess Clarinda because of the help of the ghost. He is prepared to kill her to offer half of her to Tibaldo when the ghost stops him. It was merely a test of his willingness to hold up his end of the deal. Tibaldo's return has once again reiterated the transactional nature of their relationship, but he eventually "gifts" his help to Don Juan. In other words, all Don Juan really had to do to earn the rewards the ghost brings is his initial act of kindness to the dead, reiterating the importance of the relationship between living and dead, and of the living recognizing and paying what they owe to those who have died.

*El mejor amigo el muerto* combines the notions of transactional generosity and friendship into one single relationship. Don Juan's relationship to the dead man, called Lidoro in both versions of *El mejor amigo el muerto*, is explicitly referred to as an ideal friendship, and it is compared to the imperfect friendships between living men. Don Juan's generosity and kindness are played up in comparison to the disloyalty of the characters surrounding him, especially Prince Roberto of Ireland. Both versions begin when Don Juan and his servant, Bonete, wash up on shore after the shipwreck that leads to Lidoro's death. Don Juan and the audience watch as Roberto finds Lidoro dying in his son's arms. When Lidoro reveals that he has debts that will prevent him from receiving proper burial rights, he begs Roberto, whom he has served loyally for many years, to pay off the debts and permit Lidoro's passage into the next world. Roberto selfishly denies not only that he owes Lidoro any kindness but that he could owe anyone anything at all. Don Juan, as we know, pays off these debts with all that he has managed to salvage from the shipwreck and funds Lidoro's burial. Don Juan and Roberto are immediately set up as men of opposite moral compasses; Roberto appears miserly where Don Juan is generous. Roberto refuses to participate in the kindness economy (and the economy of haunting) as he should, while Don Juan offers more than he is responsible for.

Don Juan therefore puts Lidoro in debt to him in the economy of the ghost and in the kindness economy. And here we have a major deviation of this story from the traditional grateful dead tale: Lidoro does not return to strike a bargain with Don Juan before interfering to his benefit. He never asks for half of whatever Don



Juan gains from their alliance; instead, he appears to Don Juan when the Spaniard is wrongfully imprisoned following a politically motivated skirmish. Roberto has come to England to propose marriage to Clarinda, who has recently inherited England's crown from her deceased father. Roberto, her cousin, intends to marry Clarinda and take over the rule of the kingdom, or, if Clarinda denies him, he will use his claim as the late king's nephew to oust her forcibly. Factions begin to form in London, with those who support Clarinda's claim opposing those who support Roberto's. Don Juan steps in to save the life of Clarinda's advisor, Astolfo, and in doing so appears with his sword drawn in the presence of the monarch, who assumes that he fights against her. He is immediately arrested and put in jail; Astolfo, who knows that Don Juan was defending Clarinda's claim to the throne and not opposing her, promises to vouch for him and get him out, but he does not. This is another failure in the kindness economy, since Arnesto acknowledges that he owes Don Juan his life but does not make a concerted effort to help him in return.

Instead, it is the ghost of Lidoro who appears in Don Juan's cell and helps him escape, though he first establishes that Don Juan was kind to him with no expectation of a return transaction. In the dark prison, Don Juan does not recognize Lidoro or know why he has appeared. Lidoro explains that he has come to repay a kindness performed by Don Juan, but Don Juan cannot remember to what kindness he might be referring. Lidoro notes that Don Juan's lack of memory means that he has performed his kind act "solamente por hacerlo" (*Tres ingenios* 3.578).<sup>96</sup> Only once he has confirmed that Don Juan does not know him does he decide to help. Our kindnesses, then, must be entirely selfless and bestowed with no thought for personal gain. The transactional nature of the human-ghost relationship that we saw in *Don Juan de Castro* is altered. There can be no thought of reciprocation, no expectation of a complete transaction. One must perform kindnesses for their own sake and out of true generosity. This is a key element of this play's conceptualization of what it means to be kind and a key characteristic of Don Juan's character.

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<sup>96</sup> Because no printed edition of either version of *El mejor amigo el muerto* includes line numbers, I cite page numbers instead.



When the ghost has confirmed that Don Juan does not expect his kindness, he grants it; furthermore, as I have explained, he expects no material reward in return. Instead, at the end of the play, he proves that he only wants Don Juan's regard. When everything has gone wrong—the Prince of Ireland has besieged the city of London and captured Clarinda, planning to force her into a marriage; Don Juan has been near-fatally wounded and rejected by those who remain in London for having lost Clarinda; there appears to be no hope of winning the battle—Don Juan wonders why his ghostly friend has not stepped in to help. When he wonders aloud, music and a voice from offstage respond: “Porque tú te olvidas del” (*Tres ingenios* 3.581).<sup>97</sup> In the expanded version of this scene, Don Juan entreats the voice to ask forgiveness of Lidoro, saying:

Pues dile que su piedad  
 Enmienda dé á mis errores;  
 Que en los peligros mayores  
 Se conoce la amistad. (3.581)<sup>98</sup>

In the relationship between Don Juan and Lidoro, utility and true friendship are combined. There is a transactional nature to their interactions here; Lidoro wants something from Don Juan before he will step in to help (and he does, functioning as a sort of *phasma ex machina* who sends an army of shades to defeat the Irish on Don Juan's behalf). However, the “transaction” that Lidoro wishes for is friendship; he wants to be thought of. He also wants to be remembered, as is due the dead. This is the ultimate joining of perfect friendship and the economy of kindness exemplified by the grateful dead.

The culmination of all of these relationships is that a Spanish man arrives in England made destitute by a shipwreck but ends up as the future king of the country. And it cannot be taken for granted that each of these plays stages this series of events at a politically significant time. Robert Henke notes that “national identity in the early modern period was often porous, hybrid, and dialogically

<sup>97</sup> This exact same line also appears in the earlier version of *El mejor amigo el muerto* (Calderón et. al. 3.487).

<sup>98</sup> In the earlier version of *El mejor amigo el muerto*, which contains a drastically shorter third act, no such line appears.

developed in concert with ‘foreign’ national/regional identities” and that “theater was a particularly rich medium for exploring transnational and multiple national identity” (3). If that is the case here, then we can understand that these Spanish dramaturgs are developing their national identities as Spaniards in opposition to the English (and Irish) portrayed in these plays, with the Spaniards defined by their kindness and selflessness, and the English by their treachery and self-centeredness.

It should also be noted that these plays present a sort of fictional history, perhaps allowing for an element of wish fulfillment when placing a Spaniard onto the historical English throne. While there is no specific historical context for this play, as none of the political events follow those recorded by history and the existence of a Don Juan in the Castro line is also ahistorical, Joan Oleza notes that the events, which decidedly did not occur, “podría[n] situarse a principios del siglo XII” (237), while also explaining that “Las dos comedias son tan inexactas como ricas en vagas resonancias históricas. Casi nada es exactamente como fue, pero todo suena como si hubiera sido” (233). Stone presents two interesting interpretations of the implications of the play, first noting that it “may be read as a kind of mystical response to the loss of the *Armada Invencible*” (260) since Don Juan’s brother’s name, Rugero de Moncada, is very similar to the captain Hugo de Moncada, who was shot and killed at a critical moment in the battle for Calais in 1588. He also proposes that Don Juan’s status as the heir to the English throne by the end of the *comedias* “recasts history as it was supposed to have been, recalling a plan made by Don Juan de Austria in 1587 to invade, marry Mary Queen of Scots, and wrest the throne from Elizabeth. The historical Don Juan took ill and died before he could carry out his plan. Is the play’s Don Juan, then, *his* ghost?” (260).

Zaida Vila Carneiro notes that although Spain and England have a long and complex history with one another, there are periods of calm; she points to the beginning of the seventeenth century, when *Don Juan de Castro* is supposed to have been written, as one such calm period. Lope’s version of this story is therefore less directly confrontational towards the English than *El mejor amigo el muerto* is several decades later. As Stone describes, “When it comes to English issues, Lope’s combination of history and artistry is, like

Shakespeare's, indirectly allusive" (251). Contrasted with *Don Juan de Castro*, *El mejor amigo el muerto* paints a much more severe picture of its British and Irish characters. Vila Carneiro points to 1623, which we can judge to be between the composition of Lope's pair of plays and the various versions of *El mejor amigo el muerto*, "como punto de inflexión no solo en las relaciones anglo-españolas, sino también en su reflejo literario; de manera que las composiciones amables dejan paso a una representación más agresiva de la nación enemiga" (149). Namely, she points out that after this point the English are often portrayed as heretics or blasphemers, due to religious differences. While those specific words are not used in this play and in fact religion is not explicitly mentioned, there are repeated references to Don Juan's "piedad" which we could understand as compassion or as piety and Christian behavior in contrast to the English and Irish lack of kindness demonstrated by the likes of Roberto and Arnesto.

Roberto and Arnesto are primary examples of how *El mejor amigo el muerto* depicts its non-Spanish characters. Roberto is markedly crueler than his counterpart in Lope's plays; he refuses to help Lidoro in his time of ultimate need and behaves so abominably to Clarinda that she is pushed to ask at one point if he intends to be her lover or her enemy. These are characters to whom he presumably owes some gratitude or affection, and he treats them needlessly badly. He is also, as described by Lidoro, the perfect opposite to Don Juan. He lacks all the qualities that Don Juan embodies, and in fact he personifies their opposites. Arnesto, meanwhile, is the example of the treacherous friend. He turns not only on Clarinda, whose claim to the throne he claims to support at the beginning of the play; by the end of the play he is setting siege to London with Roberto and the Irish army. He is also held in direct comparison to the ghost of Lidoro when considering virtue and friendship in this play. Don Juan has saved Lidoro's soul by paying off his debts and ensuring his burial and has saved Arnesto's life in the riots in London; both men, therefore, owe Don Juan an incredible debt of kindness. Only Lidoro will repay it. Campión Larumbe explains the central theme of this play as "el de los falsos amigos de la tierra frente a los amigos verdaderos del cielo" (64). Lidoro is the false friend, who promises Don Juan his loyalty as repayment for his life but fails to contribute to the economy of kindness in any way. These two men are made

into foils to the true friends, Don Juan and Lidoro, whose friendship is based on their goodness and their exchanges of generosity.

In either telling of Don Juan's story, the moral superiority of the Spaniard shines through. González highlights the religious aspect of Lope's protagonist's behavior, saying "La caridad de don Juan se entiende como ideal cristiano y caballeresco de perfección moral, recuérdese que él la practica no sólo en Rugero sino también en Tíbaldo" (199). Meanwhile, Wardopper interprets the morality of both Don Juan and Rugero as primarily patriotic: "los valores espirituales presentes a los espectadores son mayoritariamente sociales y patrióticos, y no religiosos" (156). Whether we foreground the role of religion in the construction of oppositional national identities between the Spanish and English at this time or focus solely on the patriotism displayed by the gentlemen, these plays create a subtle, or not so subtle in the case of *El mejor amigo el muerto*, suggestion that the Spanish are of better moral character than the English, and that to have a Spaniard in line for the English throne would be an incontestable victory for goodness.

The moral perfection of Don Juan de Castro, in all his versions, builds him a productive friendship with the ghost. It is this relationship, born of Don Juan's kindness and his recognition of his responsibility to those around him, be they living or dead, that permits him to take the English throne. When he marries Clarinda, the oppositional worlds of England and Spain are united, albeit in a fictionalized past. The morality of each of these plays is founded on the economy of kindness, and in particular the generous treatment of the dead, which will reap continual rewards. The story of Don Juan de Castro deals with the question of what we owe to each other. These plays seem to suggest that we should strive to be selfless and compassionate, while simultaneously warning that others will not likely treat us in kind. They have presented what I have referred to as a kindness economy: the notion that a selfless act should reap the reward of friendship and kindness in return.

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## INSIDE OR OUTSIDE?: FREEDOM VS. SECURITY IN *POR EL SÓTANO Y EL TORNO*

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**Abstract:** In Tirso de Molina's *Por el sótano y el torno*, Jusepa and the family's slave Polonia team up to thwart her planned marriage to an ancient *perulero*. Opposing her is her sister Bernarda, a widow who is concerned about the family's finances. They come to Madrid to a house owned by the *perulero* with limited outside contact. When a rich noble falls for Jusepa, the stage is set for her escape from the trap represented by the house. Using this conflict as his starting point, Tirso explores a number of contradictions embedded in Spanish society. Primarily, the contrast between love and financial security, which is an explicit point of conflict between the sisters. Additionally, the work contrasts Spain and Portugal, freedom and slavery, and social class distinctions. The play uses the *perulero*'s house as a metaphor for the various conflicts. The house, closed off to all except the women and their servants, is actually much more permeable than described. As the title indicates, the house has multiple entry points, some more legitimate than others. In my article, I consider how the house becomes the physical representation of the two competing worlds, as expressed through a conflict of ideas, actions, and symbols.

**Resumen:** En *Por el sótano y el torno* de Tirso de Molina, Jusepa y Polonia, el esclavo de la familia, se unen para frustrar su matrimonio

planeado con un anciano perulero. En oposición a ella está su hermana Bernarda, una viuda preocupada por la economía de la familia. Vienen a Madrid a casa del perulero con limitado contacto con el exterior. Cuando un rico noble se enamora de Jusepa, el escenario está listo para que escape de la trampa que representa la casa. Utilizando este conflicto como punto de partida, Tirso explora una serie de contradicciones incrustadas en la sociedad española. Principalmente, el contraste entre el amor y la seguridad económica, que es un punto explícito de conflicto entre las hermanas. Además, la obra contrasta España y Portugal, la libertad y la esclavitud y las distinciones entre clases sociales. La obra utiliza la casa del perulero como metáfora de los diversos conflictos. La casa, cerrada a todos excepto a las mujeres y sus sirvientes, es en realidad mucho más permeable de lo que se describe. Como indica el título, la casa tiene múltiples puntos de entrada, algunos más legítimos que otros. En mi artículo, considero cómo la casa se convierte en la representación física de los dos mundos en competencia, expresados a través de un conflicto de ideas, acciones y símbolos.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** *Por el sótano y el torno*, Tirso de Molina, freedom, parallelism, female protagonist, disguise, slavery / *Por el sótano y el torno*, Tirso de Molina, libertad, paralelismo, protagonista femenina, disfraz, esclavitud

In *Por el sótano y el torno*, Tirso de Molina makes use of a constant comparison between various types of enclosures and open spaces to represent the two worlds available to the protagonists. Within the play, Doña Bernarda and Doña Jusepa struggle with each other and their circumstances to determine whether they will live free lives out in the open, or whether Jusepa will be trapped inside a cold loveless marriage. As the play progresses this struggle moves from an initial theme of confrontation and duality towards an eventual resolution centered around a joining of the two worlds and a reconciliation between the sisters.

The opening scene starts *en media res* as the carriage bringing the two sisters, Jusepa and Bernarda, to Madrid overturns on a muddy riverbank. They are soon rescued by Don Fernando, setting the play's



action in motion, while also establishing the operating metaphor. In this initial scene, we are presented with a number of elements that will later take on symbolic significance. The actual accident occurs offstage and the stage directions have the group enter in the following order: Don Fernando, Doña Bernarda (unconscious in his arms), Doña Jusepa, and then Polonia (stage direction after 1.25). We learn from Don Fernando's later explanation that by the time he arrived, Doña Jusepa and Polonia had extricated themselves from the overturned coach, but he was forced to go in and recover the unconscious Doña Bernarda (1.681-702). In fact, the words Polonia uses during the rescue are "¡Rompan ese encerado!" (1.23). While not particularly portentous at first, this scene establishes the play's interior/exterior dynamic that guides the remainder of the work and delineates the two worlds available to the sisters: one is that of freedom and agency, the other one of passivity and enclosure.

The key element is the portrayal of Doña Bernarda, the eldest sister. Bernarda represents the calculation that early modern women in Spain had to make with regards to status, wealth, and love. Fernando's breaking of her "encerado" and her forcible removal is both a violation of norms and the means for her escape. Tirso will play with this idea of escape and breaking through into enclosed spaces repeatedly throughout the text. The fact that she is unconscious during the process alludes both to her symbolic escape from a deathlike existence as well as to the fact that she is unable to act for herself and must rely on others to bring about her own salvation. In contrast, both Polonia and Doña Jusepa are able to free themselves without aid. Within the play, Doña Bernarda represents the self-limiting aspect of early modern cultural expectations. In contrast, Doña Jusepa symbolizes the youthful desire to find love and a "happy ending" (like those often found in the *Comedia*). We can view these as representations of Pragmatism contrasted with Idealism.

Upon arrival in Madrid, the sisters are immediately installed in a house owned by Jusepa's aged fiancé, a *perulero*. The house is intended to limit contact with the outside world and various eyes watch the sisters to enforce their isolation. As the play progresses, Jusepa and the family's Moorish slave Polonia will team up to thwart her planned marriage. Bernarda, a widow herself, is much more preoccupied with the family's financial situation and believes that

Jusepa's marriage to the *viejo*, followed by a rich widowhood is the best option available to the two sisters (1.996-1002).

From this initial setting, Tirso explores a number of contradictions embedded in Spanish society using the house and its permeability as a symbol for issues of honor and appearance.<sup>99</sup> The focus of this work is on conflict surrounding the purpose and justification for marriage. The contrast between love and financial security is an explicit point of contention between the two sisters.<sup>100</sup> The *perulero*'s house acts as a metaphor for the two sides of the various conflicts. In each case, the exterior represents progress and freedom, while the interior represents limited options and distasteful choices. In each case Tirso highlights the contrasts between the two worlds.

From the outset, the conflict between love and financial security is made explicit. When Don Fernando asks Polonia about her mistress, Polonia provides a detailed breakdown of the sisters' origins, marital state, reasons for traveling to Madrid, and financial status. She adds that the marriage is purely for financial benefit, volunteering that the agreement includes a dowry of 30,000 ducats with an additional 10,000 ducats going to Doña Bernarda for her role as "tercera" (1.85). In her narration, Polonia links herself to Doña Jusepa and the house, telling Don Fernando:

Doña Bernarda  
va a Madrid, en cuya villa  
el viejo le ha puesto casa  
y mil galas le envió.  
Soy esclava suya yo;  
y, entretanto que se casa,  
dicen que Doña Jusepa  
tan encerrada ha de estar,  
que el sol no la ha de mirar  
por más entradas que sepa; (1.101-10)

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<sup>99</sup> Laura Dolfi notes in her 1973 initial study of the play that the basic premise follows that of Cervantes's *El celoso extremeño*. However, the conclusion and message are distinct. See pp. 76.

<sup>100</sup> Additionally, the work contrasts Spain and Portugal, as well as freedom and slavery, and social class distinctions. Limitations of space prevent me from discussing them here.

Jusepa comes to share Polonia's status. Both are stripped of agency, denied freedom of choice and movement, and controlled by Doña Bernarda. More importantly for the development of the plot, Doña Bernarda also lives a circumscribed life. As Polonia highlights in her soliloquy, the house and the restrictions placed on it are the *perulero's* doing. The fact that Bernarda's future freedom is dependent on the *perulero's* silver (1.88-91), reduces her to acting as an enforcer of the absent bridegroom's will. It is with and against this dynamic that the sisters will struggle throughout the play.

As the play shifts its focus to Madrid, Don Fernando meets his close Portuguese friend, Don Duarte, at an inn, just as the sisters and their retinue arrive at their new house. Thanks to the logic of the *Comedia*, the two dwellings face each other from across the street and serve as inverted mirrors of each other. The inn, under Mari-Ramírez, is open and is a space where “restalla la alegría de la conversación de los galanes con la posadera” (Pagnotta 254), with the initial dialog around the proprietress highlighting this openness using multiple sexual references, including allusions to Mari-Ramírez's function as a procuress (1.183-87, 1.247), the removal of clothing (1.196-98), a discussion of available women (1.215-22), and Mari-Ramírez's past as a prostitute (1.224-29).

In contrast, the home for the sisters is new and pristine, with white walls. It also comes with a *torno* that will block out all visitors to the point that “No ha de mirarlas / el sol, ni aun para alumbrarlas (1.324-25). Bernarda's resigned comment, “No hay prebenda sin pensión” (1.326), reenforces the convent-like nature of the house as well as again linking her choices with financial realities. Bernarda makes the comparison to a nunnery explicit, telling Jusepa “entretanto que no venga / el capitán que te adora, / has de ser monja” (1.379-81), causing her sister to break into tears. Santillana, who is employed by the *perulero*, is likewise barred from the upper spaces, leaving the women alone and isolated, but under the eye of a servant who is beholden to the homeowner and not the sisters.

The contrast that Tirso has established—an open male dominated space filled with sexual possibilities, across the street from a virtual convent (or tomb), white, sealed, silent, and under constant observation—is one that will almost immediately be undermined (later in the play literally so), as the virginal space is quickly penetrated

in a number of ways. This clearly sexual symbolism will become more pronounced as the space underneath the two houses becomes a space of union (Halkhoree, “La experimentación dramática” 369-70).

In so doing, Tirso creates a duality that reflects cultural assumptions and expectations of the period, while his undermining of the same signals the reality that lies beneath these ideals. Where Dolfi sees this as a contrast between the new, more open world of the court and that of the more enclosed traditional Spanish world (“Introducción” 29), Alonso Zamora Vicente attributes it to the inward-looking elements of the Spanish baroque (40), and P.R.K. Halkhoree views this contrast as symbolic of the corruption of nature through greed (“Satire and Symbolism” 379), in my view, this contrast is primarily tied to the concept of freedom. Dolfi is correct in her observation that the contrast is between an open and an enclosed world. However, I understand the contrast as symbolic of individual freedom versus a competition between elements of Spanish culture. One anomalous aspect of this play is that there is no actual authority figure present on stage. Instead, we have proxies that maintain the dynamic, but in both the case of Doña Bernarda and of Don Luis, their ultimate goals do not align well with that of the absent *perulero*. Thus, the dynamic is more internalized than we might expect from a straightforward cultural conflict.

Once the inn/house contrast has been established, Tirso immediately begins to undermine this distinction as Doña Bernarda, who still feels weak from the accident, sends for a bloodletter. Don Fernando, overhearing this, runs off only to return dressed as a barber, whereupon he is ushered into the house.

It is important to note a structural effect that Tirso has built into this text. A number of key scenes throughout the play are represented on stage through differing viewpoints, creating a Rashomon-like kaleidoscopic representation that Laura Dolfi sees as providing “tre funzioni: informativa [...], integrativa e iterativa” [three functions: informative [...], integrative, and iterative] (*Studio Sulla Comedia* 28). We first see the ensuing meeting between Fernando and Bernarda through the eyes of Don Luis, the disloyal nephew of Jusepa’s ancient fiancé, Don Gómez. Luis intends to woo and marry Doña Jusepa for himself and so watches the house jealously. His spying represents the first invasion of the house. As Don Fernando enters, Luis puts

his eye to the window and peeks in (stage direction after 1.450). This peeping immediately thwarts the *perulero*'s efforts to close off the windows with “una red a la ventana, / que puede cerner lantejas” (1.334-35) protecting it from prying eyes. Don Luis is initially fooled by the false bloodletter, until the true barber conveniently appears on stage to complain of the usurpation of his identity and the loss of his tools. Luis's rage, misnamed as concern for Jusepa's loss of honor, leads him to try and force the doors— “Haz pedazos esas puertas” (1.499)— further violating the protected space his uncle has so recently created. His run-in with Don Fernando leads to a sword fight as well as a confrontation with Doña Bernarda.

The stage direction's description of Bernarda, as she comes to the door in response to the noise, highlights the vulnerability of the house as a place of safety and hints at her own sexuality trapped within societal constraints. We read “*Salen DOÑA BERNARDA, en faldellín carmesí y en cabello y Santillana*” (stage direction after 1.534). Seeing her in revealing clothing, Luis focuses upon the red color of her overskirt, taking it as a symbol of her dishonesty and lust: “granada que por defuera / cubre cáscara grosera / y tiene el alma rubí” (1.548-50). This red is also symbolically linked to the bloodletter that he correctly implies is a suitor “también tendrá barberos / la medicina de amor” (1.545-46). What a few minutes ago was a white convent is now an open space with the red of blood and passion as the dominant color. This contrast between the stated purpose of the house and the reality within it will be a continual theme that highlights the difficulty of separating the sisters from human desires.

As soon as Don Luis departs, we are provided with a second viewpoint as Doña Bernarda turns on Santillana. His defense provides us with another perspective as he tries to prove his innocence. He starts from a concrete event, “hallé en su tienda al maeso” (1.591), quickly moving to hearsay, “iba a echar a un tabardillo” (1.592) and then to pure invention, calling the bloodletter “sangrador de palacio” (1.597) and ascribing to Don Fernando a variety of exaggerated characteristics, finishing with “por dondequiera que pasa / le llaman la ‘Extremaunción’” (1.610-11). Doña Bernarda grudgingly accepts his assurances, although Fernando's hesitation to actually bleed her, a fact both Fernando and she mention separately, concerns her.

We are provided with a third, more detailed, depiction of the event as Don Fernando returns and regales Don Duarte and Mari-Ramirez with his exploits. He starts with his version of the opening scene, where, in contrast to the more prosaic narrative presented previously, he wraps the events in bombastic, baroque, mythological references and poetic allusions, rewriting history to fit into a narrative more suited for a literary lover than the more mundane descriptions provided on stage and by Santillana.

His monologue weaves two key events into a continuous thread. While for the rest of the play's characters the accident at the inn and the arrival of the false bloodletter are disjointed, for Don Fernando the accidental meeting in Viveros is the direct precursor for all that follows. We learn that he bribed his way into the bloodletter's shop and assumed his identity just in time for Santillana to come looking for him. In this narrative we get a second peek at the interior of the sisters' home. Unlike that provided by Don Luis, this description is much more intimate and sexually charged.

As soon as Don Fernando penetrates the walls of the household, we are presented with a tableau described as if it were a still life. Bernarda is located on top of a sumptuous bed with her locks left loose and "licenciosos" (1.836) followed by a description of her nightgown that implies partial nudity (1.843-48). After she bares her arm and he strokes it to raise the vein, he is saved from the actual bloodletting, a symbolic sexual penetration, by Don Luis's pounding on the door, and he makes his escape as is described in the original scene (1.513-18).

As the various participants furnish their versions of the event, two points stand out. Of note is that we see very little of Doña Bernarda's perspective. Other than the short exchange with Santillana, her thoughts are opaque. Secondly, our understanding of the visit is modified with each retelling. At first we are presented with the perspective of an outsider, both as spectators and through Don Luis by proxy. Don Luis, a character newly introduced to the play, has not entered the house. He is the furthest removed from everyone, having had no interaction with the other characters at all. What he sees is, at first, a mystery that prompts him to peep through the window. It is the barber's arrival that alerts him to Don Fernando's deception. Santillana's version is more proximate. He

has directly interacted with Don Fernando, but his exaggerated description makes it clear that he is an unreliable narrator and that Doña Bernarda, and by extension the audience, should not trust him. Finally, Don Fernando, the only one who actually penetrates the house, provides us with a firsthand account of events, and enters into the sister's private space. Nevertheless, the overly poetic narration also casts the entire episode in doubt. Since the events occur offstage, the audience is left in uncertainty as to the veracity of the final two narrations, while the first's limited point of view leaves us with little concrete information.

These narrations serve to delineate the spaces of the *Comedia*: outside, tangential, and interior. These same spaces function metaphorically on the bodies of the two sisters as well. So far, it is Doña Bernarda who embodies this metaphor. She was completely cloaked upon her arrival, partially disclosed/dis-clothed both following the overturning of the coach, with its subsequent opening, and at the door as she is accosted by Don Luis. It is only within her room that she is presented as open, free, and unbound.<sup>101</sup>

While the first act is represented in the open air and streets of Madrid, in the second act we are invited into the sisters' private space. This is also a movement towards more candor in the calculations inherent in Jusepa's planned marriage. The opening moments of the act invert the previous use of space as the sisters quarrel over events occurring outside. In this case, the conflict is over Jusepa's exposure of her face as she stumbled returning home from a dawn mass. This exposure, to a man we will later learn is Don Duarte, is a symbolic echo of the opening of the sisters' home to Don Fernando in the previous act. As the second act opens, questions of propriety, exposure, sexual desire, and cold financial calculations become explicit.

When she tripped on the uneven cobbles of Madrid's streets, Jusepa was caught by a young gentleman, who gained a glimpse of her face. Doña Bernarda's scolding claim, that this was a gateway to inappropriate attention and behavior (2.972-74), leads to a vicious argument in which Bernarda accuses her sister of deliberately flirting:

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<sup>101</sup> It should be noted that the chromatism within the play also echoes this pattern, with the women gaining more color-related description as the scenes move from exterior to interior.



[...] Ya te vio  
el que la mano te dio,  
y también se la darás  
de esposa, si llega a verte; (2.992-95)

and then immediately pivots to the financial realities that define their lives: “que poco importa perder, /de un perulero mujer, / cien mil pesos” (2.996-98). This calculation is reiterated as she concludes, asking rhetorically, “¿Tan malos son cien mil pesos, / que los arriesgas no más / que al descuido de un chapín?” (2.1010-12). It is this financial constraint that shapes Doña Bernarda’s thoughts and actions, and it is not until a pathway towards financial freedom opens later in the act that she is willing to consider other alternatives. In practice, she is caught in one world, that of financial necessity, without having any understanding of the possibility of another.

For her part, Doña Jusepa attacks her sister’s hypocrisy, bringing up the accident that opened the play and the fact that she was rescued by the same man who had just entered the house in the guise of the barber.<sup>102</sup> Her concluding remarks drive to the heart of the conflict between the sisters:

Yo tropecé, tú caíste;  
diste el brazo y yo la mano.  
Cuando alguna ocasión haya,  
que no habrá si nos guardamos,  
iguales las dos estamos:  
uno por otro se vaya. (2.1061-66)

Doña Bernarda is determined to repeat her own experience with her sister, perpetuating the cycle. She can see no other way out of poverty than to sell Doña Jusepa as she herself was sold and hope for an early widowhood, a delayed freedom, and a second chance to find love. Doña Jusepa’s bitter recriminations hint at Doña Bernarda’s own desires, implicit in the sensual description

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<sup>102</sup> This is the third time that the opening scene has been presented within the play. It is also noteworthy that Doña Jusepa has identified the false bloodletter as the same man who rescued her sister, hinting that she is better able to see the larger picture.



Don Fernando provided, presenting the sisters as each other's impediment to freedom.

In this moment, Tirso shifts our perception of the structure of the play and the nature of the two sisters. Until this point, the sisters have been presented as opposing figures, one cold and one warm; one pragmatic, the other romantic; one cruel, the other kind. As this argument plays out, we begin to see that the sisters are not opposites, but are instead reflections of each other, offset by time. Where the play had been initially structured around paralleled contrasts, with the primary ones being the Bernarda-Jusepa, House-Inn, and Interior-Exterior dualities, we now perceive that these are actually parts of a spectrum. As we will see shortly, the Inn and the House are physically connected, Interior and Exterior are more ambiguous concepts than first presented, and, of course, the sisters are echoes of each other, not opposites. This also hints to the audience that the worlds of love and financial stability are not as opposed as Bernarda assumes.

This change becomes evident as Doña Bernarda sends Santillana out to discover more about the fraudulent barber. Her initial anger and accusations quickly shift to enquiry and hope.

Si es caballero, livianos  
pensamientos, bien podéis  
disculparos cuando deis  
puerta a amores cortesanos. (2.1167-70)

In contrast to her dictates to her sister, she is willing to be more flexible with propriety if it yields the desired result. As the play progresses she will be forced to face this apparent hypocrisy and come to terms with the tension between her desire for financial stability and the pressures of love and familial bonds.

This dynamic progresses as visitors begin to enter the house. In this portion of the play, Tirso highlights the thematic connection between material goods and love as Doña Bernarda buys new clothing, telling herself

Este traje admite el mundo;  
será el cambray, que no pesa,  
manteles para la mesa  
del matrimonio segundo. (2.1197-1200)

Her newfound openness is a deliberate contrast to the rules she imposes on her sister and signals that her enclosure is coming to an end, while highlighting her hypocrisy. As the *Comedia* audience will surely anticipate, Doña Jusepa will soon find a way out of her enclosure and marry to her liking. Thus the two sisters are matched and opposed simultaneously. Because the course of the plot is predictable, we, as the audience, know that both sisters will find love with their *galanes*, but at the same time, the forced hiding that Jusepa endures, both within the house and within her own clothing, is a sharp contrast with Bernarda's longing for clothing that "admite el mundo," a difference that Jusepa comments to Polonia shortly thereafter (2.1252-58).

Whatever enclosure the home was intended to provide disappears as the play reaches its midpoint. First, Santarén, dressed as a peddler, wanders into the house after Polonia leaves the door open. This immediately begs the question as to whether this was accidental, "descuidéme" (2.1296), or deliberate on the part of Polonia, since she seems to know that there was a letter waiting for Doña Jusepa within and refers to the container as a Trojan horse (2.1348-49).

Polonia, like all the women in the play, desires freedom, and it is entirely possible that the open door not only symbolizes the opening of the sisters to outside contact, but also signals Polonia's own desires for liberty. Polonia's response to Jusepa's desire to eject Santarén ["la ocasión abrió la puerta; / no saldrá a mi parecer / tan presto, que es regatona." (2.1311-13)] highlights her disregard for the *viejo's* and Doña Bernarda's strictures and her alignment with Jusepa's desire for freedom.

The following scene completes the realignment of the two sisters from opposing to complementary roles as Doña Bernarda also receives a letter from her suitor. As is the case with Don Duarte's letter, this one comes symbolically tied to money and goods, and continues Tirso's leitmotif of the mercenary aspects of love and marriage. The letter, for all its baroque linguistic posturing, is in fact a direct proposal with concrete terms. Don Fernando concludes his missive with a promise of marriage, a specific reference to his wealth, and his name (2.1495-1500). With this promise made, Doña Bernarda is given a path forward. Financial reality has always been her motivating factor. Even her arguments for her sister's marriage

are based on financial gain and imposing a solution to their financial straits that while not ideal is bearable.

It is important to remember that this note was supposedly a bill that Mari-Ramírez was expected to pay out of her dead husband's accounts. Don Fernando's love letter comes in the guise of a financial statement, and Doña Bernarda reads it with this in mind. Bernarda's pecuniary orientation does not change, even as she discovers that the text is not what she had expected. This love letter hidden under the cover of a bill is symbolic of Doña Bernarda's mercenary instincts and true priorities. Although she wraps her actions in the language of propriety and social expectations, she is represented as a merchant who is unwilling to devalue merchandise until payment has been received in full, or as Halkhoree puts it, "she is the prisoner of another passion: her love for the *viejo's diez mil pesos*" (Satire and Symbolism 377).

Her response highlights this.

¡Seis mil ducados! Hoy junto  
a mi amor, honra y provecho.  
Su talle me ha satisfecho,  
Aragón es su apellido.  
¿Quién duda que es bien nacido?  
¡Seis mil ducados de renta!  
Mejor me sale la cuenta  
de lo que yo había entendido. (2.1503-10)

She bookends her observations about love, attractiveness, and social standing with the exclamation "¡Seis mil ducados!" While the other elements are desirable, it is money that occupies her mind and imagination.

Throughout the play, Doña Bernarda has attempted to secure the sister's financial status as a prelude to being able to do the things she desires. With an escape provided by Don Fernando, she is finally willing to reconsider her previous plan —"El capitán se dé priesa / o no logrará su enero" (2.1515-16)— and allow her sister the opportunity to seek her own desires as well.

This moment, occurring close to the midpoint of the work, signals an important shift in the play's dynamic. Although Doña Bernarda will still act as a blocking character to her sister, the

actual conflict is mostly resolved. Once she feels free of the press of financial exigency, Doña Bernarda is able to consider other options and to concede Doña Jusepa her freedom. The remainder of the play focuses on uniting the various lovers, both through the symbolic union of the two residences, as well as by uniting the narratives.

As the play reaches its midpoint and shifts the work's dominant metaphor from conflicting, juxtaposed, spaces to a focus on unification, Don Duarte recounts his encounter with the two sisters. This is the second telling of the early morning stumble and the first narrative that presents events from Don Duarte's point of view. As was the case in the multiple narrations of the coach accident and Don Fernando's disguised entry into the house, the second narrative is longer and more poetic. This overly dramatic telling includes a wink to the audience as Don Duarte admits that such narrations are "hipérboles del amor" (2.1524), although he confesses his wish to experience these same "hipérboles."

His account removes the element of chance implied when the sisters quarreled over the meeting earlier in the act. Listening to his monologue, the audience learns that he made the choice to follow them and took advantage of Doña Jusepa's stumble to initiate contact. Furthermore, he also explains how he made use of Santarén to smuggle in a letter to her.

Don Duarte's account, like that of Don Fernando earlier, provides a narrative frame for actions that are originally presented as discrete, separate events. While the sisters see an accident, a false barber, an unexpected stumble, and two hidden letters as individual moments, the two *galanes* tie these events into a continuous progression. This latter point of view informs the audience of the larger picture, providing us with causality missing from the first telling. By unifying the narrative, there is a shift towards wholeness that reflects the change in the structural symbolism of the work, it also highlights the isolation and limitations of the sisters within their world. It is the men who are able to move about and act freely, who see the larger course of events, while the women are limited in perspective. Don Duarte's final comment as he closes the description of his actions serves to explicitly unite the two plotlines.

De dos hermanas los dos  
 a un tiempo somos amantes:  
 uno de otro imitación.  
 Una caída fue causa  
 de vuestra enajenación,  
 de la mía un estropezo.  
 ¿Qué semejanza mayor? (2.1678-84)

The two friends, who were reunited by chance, are now presented as echoes of each other as they coordinate their pursuit of the sisters who, as Jusepa has observed already, are “iguales las dos” (2.1065).

The unification continues as Santarén, following up on the letter that he left with Doña Jusepa, brings Don Duarte to the *torno* in a first attempt to allow the two to converse directly. Now that Doña Bernarda has a sense of hope and a plan to move forward, the only other true obstacle, despite the distractions that Tirso will add to the play, is the *viejo*, as represented by the house itself. The impending arrival of Doña Jusepa’s fiancé, mixed with the pressure that Polonia places on both of the lovers to get to the point and make a commitment— “Señor mío, / lo que importa es ir al caso” (2.1861-62)— pushes Don Duarte to have Don Fernando vouch for him so that Doña Jusepa can accept his marriage proposal. Instead of the anticipated Doña Jusepa, it is Doña Bernarda who is at the *torno* when Don Fernando arrives to plead Don Duarte’s case. As she converses with him, her realization of the situation —“Contra el amor no hay presidios” (2.1961) — is paired with a recognition of her role in hindering her sister’s happiness, as she calls herself “espantagustos” (2.1972).

This opens the door for a moment of self-reflection where Bernarda is forced to come to terms with her actions. She describes herself as “viuda de vidrio / tan delgado que se quiebra / a un tris y nos hunde a gritos (2.2023-25), and asks rhetorically

¿No tiene su alma en su cuerpo  
 la viuda? ¿Tan desvalido  
 anda un monjil en la corte  
 que falte, en años floridos,  
 quien se oponga a su baluarte? (2.2048-52)

As Maria del Carmen Sanchez Crespo Munoz observes, “en el fondo es una mujer frágil e insegura que reconoce que no está bien lo que hace” (341). This recognition is a key point in her development. In both of the quotes above, Doña Bernarda uses language that describes breaking barriers in reference to herself, followed immediately by opening the door of the *torno* (stage direction after 2.2090). This is the first time that the door has deliberately been opened to the suitors and despite the show provided for Santillana’s benefit, it symbolizes the conclusion of the sister’s isolation and a new openness to the outside world. All that remains is for the sisters to assure themselves of the validity of the offers of marriage and to find a face-saving way to accept them.

As the final act opens, the sisters once again bicker. This version of the argument is more personal than the previous one, with a focus on freedom.

JUSEPA: Hermana, yo no te entiendo:  
dejarte será mejor.  
Lo que yo te sé afirmar,  
es que deseo la venida  
de quien me ha de rescatar  
de este Argel, como la vida. (3.2178-82)

After Doña Jusepa storms off, Bernarda continues with the soul searching initiated at the end of the second act. She observes:

La codicia y la afición  
pelean dentro en mi pecho,  
y cada cual en derecho  
alega de su opinión.  
Tiene Jusepa razón  
.....  
y así combate me dan  
las barras del capitán,  
que pesan diez mil ducados.  
Convénceme el interés  
a guardalla y reprehendella,  
y la edad la inclina a ella  
al gallardo portugués.

.....  
 pues perdiendo diez mil pesos  
 no tengo con qué casarme. (3.2189-2208)

During the entire course of the play, Doña Bernarda has insisted on the primacy of wealth over love and has made clear that she is willing to sacrifice her sister to guarantee their fortune and her chance at a second marriage. In this soliloquy, although she still decides in favor of financial gain, she is willing to admit her motives to herself and acknowledge the costs she is imposing on her sister for her own benefit. Although this is not a moment of redemption for Bernarda, it is progress towards a greater humanity.

As the play moves towards its conclusion, Tirso breaks the sisters' isolation further as Doña Bernarda, upon hearing that Don Fernando is entertaining another woman, leaves her home to visit and chastise him in a transparent fit of jealousy. This scene is immediately followed by Santarén's arrival, where he announces that the inn and the sister's house are physically connected through the cellar. This connection completes the thematic movement from opposition to union and concretizes the growing similarity between the sisters and between their suitors.

It is not until Doña Jusepa, at Santarén's urging, takes the Portuguese style dress offered to her and escapes to the inn through the newly created basement entrance that both sisters are finally able to leave their cloister-like existence and experience the freedom the inn represents. Doña Bernarda, as a widow and the proxy authority figure, can leave through the main entrance and maintain her identity, while Doña Jusepa is forced to conceal hers. As is the case in *El amor médico*, Tirso uses language to provide the basis of this new identity as Jusepa uses Portuguese as part of her disguise as the Countess of Ficallo.<sup>103</sup> When Bernarda's identification of her sister is challenged by all present, she turns to Polonia for support.

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<sup>103</sup> The choice of the title is symbolic as well. The title was established in 1599 by Philip II for Francisca de Aragão, a former lady in waiting to the queen Catarina de Austria. Ficallo is very close to the Spanish border near an established crossing. Thus the title exists due to the Spanish monarchy, but is Portuguese. At the same time the location is almost literally at the crossroads between the two countries and cultures. Jusepa is Spanish and her assumed title is symbolic

Polonia's response is a masterful example of incrementation as she goes against the flow of the play by separating Doña Jusepa from herself. Her original "En nada descrepa / de ella" (3.3061-62) moves immediately to "Una señal / tiene que la diferencia" (3.3066-67), and then to a final "La circunferencia / de cara el engaño enseña, / aunque algo le corresponda" (3.3070-72). This rapid movement from identification to alienation ironically serves to unite Doña Jusepa with her desired spouse. When, in a scene reminiscent of *Los balcones de Madrid*, which Blanca de los Rios sees as a sister work (550), Doña Bernarda rushes back to the house to prove that the supposed countess is actually her sister, Doña Jusepa returns through the basement opening and awaits her sister's return. Once there, Polonia completes the separation between the Countess and Doña Jusepa stating

Repare vuesa merced  
 en esta fisonomía,  
 y verá la diferencia  
 de la dama parecida.  
 Mire esta aguileña cara,  
 las rosas de estas mejillas,  
 los rasgos de aquellos ojos,  
 la nariz no tan prolija  
 y conocerá su engaño. (3.3151-59)

This is enough to force Doña Bernarda to accept the claim. However all this roleplay becomes a distraction when the announcement of Doña Jusepa's fiancé's imminent arrival moots these efforts. This causes Jusepa to drop pretenses and declare herself to be married to Don Duarte, with Santarén and Mari-Ramírez serving as witnesses.

Once Doña Jusepa reveals the existence of the basement passageway, Doña Bernarda, realizing that Jusepa's enclosure was always as much a fantasy as the existence of the countess, is forced into an untenable situation. Her hope to sell her sister is no longer viable and so, after all the characters on stage beg her to accept Don

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of the union between the two countries, just as her disguise is a union between her desires, marriage to a Portuguese noble, and her current reality.



Fernando, she is finally willing to dispense with her previous plans and marry the man she desired.

This capitulation concludes the transformation from enclosure to openness and does so as Doña Bernarda is finally able to complete the mental journey from enforcer of enclosure and pseudo-father figure to sister and equal. The previously referred similarities between the sisters and between the suitors is concretized as they wed. As the wedding agreements occur, the two sisters reconcile. Doña Jusepa's "Tu esclava soy" (3.3257) is answered with Bernarda's "Yo tu hermana" (3.3257). With the sisters finally at peace and reconciled, the union of the characters is complete. Don Fernando and Don Duarte are now brothers-in-law, Santarén is guaranteed employment, and Polonia stays with the family as a free woman. Only Santillana, representative of the *viejo perulero*, and Mari-Ramírez, who as the *alcabueta* is always a freelancer, remain alone.

As has been observed, the play is full of repetition, parallels and doublings. But this final scene blends all these contrasts. Tirso originally paints the sisters as being a world apart from the men. They are cloaked, locked in, and circumscribed. However, the resolution brings the two worlds together by exposing and exploiting the gaps in the physical and metaphorical walls that guard the two women, finally uniting external and internal elements. The four initial individuals are now united through ties of marriage. The two houses are actually one interconnected structure, the false Portuguese noblewoman is now a real one as she marries Don Duarte, and the symbolic chains of Polonia's captivity change to the literal one offered in payment to Mari-Ramírez, offering freedom to the first and financial autonomy to the second.

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ESCENARIOS SIN LÍMITES /  
STAGES WITHOUT LIMITS



## BEHIND THE VEIL: ANTONIO ENRÍQUEZ GÓMEZ, KABBALAH, AND THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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**Abstract:** Antonio Enríquez Gómez, a Spanish expatriot living in the Iberian merchant enclaves of France, was wanted by the Inquisition as a relapsed *converso*. Though he spent more than a decade in exile (c. 1636-1649) as a practicing Jew, he returned to Spain (Sevilla) clandestinely and wrote *comedias de santos* for the theater under the name of Fernando de Zárate. This study explores how the playwright's exposure to Judaism abroad may have inflected his composition of *La escala de la gracia*, an Immaculate Conception play from the 1650s. In particular, I consider Lurianic Kabbalah, which had permeated Jewish spirituality in the seventeenth century, as an interpretive strategy that the poet may have utilized to encode, behind the veil of allegory, one message for Christian audiences and another for crypto-Jewish readers. The poet, himself an adept at crossing the boundary between worldviews, creates a work that transcends this world (the mundane) and unites it with the next (the sacred).

**Resumen:** La Inquisición buscaba a Antonio Enríquez Gómez, español ex-patriado que vivía en Francia entre las comunidades de mercaderes ibéricos, por converso relapso. Enríquez Gómez pasó más de una década en exilio (ca. 1636-1649) como judío practicante, no obstante, regresó clandestinamente a España (Sevilla) donde

escribió comedias de santos para los corrales con el seudónimo Fernando de Zárata. Este estudio investiga cómo su contacto con el judaísmo fuera de España podría haber influenciado la redacción de *La escala de la gracia*, una comedia de los años 1650 sobre la Inmaculada Concepción. En especial, se considera la cábala luriánica, la cual había penetrado tanto en la vida espiritual judía del siglo XVII, como estrategia hermeneútica que el poeta pudo haber usado para cifrar, detrás del velo de la alegoría, un mensaje para las audiencias católicas y otro para los lectores cripto-judíos. El poeta, un maestro de navegar entre distintos mundos religiosos, crea una obra que trasciende este mundo (lo mundanal) y lo une al otro (lo sagrado).

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Antonio Enríquez Gómez, Crypto-Judaism, Inquisition, Kabbalah, Immaculate Conception, Shekhinah / Antonio Enríquez Gómez, Cripto-judaísmo, Inquisición, Cábala, Inmaculada Concepción, Shejiná

The purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of reading Fernando de Zárata's *La escala de la gracia* through a crypto-Jewish lens. Zárata was the pseudonym of Antonio Enríquez Gómez, a poet/playwright of *converso* origin who fled to France in the late 1630s. The Inquisition's spies and informers repeatedly denounced him for returning to Judaism<sup>104</sup>. He wrote vigorously against the Inquisition while in exile and one informant even claimed "quel dicho Antonio Henríquez Gómez abía conpuesto una comedia en que ablaba mal de la fe, diciendo algunas cosas eréticas" (qtd. in Révah 522). Enríquez Gómez returned to Spain clandestinely in 1649-1650 and settled in Sevilla. There, under the name Zárata, he "was best known for his militantly Catholic comedias de santos" (McGaha 137). *La escala de la gracia* is one such play. It dramatizes the Immaculate Conception—the doctrine that holds that the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. The doctrine was seen as a badge of Spanish identity and

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<sup>104</sup> For biographical details I lean heavily on Révah, especially his appendix with 113 pages of documents transcribed from the Inquisition section of the Archivo Nacional Histórico (ANH) in Madrid.

seventeenth-century Spaniards defended Mary's immaculacy staunchly, perhaps as an extension of their obsessions with honor and blood purity<sup>105</sup>. How could Enríquez Gómez exalt a Jewish martyr in 1648, referring to Spain as an "horno de Babel" and "pueblo sin Dios" (*Romance* 163, 166), yet only a couple of years later write a convincing play about the Immaculate Conception? Can the *comedia* bridge the gap between these two seemingly irreconcilable worldviews?

Enríquez Gómez himself was certainly adept at moving between worlds: Catholic and Jewish, Spanish and French, balancing poetry and business, theater and life<sup>106</sup>. The Zárate plays, along with the poet's literary output during his French sojourn (1640s) and the Inquisition documents collected on him, point to an extraordinary double life between 1650 and his arrest in 1661. Early literary historians, such as Ramón de Mesonero Romanos and Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, maintained that the Zárate works could not possibly have been written by someone of Judeoconverso background<sup>107</sup>. I.S. Révah's research among the Inquisition files of the ANH in the 1960s proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the two names belonged to one writer. But critics are at odds over the nature of Enríquez Gómez's religious convictions in his final years. Glen Dille, for example, interpreted the Zárate plays as evidence of a final reconciliation with the Church ("Christian" 48). Other scholars square Enríquez Gómez's writing in exile (c.1636-1649) with his pseudonymous work of the 1650s by casting doubt on his Jewishness, reasoning that a Christian, too, could criticize the Inquisition (McGaha, Salomon). Still others might characterize the Zárate persona and his *comedias* as a strategy of deception, what Rafael González

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<sup>105</sup> Estrella Ruiz-Gálvez Priego notes that "el Inmaculismo alcanza un verdadero paroxismo en la España del siglo XVII" (217). Regarding honor and genealogy, Barbara Fuchs reminds us, "Normative, aristocratic male subjects in counter-Reformation Spain staked their identity on two basic tenets: honra (honor) and limpieza de sangre (blood purity)" (3).

<sup>106</sup> In addition to Révah, see Wilke ("Políticos") and Carrasco (esp. 53-54).

<sup>107</sup> On the debates about the identity of Fernando de Zárate between the early nineteenth century and the late twentieth, see Dille ("Antonio") and, more recently, Domínguez Paz.

Cañal has called “las máscaras de un converso,” an appropriately theatrical metaphor for describing this double life<sup>108</sup>.

By invoking Fernando de Zárata as a “mask” for Antonio Enríquez Gómez, critics affirm that Zárata was not just a *nom de plume*. It was a role to be played, much like Maese Pedro was for Ginés de Pasamonte in the second part of Cervantes’ *Quijote* (1615). Moreover, the *comedias* that Enríquez wrote in the persona of Zárata also navigate between worlds. As Carsten Wilke has noted in making the case for a dissident reading of an early Enríquez Gómez play (*La soberbia de Nembrot*), “theater allows for an intertextual and reception-oriented approach that is capable of exploring the author’s anticipation of (and response to) the simultaneous expectations of different types of audiences” (“Ark” 279). Enríquez Gómez, whether or not he was secretly Jewish, would have known the Immaculate Conception iconography and would have been thoroughly acquainted with his audience’s expectations for a play on the subject. Nevertheless, as Wilke reminds us, “there was an audience of Portuguese New Christians [in France] that considered Enríquez Gómez as a brother in faith and expected (or at least suspected) him of using the comedia as a channel through which to communicate heterodox ideas” (“Ark” 279-80)<sup>109</sup>. I make the case that Enríquez Gómez wrote *La escala de la gracia* in such a way that a Spanish Catholic audience would interpret it as a Christian play about the Immaculate Conception. And yet, the dramatist could also invite a Jewish or crypto-Jewish audience to interpret the play

<sup>108</sup> In addition to the article of that title by González Cañal (“Las máscaras”), see also Jesús Antonio Cid (282-83) and Jaime Galbarro: “El verdadero sentimiento religioso, fuera el que fuese, podía quedar perfectamente al margen, puesto que el objetivo de la obra no era necesariamente expresarlo” (252). Gitlitz notes the case of “an old crypto-Jewish woman in Braganza” who in 1929 told a French journalist that “although she had lots of Catholic religious imagery in her home, ‘it is to preserve appearances . . . we never look at them, they are not ours’” (612).

<sup>109</sup> Cid, for example, cites a 1649 letter from a Spanish diplomat in Venice alerting Spanish authorities to Benjamín Cordovero, a judaizante traveling under the name Don Alvaro de Silva and carrying a comedia “escrita por Don Antonio Enríquez, que está en París, y que, llevando ánimo de venderla, se podrá saver si alguno de los autores la ha comprado y descubrirle por este medio, porque tenga el castigo que merece quien quiere abusar de la misericordia del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición” (274).



differently, through the veil of allegory. It so happens, for example, that both Mary and Grace in Christian theology have some analogies in Judaism's Shekhinah, the divine presence, a biblical concept which was transformed by medieval and early modern Kabbalah into God's "quasi-independent feminine" aspect (Scholem 105). The dramatist certainly could have taken advantage of these analogies.

Allegory enables the dramatist to appeal to the double consciousness of a crypto-Jewish audience, while not alerting a Catholic audience to Jewish subtexts. Enríquez Gómez, as I will attempt to show, reverses the typological or figural allegory of the Christian tradition. Christian exegesis mines the stories of the "Old" Testament (i.e., the Hebrew scriptures) for prefigurations of the Christian salvation narrative<sup>110</sup>. Lope de Vega's Immaculate Conception play, *La limpieza no manchada* (1618), provides an example. Rather than dramatize the lives of Mary's parents (Anne and Joachim) to bring the doctrine to life on the stage, Lope stages a crisis of faith: St. Bridget has doubts about the Immaculate Conception. To help Bridget resolve this conflict, the character Alegoría takes the stage as "una mujer cubierto el rostro con un velo" (II, 127). She comes to reveal a secret to Saint Bridget. Alegoría's veil will be removed only once the secret is understood, so she stages a play on the story of Esther in order to explain the doctrine: "Hay en las letras divinas, / Brígida, muchos sentidos" (II, 133-34). Along with the literal "sentido" of the book of Esther from the Tanakh, there are other layers of meaning. Esther, the book's Jewish heroine goes to her husband, the Persian king Ahasuerus, to plead for the lives of the Jews in his kingdom. She knows, however, that "it is contrary to the law" for her to approach the king without being summoned first (Esth. 4: 11). Esther risks a death sentence to save the Jews, but she wins the favor of the king, who makes an exception by extending his scepter to her (Esth. 5: 2). When Esther receives this favor in the play-within-the-play that Alegoría has staged for Bridget in Lope's *La limpieza no manchada*, it becomes obvious that a figural interpretation is applicable: Just as Ahasuerus shows favor to Esther when she intervenes to rescue the Jews, God has the power

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<sup>110</sup> I hesitate to use the terms Old Testament and New Testament, since this prioritizes a Christian perspective. All quotations from the Bible are from the Tanakh, except those that are exclusively Christian (i.e., the Gospels) for which I use the Authorized (King James) Version or KJV.

to exempt Mary from the stain of original sin, thus paving the way for mankind's salvation.

Enríquez Gómez, too, draws connections between Esther's story and Mary's, calling the Virgin an "Éster del pueblo de Dios" (449)<sup>111</sup>. But Enríquez Gómez reinserts Mary into a Jewish context, setting his play on the historical boundary between "Old" and "New" Testaments. Unlike Lope, Enríquez Gómez emphasizes Mary's Jewish parents, focusing much of the drama on Joachim and Anne, the heirs of a long line of Jewish patriarchs. A crypto-Jewish interpretation of *La escala de la gracia* might suggest reading this *comedia*, a prologue for the Gospels, as an allegory for a kabbalistic understanding of the Hebrew scriptures. As with exegesis performed by the Kabbalists, the story of this new Esther may help the reader/audience consider the nature of the divine Godhead, divine intervention in the material universe, and the relationship between God and the "Pueblo de Dios." When Jewish kabbalists read the Torah, they did so not to project forward as a justification of Christian doctrine, but to work backward from the Hebrew Bible, to catch glimpses of the nature of the divine. They wanted to understand God and Man before the fall, to repair their relationship. I contend that a crypto-Jewish author, whose Judaism is necessarily inflected by the Catholic mask behind which he hides, could indeed begin with a Christian figure and read allegorically back to the "supernal truths and sublime secrets" of the Torah (Zohar 121). In negotiating between Christian and Jewish worlds, of course, the playwright would have to tread lightly for a Catholic audience alert to the slightest whiff of heterodoxy.

Over the course of this study, I will compare Conceptionist iconography to the concept of the Shekhinah as it emerged from Lurianic Kabbalah in the sixteenth century, making its way into mainstream Judaism in the seventeenth. After making the case that Enríquez Gómez would indeed have had access to this current of Jewish thought in the mid seventeenth century, I will demonstrate how

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<sup>111</sup> Parenthetical references to *La escala*, unless otherwise noted, are to page numbers in the 1671 Parte edition. I retain the orthography and punctuation of the original, but anglicize Mary's name and the names of Sts. Joachim, Anne, and Joseph (listed as S. Iochim, Santa Ana, and San Ioseph respectively in Zárate's *dramatis personae*) when not quoting directly from the text.

certain passages of *La escala de la gracia* could be read allegorically by crypto-Jewish audiences. First, however, I offer a brief overview of the play for those unfamiliar with it. The earliest version we have of the play is from Madrid, 1671, published in the *Parte treinta y cinco Comedias nuevas escritas por los mejores ingenios de España*, though it was probably performed for feast day celebrations beginning in the 1650s. It was also published as a *suelta* on at least four separate occasions in the eighteenth century and one of its scenes, a long monologue by Joachim in the first act, was printed separately in *pliego suelto* “relaciones” at least six times during that same period (González Cañal, “Relaciones” 214-16). All this would seem to indicate that audiences in Spain found nothing objectionable about *La escala de la gracia*.

The first act of *La escala* begins with a conversation between Joachim and his nephew, Joseph (Mary’s future husband). Joachim is distraught. He has just come from the Temple in Jerusalem where he has been turned away by the high priest because he and his wife, Anne, have not yet had a child. Their infertility is taken as a sign of God’s displeasure with the couple, even though they have done many works of charity for the Temple and the poor. Joachim, in his shame, tells Joseph he plans to retreat to the countryside and pray. Demonio and Pecado (i.e., the personification of Original Sin) come onto the stage after an interlude with the play’s comic figures, the *gracioso*, Chaparro, and the *criada*, Susana. Demonio has called Pecado because he is concerned about a prophecy that, if fulfilled, would diminish their power on earth. He suspects that Anne and Joachim, because of their faithfulness and good works, have been chosen to conceive a child untarnished by original sin. The diabolical duo lurk in the next scene as the Archangel Gabriel appears to Joachim and then to Anne. Gabriel tells them that their prayers have been answered. When Anne and Joachim are reunited at the Golden Gate in Jerusalem it is a sign that they will be blessed with a child, Mary. Demonio fears the worst.

Much of the dramatic tension over the final two acts of the play comes from the presence of Demonio and Pecado, attempting to bring darkness to the virtuous couple and their daughter (literally throwing shade, as we will see below). The scenes alternate between angelic visions and demonic broodings, with the occasional comic interventions from Susana and Chaparro. Act II begins on the day

of Mary's conception and ends with the announcement of her birth. Act III has Mary as a young child and ends with her presentation at the Temple. The allegorical Gracia makes her first appearance in the second act, to counterbalance the allegorical Pecado. Pecado and Demonio try to approach the house of Ana and Joachim, where Pecado threatens to infect Mary with original sin ("de Maria la pureza / mancharè" [430]), but Gracia appears and runs them off. At the end of the play, Gracia reappears at the Temple for Mary's presentation. The curtains are pulled back to reveal the "escala" of the play's title. Gracia on a throne with angels at her side is at the top of the ladder or stairway (Covarrubias noted in 1611 that the term "escala" was "lo que comunmente llamamos escalera"). Joseph tells her that the steps she sees are the "escala de la gracia / que viò Iacob nuestro abuelo" (450), that is to say, the stairway to Grace is also Jacob's ladder.

In one sense, Enríquez Gómez's allusion to Jacob can be interpreted simply as another scriptural validation of Mary's redemptive role: Jacob saw the stairway, but Mary will open it so that mankind can climb it. But for a crypto-Jewish spectator the scene might suggest that this appearance of Grace is not the dawning of a new age—in which the Law of Grace would supercede the Laws of Nature and Scripture, as Calderón would have it (Wilke, "Ark" 287)—but rather a bridge back to an older tradition. Jacob could glimpse a stairway to a heavenly realm and sense the presence of God: "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the abode of God, and that is the gateway to heaven" (Gen. 28: 12-13, 16-17). That divine presence would be the Shekhinah. For traditional Rabbinical Judaism, the "Shekhinah—literally in-dwelling, namely God in the world—is taken to mean simply God himself in His omnipresence and activity in the world and especially in Israel" (Scholem 105). The play's final scene holds additional clues. Gracia tells the Virgin:

Maria, por estas gradas,  
 en los venideros tiempos,  
 despues que el Hijo de Dios  
 abra las puertas del Cielo,  
 han de subir los fieles  
 de la gracia, hijos eternos  
 de Dios, de quien eres luz.

Esta es la Escala del Verbo,  
 y por ella subiràn  
 los que con divino zelo  
 a tu limpia Concepcion  
 fueren devotos perfectos,  
 Si la Escala de Iacob  
 tocò la tierra y el Cielo,  
 tu con la de Gracia juntas  
 el hypostatico Imperio  
 de las dos Naturalezas. (450)

The hypostatic union referred to in these lines is, of course, Mary's ability to give birth to "el Verbo"—bringing together the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Jesus.

Again, this closing scene would have been interpreted by a Catholic audience as a standard celebration of the doctrine of the Incarnation, made possible by Mary's immaculacy. It is also possible, however, that the action of the play unfolding before our eyes could be pointing allegorically in a different direction, to a more esoteric interpretation. A crypto-Jew familiar with Kabbalah might interpret this new ladder, "la Escala del Verbo" which is also Jacob's ladder, as the re-opening of an older pathway between the corporeal and the spiritual realms. Joseph closes the play with the standard turn to the audience:

Dando con aquesto fin,  
 pues es tan vuestro el ingenio  
 de don Fernando Zarate,  
 a lo literal del Texto  
 corrección de alegoria,  
 siendo su nombre perfecto  
 en la Escala de la Gracia  
 la Presentacion del Templo. (450)

One early edition of this play, the 1734 *suelta*, changes "alegoría" to "alegría." The contorted syntax of this closing passage creates so much ambiguity that it appears at least one early editor may have been uncomfortable with the possibility that Mary's "Escala de la Gracia" ("lo literal del Texto") might actually be an allegory

for something else: the provocative “Presentación del Templo.” A careful reading shows that this is not the presentation of Mary “in” or “to” the Temple (with the preposition “a,” as it was put earlier in the play), but a presentation, perhaps re-emergence “of” the Temple. Are we to read Mary and Grace as a personification of the Shekhinah—a return of God’s presence to the earth, a restoration of the Temple? I will attempt an answer to that question later on, by returning to an allegorical vision that Joseph, guided by the Angel Gabriel, has in the second act. But before looking at passages in the text where Enríquez Gómez appears to gesture toward an allegorical connection between Grace, Mary, and the Shekhinah, we should take a brief look at Conceptionist iconography.

“[D]os ymágenes de la Concepción,” including a yard-tall painting (“un quadro de una vara de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción”), were found in the first-floor hall of Zárata/Enríquez Gómez’s home after he was arrested by the Inquisition on September 21, 1661<sup>112</sup>. We would expect this in mid-seventeenth-century Sevilla, the Sevilla of Zurbarán and Murillo. The painters filled churches and private homes with images of the Immaculate Conception: Mary “calzada de la luna y vestida del sol,” as the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega put it (200)<sup>113</sup>. The playwright, Zárata, could not have avoided Conceptionist iconography, which is Mary in *tota pulchra* stance, astride the moon, blocking the sun from our view, but bathed in its light. In these images she is surrounded by clouds and angels, often by symbols from the Marian litanies<sup>114</sup>. Indeed, Zárata presents the image to his audience in the play’s final act:

Ave, dixo, Gabriel, de gracia plena  
la Luna estando llena  
con plenitud de luz, macula alguna

<sup>112</sup> The inventory is transcribed by Révah from ANH Inq., legajo 2067, no. 25 (566-69). On the Inquisition’s practice of inventories, which usually preceded the confiscation of property, see Kamen (Spanish Inquisition 183-84), Pérez (143), and Bethencourt (60-63).

<sup>113</sup> In his 1616 dedicatory to the *Historia general del Perú*, the second part of his *Comentarios reales*; see Stratton on the activities of Zurbarán and Murillo in Sevilla.

<sup>114</sup> On the iconography of the Immaculate Conception in art, see Buffer and Horner; Stratton.

no dexa el Sol al cuerpo de la Luna.

[...]

Christo fue el Sol, María fue la Luna,

y no fuera buen Sol si la dexara

mancha en su Concepción que la eclipsara. (448)

Mary is the moon who reflects the light of the sun to the earth, as she is the chosen vessel that will bring God, in the person of Christ, into a world otherwise absorbed in darkness. She is a literal mediator between worlds, between the earth and sky, between spiritual and material, divine and mundane. She herself, according to the doctrine, must be unstained by original sin in order to do this. There is nothing about this that is remotely unorthodox from a Catholic perspective, though these words are spoken by the character Demonio. If we take the Devil at his word, this is just another example of the many representations of the Immaculate Conception—iconography which was in almost every home, including Zárate's. Enríquez Gómez makes light of this when he has Chaparro announce Mary's birth toward the end of the second act. The *gracioso* describes the angels singing her praises and looking on in wonderment. One of the angels, Chaparro reports, even claims she looks like the images in the paintings (an anachronism obviously played for comic effect): "Otro con grave atención, / dixo, mirando a la Luna, / a sus pies con deuocion, / que me maten si no es vna / Virgen de la Concepcion" (438). This association of Mary with the moon in *Concepción* images is, however, also a potential clue for a crypto-Jewish spectator looking to validate a Jewish perspective. Significantly, where the Conception paintings done by Murillo at the time this play would have been popular all feature Mary standing or floating over a crescent moon, Enríquez Gómez's text mentions a full moon: "la Luna estando llena / con plenitud de luz" (448). It is a small detail, but it would remind some audience members of how the moon functions symbolically in the Jewish personification of the divine presence, the Shekhinah.

At this juncture it is worth reviewing how the concept of the Shekhinah evolved through the late-medieval period and came to be understood widely by Jews of the seventeenth century—ideas which Enríquez Gómez would have encountered if he was practicing Judaism secretly in France, planning to move to a more tolerant



jurisdiction such as Amsterdam. *Shekhinah* (sometimes spelled *Shekinah*; *Shejiná* in Spanish) is “a Hebrew word from the root ‘to dwell’ that is translated as the ‘presence’ of God” (Saldarini 938). In the Bible, this presence was often localized, as we saw with the example of Jacob sensing God’s presence and abode in a specific place. The “glory of God, which filled the Temple, was his Shekinah” (Saldarini 938). This distinction between God and his “presence” appears already in the Bible. The presence of God on the Temple mount, within the inner sanctum of the Holy of Holies (behind the veil, so to speak), was a powerful image. It is easy to see how later kabbalists might take this presence, the Shekhinah, and personify it further. For medieval Spanish kabbalists, the Shekhinah takes on a feminine aspect (Scholem 105). Throughout the Zohar, written in Aramaic during the thirteenth century by Moses de León, the Shekhinah is personified and gendered female: she is like a Queen exiled from her throne with the destruction of the Temple, she is God’s spouse awaiting reunion with the Beloved, she represents the community of Israel in exile, but her presence also protects Israel in its wanderings, she is an extra soul emanating straight from the divine realm, animating believers on the Sabbath<sup>115</sup>.

Gershom Scholem highlights the “age-old moon symbolism” that became an attribute of the Shekhinah, helping kabbalists visualize her relationship to the Godhead, a relationship strained, even broken, by the presence of sin:

...the cleavage is also expressed in cosmic symbols, such as the lessening of the moon, degraded to the status of a lightless receiver of light. For the religious feeling of the early Kabbalists, the exile of the *Shekhinah* was a symbol of our own guilt, and the aim of religious action must be to end this exile or at least to work in this direction. The reunion of God and his *Shekhinah* constitutes the meaning of redemption. In this state the masculine and the feminine are carried back to their original unity, and in this uninterrupted union of the two the powers of generation will once again flow unimpeded through all the worlds. (108).

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<sup>115</sup> See especially the sections in the Spanish translation on Exile (194-203) and the Sabbath (235-41).



In other words, the presence of sin will cause the divine presence to recoil, like the waning of the moon. In order for God (masculine) and his Shekhinah (feminine) to be reunited, humankind must turn away from sin. When the two are restored “to their original unity,” as Scholem puts it, then divine love or grace “flow unimpeded through all the worlds.”; i.e., the Shekhinah’s union with God also unites spiritual and material worlds. It is no coincidence, by the way, that at the same time that the Shekhinah was evolving into the feminine aspect of God in Jewish mystical circles, the Virgin Mary was rising to new prominence in the medieval Church as an object of veneration and devotion. Mary as the primary intercessor helps balance the masculine notion of the monotheistic God (often harsh and authoritarian), with a feminine perspective. The Shekhinah, as the female side of divine nature, appears to fill an analogous role in certain circles of Judaism at the time.

Kabbalah was mostly an elite affair, however, until the expulsion of the Sephardic Jews from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497). Daniel Matt writes: “Along with tens of thousands of other exiles, kabbalists made their way to North Africa, Italy, and the eastern Mediterranean, disseminating mystical ideas. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Kabbalah, with the Zohar at its nucleus, had become an important spiritual factor in Jewish life” (13). Moses Cordovero and Isaac Luria, in the late sixteenth century, interpreted the *sefirot* (successive emanations from the Godhead) as vessels containing divine light, and connected the exile of the Shekhinah to a breaking of the vessels (*shevirah*), a primordial cataclysm which scattered divine sparks through the physical universe (Scholem 109-17; Dan 72-81). Redemption or healing (*tikkun*) of the wounds of the cosmos would come only with acts of piety, uniting the divine sparks of Shekhinah in the lower world with the upper realms. The Shekhinah’s role in Lurianic Kabbalah is as conduit to the divine realms (as the soul is the physical body’s connection to the spiritual world). This is not unlike the Immaculate Conception Mary—she is not the origin of the light, but reflects the light to the world: “the Shekhinah functions at once as mirror and filter, which throws back the substance of the lights pouring into it, and lets through or transmits, only their residue and reflection” (Scholem 114). This calls to mind the *speculum sine macula* from the Book of

Wisdom, which also came to symbolize Mary's Immaculacy for Catholics (Stratton 42).

One could reasonably object at this point, however, that while this integration of Kabbalah in the belief system of practicing Jews might be plausible for the Sephardim of seventeenth-century Amsterdam or Venice, the same could not be said for crypto-Jews living in Spain, isolated from the main currents of Jewish thought. Indeed, among many crypto-Jewish families in Spain by the end of the sixteenth century, the oral tradition that preserved the memory of their ancestral faith had been greatly reduced—as is understandable a century after the expulsion (Gitlitz 444). But Enríquez Gómez did not belong to just any crypto-Jewish family. He was a budding merchant and writer in Madrid in the 1620s and early 1630s with family connections and business contacts in Amsterdam, Antwerp, and the urban centers of France and northern Italy. At the time, Madrid itself was experiencing an influx of Portuguese new-Christian financiers, encouraged by the protection of the Count-Duke of Olivares, which rejuvenated the crypto-Jewish community there (Alpert 50-59). Some Portuguese new-Christians financed the travel of rabbis to Madrid or to expatriate communities in France to help reinforce the ancestral faith<sup>116</sup>. Moreover, Enríquez Gómez's father and uncle preceded him in flight to the Iberian expat communities established in France (Bayonne, Rouen, and Bordeaux). By all accounts, the family sought a rabbi there and took pains to learn Hebrew, to reintegrate themselves into Judaism<sup>117</sup>. Even in France this still had to be done in secret, but they knew they would no longer face active persecution from the Inquisition as long as they did not return to Spain or Portugal. Enríquez Gómez, in his own exile, may not have learned Hebrew, but would have access to works written in Spanish or Portuguese and published in Amsterdam for Iberian Jews returning to Judaism, works which would have been difficult

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<sup>116</sup> Alpert, for example, cites the case of João Nunes Saraiva, who “had brought a rabbi from Amsterdam to Bordeaux to circumcise his father before he died,” and “had helped another [rabbi] who had come to Madrid from Salonika” (61).

<sup>117</sup> Francisco Luis Enríquez de Mora, the playwright's cousin, testified in December of 1663 that in Bordeaux (late 1630s) “començó a aprender hebreo con un rabí extranjero, que en su cassa en un aposento retirado le enseñaba, y a otros catorçe o quince” (qtd. in Révah 589).

to smuggle into Spain<sup>118</sup>. So, if Lurianic Kabbalah permeated the whole of the Jewish world in the seventeenth century, Enríquez Gómez would have been familiar with its basic contours from his decade and a half beyond the Inquisition's reach.

Aside from the obvious analogy between the roles of Mary and the Shekhinah in their respective narratives of redemption—i.e., a female figure necessary for bridging the divide between human and divine realms, for reconciling the Creator and the created universe—what indications does the Zárate play give that might allow us to peek behind the veil of the Christian doctrine to validate a Jewish perspective? For one, the insistence on the piety of Mary's parents, Joachim and Anne, reminds crypto-Jewish readers of the importance of humanity's role in bringing about cosmic healing (*tikkun*). For example, in the second act of the play Anne suggests that God actually receives life when alms are given: “pues socorriendo al pobre, / a Dios se socorre, y puedo / dezir que recibe vida” (434). These lines, of course, would resonate with a Catholic audience familiar with Jesus's “inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (KJV, Matt. 25:40). But it also echoes the Lurianic concept of *tikkun*, whereby human actions can help heal the primordial wounds of *shevirah*: “the achievement of *tikkun* is the ultimate redemption, bringing perfection first and foremost to God himself” (Dan 73). Anne's suggestion that God “recibe vida” when she serves the poor hints at the kabbalistic notion that God, too, benefits from good deeds. When Anne attends to the poor she also frees “the captive

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<sup>118</sup> AEG's half brother, Esteban Enríquez de Fonseca, testified that while living in Rouen AEG and his wife “tenía en su poder un libro de el tamaño de unas oras, cubierto de baldana negra, con unas ligneas doradas en ella, y tendría de alto más de tres dedos, y estaba en lengua española, y en él oraciones de la ley de Moysén, sus çeremonias y ayunos y notiçia del tiempo en que cayan, y modo con que los judíos çelebraban sus festiuidades” (qtd. in Révah 578); Francisco Luis Enríquez claimed that “dichos libros se los suelen ynprimir en Olanda y bender publicamente” (qtd. in Révah 591). Gitlitz uses a list of books printed in Amsterdam, inventoried in the library of one Inquisition victim, as evidence “of the success of efforts by Jews of the Sephardic Diaspora to smuggle books into the Iberian Peninsula or the colonies” (436), though it would have been much easier to get those books to crypto-Jewish enclaves in French territories.

divine sparks [separated from God at the *shevirah*] that have to be redeemed by human deeds” (Dan 79).

In the very first act of the play, Joachim also demonstrates the couple’s righteous behavior. He comes onto the stage at the beginning of the first act dressed in a way that would definitely identify him as Jewish for the audience, “a lo Iudaico vestido” (418), and he highlights his obedience to God in the commission of good works:

Prometimos, yo y mi esposa,  
de quantos bienes el Cielo  
con franca mano nos diesse  
de hazer tres partes, lo grueso  
de la vna, y lo mejor  
para las obras del Templo  
de nuestra Santa Ciudad;  
la segunda, con el zelo  
de la santa caridad  
para pobres; el tercero  
numero de las tres partes  
mas deuil, y mas pequeño  
para sustentar, Ioseph,  
la familia ... (421)

Although Joachim saves only the “weakest and smallest part” of his estate for his family’s use, God keeps blessing that third in abundance, which means he continues to support the construction of the Temple and his almsgiving for the poor continues to increase. Joachim and Anne’s righteousness creates just the type of a virtuous feedback loop that Lurianic kabbalists thought would hasten *tikkun*: “Sanctify your limbs and adorn them with good deeds, making yourself into a throne for the divine presence, your body an ark for Shekhinah”<sup>119</sup>. The high priest fails to understand that the couple’s sterility is only apparent, however, and Joachim takes his ejection

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<sup>119</sup> This is from one of Luria’s early followers, Hayyim Vital, c. 1600 (qtd. in Matt 123). I cite English translations of Lurianic Kabbalah for convenience, but it is important to note that Enríquez Gómez may have had direct contact with Luria’s formulations through the Spanish work of Abraham Cohen de Herrera, in particular his *Puerta del Cielo*, which circulated in manuscript

from the Temple to heart: “Quien del Templo ha sido echado / por inutil, vn desierto / sea su mejor palacio” (422).

This exile from the Temple has banished him to a wilderness, physical and spiritual, where his dwelling is a wasteland:

su triste morada el yermo,  
 su Alcaçar esse peñasco,  
 y su habitación vn cerro.  
 Aquí con lagrimas tristes,  
 con suspiros, y con ruegos,  
 con gemidos, y sollozos,  
 ablandarè el Firmamento ... (422)

Joachim’s self-imposed exile to the the wasteland, a “yermo” where he will sit atop a “peñasco” and direct his sighs, tears, moans, and prayers to the Firmament, might call to mind Amadís de Gaula or Don Quijote, pining away in the wilderness for love of Oriana/Dulcinea. But it also resonates with Kabbalah’s narrative of exile and redemption. The play’s diabolical characters know that Joachim and Anne’s good works and piety are likely to bring more blessing. “Escucha atento, / mi dolor, mi pesar, y mi tormento,” Demonio tells Pecado, before describing the couple:

En esta alegre alqueria  
 sacro y lucido jardin  
 de la virtud que aborrezco,  
 viuen en vnion feliz  
 Ana, virtuosa y santa,  
 junto y perfecto, Ioachin;  
 si no me engaña la ciencia  
 que ya la gracia perdí,  
 temo que vna profecia  
 en ellos se ha de cumplir. (425)

The devil intuits that the “happy union” of a holy, virtuous woman with a “perfect” husband—perfect in observance of the Law and good works—will bring about a cosmic shift toward good

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among Sephardic communities as early as the 1630s before being published in Amsterdam in 1655 in a Hebrew translation (Artigas 204-05; Cohen).

and away from evil, ending the “exile,” which Scholem describes as “the aim of religious action” (108). Joachim’s “perfection” in adherence to Mosaic Law reflects Lurianic Kabbalah’s emphasis on human agency in bringing about *tikkun*: “Every man who acts in accordance with this Law brings home fallen sparks of the *Shekhinah* and of his own soul as well. He restores the pristine perfection of his own spiritual body” (Scholem 116).

Again, in the Lurianic terms of Enríquez Gómez’s day, the couple’s good deeds and observance of the law help gather the divine sparks that were scattered through the universe at the great shattering of vessels (*shevirah*): “In the course of its exile Israel must go everywhere, to every corner of the world, for everywhere a spark of the *Shekhinah* is waiting to be found, gathered, and restored by a religious act” (Scholem 116)<sup>120</sup>. The threats made by Demonio and Pecado in the play are perhaps another reminder of the cosmic battle playing out in Kabbalah’s light/dark symbolism. Lurianic Kabbalah posits that by “submitting to the guidance of the Law, Israel works toward the restitution of all things” and “the secret magic of human acts” can free man and nature “from their servitude to the demonic powers, which, once the light is removed from them, are reduced to deathly passivity” (Scholem 116-17). This brings new urgency to Demonio’s antagonism. He tells Pecado “A esto, culpa, te he llamado / y a ti te importa el viuir,” and he calls on the “sombra de Cain” and “los rayos / que nunca pueden lucir” to cast “Eli” from his throne (426). Demonio merges the light/dark symbolism with night/day imagery in describing how he would prevent the “profetico Clarin” from announcing the coming light, a light that is likened to a spring dawn or “Aurora de Abril” (426).

Obviously, Christianity and Judaism share an affinity for this light/dark symbolism in describing the struggle between good and evil, so a Christian audience would not see anything amiss. In fact, the reference to “Eli” might encourage a Christian spectator to remember Jesus’s call to God from the cross, “Eli, Eli lama sabachtani” (Matt. 27: 46; Mark 15: 34), itself a quotation from the opening of Psalm 22, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me.” A crypto-Jewish

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. “There are still sparks of the sacred / left within the vessels, / this is what is left for us to complete, / through our prayers and good deeds and / through saintly souls when they depart from this world” (Klein 19).

audience, however, would be more attuned to the story of Eli, high priest and guardian of the Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh in the first four chapters of 1 Samuel. This Eli's story is intertwined with the birth, education and vocation of Samuel as God's anointed. When Demonio calls for the shadow of Cain to come to his aid, so that Eli "caiga de su trono" (426), a crypto-Jewish reader might recall Eli's death. When Eli, who "had been a chieftain of Israel for forty years," learned that the Philistines had captured the Ark, he "fell backward off the seat beside the gate, broke his neck and died" (1 Sam 4: 18). In both Psalm 22 and this moment in 1 Samuel, the powers of darkness appear to overcome those of light, the speaker is left with a feeling of abandonment, as if God's presence (the Shekhinah) has been removed. Anne's infertility, Joachim's banishment from the Temple, his time in the desert, and his anguished cries to heaven all reflect the imagery of the Shekhinah in exile.

Anne's infertility and Joachim's exile from the Temple will eventually end. The spiritual dawn will dispel the forces of darkness:

Pediré que salga el Alua  
de aqueste sol verdadero,  
esta Vara de Iesé,  
esta Arca del Testamento,  
esta Paloma sagrada,  
porque con ella tendremos  
gloria sacra en las alturas  
y paz diuina en el suelo. (422-23)

This passage, from the end of the first scene, portrays Joachim praying for a new dawn. This new dawn will be the result of a "true sun" and is equated with the rod of Jesse, the Ark of the Covenant, and the sacred Dove. As Wilke has pointed out regarding the presence of the Ark in Enríquez Gómez, the "Christian spectator is repeatedly invited to complete the text by projecting onto it the well-known Christian meaning, which would extend the line of allegorical allusions to Mount Golgotha, the Ship of the Church, the Christians and their universal idiom of faith" ("Ark" 290). In *La escala de la gracia* the "Arca del Testamento" conflates Noah's Ark and the Ark of the Lord. The "Paloma sagrada" can, therefore, be read as the bird that brought an olive leaf back to Noah's Ark

(Gen 8: 11), which for a Catholic audience prefigures the coming of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. But this reading does not preclude an allegorical interpretation that equates the Dove's return with the restoration of God's presence (Shekhinah) on earth. As the return of the dove to Noah signals the receding flood, so the return of Shekhinah reunites the earthly and celestial spheres. This crypto-Jewish reading is reinforced by the closing lines of the passage above: "porque con ella tendremos / gloria sacra en las alturas / y paz diuina en el suelo" (423). The "ella" of this passage ultimately refers back to the "Alua" (i.e., Mary), but, as we have seen, it can also point to the Ark of the Lord or the sacred Dove (both visible signs of divine presence, the Shekhina). Moreover, in the cosmic drama of Kabbalah all these symbols remind us of the healing/redemptive role of Shekhinah, manifesting the "gloria sacra" of the heavens with "paz diuina" on earth (423).

By the end of the first act Joachim's prayers are answered by the Angel Gabriel—"Ana parirà vna hija, / que ha de ser Alva del Sol," he tells Joachim. Anne is initially stunned by the light: "Pendiente estoy de la luz / desse sacro esplendor, / que ordena el Señor Diuino / à su sierva" (426). Later, in the second act, when Joachim asks her how she feels, Anne replies:

Se halla el alma tan gozosa,  
que añade a la Magestad  
del Señor la voluntad,  
en cuya esfera dichosa  
todo es luz, todo alegría,  
pues por su inmenso fauor  
veo con luz interior  
de la alada Gerarquía  
Angeles, que el parabien  
me dan con alegre salva  
de que ha concebido el Alua  
para gloria de Salen. (431)

There is nothing in this passage that would prevent an orthodox Christian response, but the lack of Trinitarian language (so prevalent at other moments) here might preference a kabbalistic interpretation: the interior light of the soul is reunited with the sphere of pure light



that is “la Magestad del Señor,” which in turn opens her eyes to the “alada Gerarquía” of Angels. The verb “añade” indicates that her soul can indeed “add” something to that Majesty—the human agency necessary for bringing about redemption, *tikkun* in Lurianic Kabbalah. The union of earthly and celestial spheres, of mundane and divine realms is strongly implied: Anne’s soul “ha concebido el Alua / para gloria de Salen.” (431). The Dawn is divine, but it will glorify the material world represented by Salem, probably an allusion to Psalm 76: 2-3—“God made Himself known in Judah, His name is great in Israel; Salem became His abode; Zion, His den”—a celebration of the divine favor conferred on the chosen people in the promised land, i.e. an end to exile. Joachim immediately adds that “A su Templo està ofrecida / esta Aurora Celestial” (431).

At this point, we can return to the dream vision that Joseph has of the Temple in the second act (434-35). Though the physical Temple in Jerusalem is a constant presence in the play, Joseph is shown a Temple that cannot be perceived by the usual senses:

Cielos,  
que veo? pues corriendo cinco velos,  
sentidos corporales,  
veo con las potencias racionales  
vn Alcazar Real de luz viuiente,  
fabrica soberana, y eminente,  
que con siete Columnas poderosas,  
garçotas luminosas  
del Cielo, se sustentan cada vna,  
siendo blandon el Sol, hacha la Luna. (435)

Pulling back the veil of his five corporeal senses, his rational powers are able to perceive a Royal Palace of living light, which Joseph describes with a confusing combination of architectural and ethereal motifs: “fabrica soberana” and “Columnas poderosas,” but also luminous plumes from Heaven. The Sun is a lamp, while the Moon is its wick. The Angel tries to explain:

Este Alcaçar que miras fabricado  
por Salomon, en literal sentido,  
es porque adorna la Historia

de aquesta alegoria la memoria,  
 de figuras morales adornada,  
 passar pretendo hasta la edad dorada,  
 sumiller soberano  
 de aqueste velo humano  
 del Templo literal. (435)

Joseph's confusion results from the literal image of Solomon's Temple, which his memory conjures from History, an allegory in its own right with moral significance. But Gabriel wants his charge to penetrate the human veil of this "Templo literal," no matter how excellent it might be, to pass into "la edad dorada," a prelapsarian state. He asks Joseph "que ves agora?" Joseph responds, "Vna hermosa Deidad, de cuya Aurora / reciben luz los Cielos, y la tierra" (435).

This light-bearing feminine Deity, sharing the light with heaven and earth is, frankly, a better description of Shekhinah than it is of the Immaculate Conception. At the moment she unites upper and lower worlds in the Zohar, the Shekhinah is described "Basking in the oneness of holy light. [...] There is no power in all the worlds aside from her. [...] Her face shines with a light from beyond; she is crowned below by holy people, all of whom are crowned with new souls" (qtd. in Matt 80). Joseph breaks through the literal/material surface of the vision, the magnificent Temple and all it might represent, to glimpse something more transcendent. The spectator, in hearing Joseph's words, sees beyond what his "potencias racionales" can perceive, to a divine presence, a grace that allows us to move between worlds.

Demonio and Pecado come on stage at this precise moment to break the spell for us. They want to stain the light with their shadows: "Essa luz, esta sombra la haze guerra" (435). But Gabriel tells them they have no power and allows them to stay only to torment them with the sight of the grace that they have lost. They recognize the "Alcaçar" fashioned by "el Salomon verdadero"; and Pecado wonders why "rayos de tan diuinos misterios" should be manifested "por esta alegoria, / a lo literal del Texto" (435). Gabriel explains that the palace was indeed made by the "Arquitecto" (i.e., God) and that it is a "figura del Palacio / Angelico, puro, y Regio / de Maria soberana" (435). Mary, of course, has the womb that will

give birth to the Word in Catholic theology. In baroque fashion, Enríquez Gómez presents the reader with a “Templo literal,” which is an “Alcazar Divino,” which in turn is an “hermosa Deidad,” which is a woman, who is a womb for the Word. The poet stacks allegory upon allegory, *mise en abyme*. The effect gives its author plausible deniability. In the event that a censor or Inquisitor should detect a potential heterodoxy at one level, there is always another level just below or just above it, destabilizing that interpretation—“a lo literal del texto, / correccion de alegoria,” as Joseph tells the audience at the end of the play (450). If something about the literal reading appears not right, simply correct it with allegory. At its most literal level the play’s climactic finish presents us with a Temple, takes us inside and behind the veil to reveal a “mayor misterio,” the physical steps (“gradas materiales”) of a ladder or stairway to Grace, which had been revealed previously to Jacob (450).

The seventeenth-century Spanish stage might seem an unlikely place for Enríquez Gómez to continue the “quest for justice” that Constance Rose and Matthew Warshawsky have identified in his exile writings. “El teatro ha sido en España siempre un arte público y siendo género tan expuesto, no puede servir para una verdadera crítica,” writes Harm den Boer in an article whose title poses the question “¿Criptojudáismo en la comedia española?” (136). The critic responds: “Tan impensable como hubiera sido una comedia de contenido filojudío, tan difícil es proponer una obra con un mensaje codificado a espectadores” (136). But perhaps the critics underestimate the poet, especially one so accustomed to leading a double life: embodying one role for his audience, while maintaining a sense of identity for himself. Francisco Luis Enríquez de Mora, the poet’s cousin (Révah 176-77), gave testimony to the Inquisition in Lima (17 Dec 1663) that, when the two of them were headed back into Spain from France (1649 or 1650), “Antonio Enrrriquez [sic] dijo que cuando él dijese ‘Alabado sea Jesucristo,’ o ‘el Santísimo Sacramento,’ que él dijese en su corazón: ‘sea alabado Dios, que está en el Cielo solamente’” (qtd. in Révah 608). This discrepancy between what comes from the mouth and what one holds in the heart is not proof that the author has abandoned Judaism for Christianity, rather it is the very essence of a *crypto*-Judaism. David Gitlitz cites a case from the 1640s: “when they [crypto-Jews] refer

to the Virgen del Carmen, which they do so that Catholics will think they are evoking Our Lady, they are not speaking of her, but of Elija [i.e., the prophet Elijah]" (611). For crypto-Jews, then, certain figures in Christianity can serve their Judaism allegorically. The images of the Immaculate Conception documented in Enríquez Gómez's home after the Inquisition arrested him, or even a play on the Immaculate Conception, could indeed encode something for a crypto-Jewish writer and his audiences, separating Christian and Jewish worldviews with the veil of allegory.

Glen Dille wrote that Enríquez Gómez's *La escala de la gracia* "is vitally concerned with prophecies that support not only the messianic nature of Christ, but also the Immaculate Conception of Mary and the doctrine of the Trinity" (*Antonio* 150). This is undoubtedly true, for a Catholic audience. I hope to have demonstrated, however, the possibility that the playwright had another audience in mind as well, that he may have used the veil of Christian doctrine to reinforce a Jewish cosmovision. Dille concluded that "Unless [Zárate's] plays have no relations whatsoever with the author's own beliefs, the religious struggle was finally decided in favor of a loving and accommodating Christianity" (*Antonio* 150-51). The problem, of course, for Spaniards of *converso* descent, was that the Inquisition's Catholicism was anything but "loving and accommodating." No one would know this better than Enríquez Gómez, who was arrested in 1661 and died languishing in the secret cells of the Inquisition in Triana, Sevilla in 1663. Even if we assume the playwright's final repudiation of Judaism (with the threat of judicial torture hanging over him) was sincere, we should still ask how his experience with cycles of fasting and prayer in a Jewish liturgical context could have influenced his representation of a Catholic doctrine in a *comedia* written before his arrest. We will never know, for certain, what the author believed personally, but we should attend to what Christians, Jews, and crypto-Jews of his day believed, how they expressed their faith, because this impacted the way they understood *comedias*. Antonio Enríquez Gómez moved among all these faith "worlds." I contend that his *comedia* did too.

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## MARKING TIME: FRAMING THE *COMEDIA* BETWEEN THE 16TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

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**Abstract:** Theatre is always a translational space, a place where actions are corralled onto a stage, diverse temporalities and objects brought together, historicities conflated and language embodied. It allows us to collapse time and space, speak to the dead, lay our ghosts to rest and memorialise those who should be remembered. Walter Cohen has recently argued that the achievements of European literature in this period are defined by their non-representation of an imperial, global outside. Anachronism and relevance have been two crucial axes delimiting interpretations and performances of the plays of the Golden Age. But as aficionados of historical fiction such as *ministéricos* know well, anachronism can be as much a part of the process of understanding difference, defining worlds, and pastness. Humour is an essential aspect of our relationship to the past. Is it lost in translation or a product of it? My recent work translating and editing the *entremés* *Los mirones* raises a series of interesting problems. While on one level it counters the whitewashing of the European past, it also foregrounds racial typologies, amongst other things, that both resonate with more contemporary racisms but whose unfamiliarity and starkness are also a contemporary challenge. How these uncomfortable moments, resonances and differences are and were framed is crucial to unleashing the creative potential

of the *comedia*. As I have argued elsewhere Spain was first and foremost perceived from outside as an imperial power, self-confident in the same measure that internally it was critical and reflective about the costs of empire. For outsiders its identity seemed self-evident, erasing internal differences, its multicultural and plurilingualism, yet these political divisions and tensions were never, as for so many other nations, fully resolved. Being Spanish in the early modern era was at once expansive and open, jealous and closed. Competitors and imitators saw themselves reflected and transformed by Spain, threatened by a Hispanophilia which they rescued themselves from by transforming it into Hispanophobia. Spain's contemporary sense of belatedness is a reversal of this earlier modernity. For historians, the periodisation of this era as Renaissance or Golden Age have ceded to the more neutral notion of early modern, but what might we lose from following suit. In other words, should we be reframing the entire enterprise in which we are engaged along these lines? Relevant or unacceptable, is the unacceptability of the past what makes it relevant, or its very relevance what makes it unacceptable. How we frame early modern/Golden Age theatre will continue to determine its historicities, anachronisms or relevance to us in the 21st century, something that takes place through embodiment and acting, in the constant process of marking the time, our time, the times, in and through these seemingly inexhaustible representations.

**Resumen:** El teatro es siempre un espacio traslacional, un lugar donde acciones están acorraladas en un escenario, temporalidades y objetos diversos juntados, historicidades refundidas y el lenguaje encarnado. El teatro nos permite colapsar el espacio y tiempo, hablar con los muertos, exorcizar los fantasmas, conmemorar los que deberíamos. Walter Cohen ha argüido recientemente que la literatura europea se define por la no-representación de lo imperial y global. Anacronismo y relevancia han sido dos ejes determinantes para la interpretación y actuación de las obras del Siglo de Oro. Pero como los aficionados de la ficción histórica, como los ministéricos bien saben, el anacronismo es fundamental para comprender la diferencia del pasado, la otredad de ese mundo extranjero. El humor es clave en esta relación con el pasado. ¿Se pierde el humor en traducción o es eso que lo crea o es la traducción la que crea el humor? Mi labor editorial

y traslacional reciente en el entremés de *Los mirones* se ha enfrentado a una serie de problemas paralelos. Por un lado, el entremés contrarresta el blanqueamiento del pasado europeo pero a la vez nos enfrentan a tipologías raciales que hacen eco de racismos contemporáneos cuyas inaceptabilidad y crudeza suponen un reto en el siglo XXI. La forma en que estos momentos incómodos, resonancias y diferencias, están enmarcados, es determinante para sacar a la luz la potencia creativa de la comedia. He argüido antes que España se vio desde fuera como un poder imperial, segura de sí misma en la misma medida que desde dentro era crítica y reflexiva sobre los costes del imperio. Para los extranjeros su identidad pareció evidente, borrando su diversidad interna, multiculturalismo y plurilingüismo, las tensiones y divisiones políticas que como para tantos otros nunca se resolvieron. Ser español en la época temprana moderna significaba ser abierto, expansivo pero a la vez celoso y cerrado. Competidores e imitadores se vieron reflejados y transformados por el ejemplo de España, pero amenazados con la disolución por su propia Hispanofilia que trasformaron en Hispanofobia. El sentimiento actual de ser tardío da la vuelta a esta modernidad temprana anterior. Para los historiadores la periodización de esta época como renacimiento o aurisecular ha cedido a la denominación más neutra de temprana modernidad. ¿Qué perderíamos si hiciésemos lo mismo? ¿Deberíamos volver a enmarcar nuestra empresa de la misma manera? ¿Relevante o inaceptable, es la inaceptabilidad del pasado lo que lo hace relevante o yace su relevancia en la inaceptabilidad? La forma en que enmarcamos el teatro aurisecular seguirá definiendo su historicidad, anacronismo y relevancia en el siglo XXI en su proceso constante de marcar el tiempo, nuestro tiempo, los tiempos en que vivimos, en y a través de estas representaciones inagotables.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Comedy, Adaptation, *Los mirones*, entremés, Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo, Performance as Research / Comedia, adaptación, *Los mirones*; entremés; Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo, performance como investigación

The *comedia* in the 21st century straddles temporal worlds, from the moment of composition and first performance to its on-going receptions; passing through a series of historical contexts whose divergence can make them feel opposed. Of course, productions

whether in the original or other languages translate plays through history, modernising, making relevant, and using contemporary analogies to bring the play world within touching distance of the contemporary. Laughter may be a universal human attribute; however, jokes are rooted in the moments and places of their enunciation. They are context dependent, reliant on the co-presence entailed by performance. Humour is contagious, embodied, and presential. The refrain when a story does not land, ‘you had to be there’ acknowledges this. One reason why humour gets lost in translation is the extent to which it arises from irony and ambiguity, subversion and incongruity, punning and exaggeration that are tied to particular languages and their usage. So how is it that the form can still seem uproariously funny today?

This article presents the case study of *Los mirones*, an *entremés* or short comic play and fascinating social document from the first quarter of the 17th century offering a vibrant portrait of Spain’s major Atlantic port Seville at that moment, whose jokes and humour challenge ethical commitments almost universal in the contemporary world. Racism, misogyny, ableism, ageism, and fattism run through its anecdotes, stories, and language. The comic play, however, thematises precisely the question of what proper objects of ridicule might be and reflects on the way humour is always implicated in dynamics of power. When cruel, it dehumanises others, asserting superiority over its object. At other times it arises from the recognition of shared humanity, common weakness, and imperfection. Fundamental is the contrast between laughing at and with. My argument proposes that contemporary audiences’ discomfort watching *Los mirones* derives precisely from a recognition of its relevance, the inexorable connection of its racialised discourse, for example, with contemporary racial injustice. The piece appears to want to trick its readers into laughing when they should not, to catch them participating in its cruelty and force them to reflect on what is and is not funny, why and whether it should or not evince laughter. Ultimately, the gawkers of the play themselves and not their stories are what is laughable.

Forms of comedy can of course cross time. Subversion, for example, puncturing the pomposity of certain social types, can resonate trans-historically, even when those mores and practices

and hierarchies are no longer recognisable through analogy with now. The satirical ironies of *Los mirones* may need framing for a 21st century audience through context but ultimately its humour still works, because it reflects its times and their difference from our own, a continuum in which we are necessarily implicated. When *Los mirones* was transcribed along with fourteen other *entremeses* into a single volume, its comedy reflected awkward truths about the early seventeenth century. Its difficulty for us reveals how those concerns and the sources of its comedy remain relevant, its humour still touches us even if its difference is invoked to define our own times. In what follows, I offer a brief, introductory textual history of the play, set out evidence for its definitive attribution to Salas Barbadillo and briefly explore Renaissance theories of humour and comedy, as well as ideas about how humour in the *entremés* and *comedia* differed. The second part of the article explores how the performance as research staged reading of the play by the Madrid-based theatre company Grumelot in the summer of 2022 in London and then at the Almagro International Theatre Festival contributed to our understanding of it as a chamber piece, designed to be read/performed by a coterie of friends in a domestic setting. The animus of the play satirising a series of social types from Black people to older women, the blind and fashion victims, turns back on itself and its readers. It shows us how comedy could be staged on the page and force us to reflect on the dynamics of power implicit in any joke.

The unattributed manuscript of *Los mirones* [*The Gawkers*],<sup>121</sup> a short comic play probably from the second decade of the 17th century, is one of fifteen items found in a scribal volume of *entremeses* held in the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville. The catalogue entry offers a series of uncertain attributions of its contents to writers from Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza (two) to Cervantes (five), Lope de Vega (four), Francisco de Quevedo (two), Luis de Góngora (one), Félix Persio Bertiso (one) and Guillén Pierre (one), as well

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<sup>121</sup> I would like to extend my warmest thanks and appreciation to my fellow *mironista* John Beusterien, who drew my attention to the text in the first place and has encouraged and supported this research. We are currently working on an edition and translation. Our draft translation of the title as *The Gawkers* eschews the perhaps more obvious and attention-grabbing term ‘voyeur’, a tempting possibility but one that calls forth a set of modern psychoanalytic, sexual associations not entirely apt for this play.

as proposing the clearly erroneous date of 1601. Antonio Hurtado Mendoza would only have been fifteen then and two of the texts ('Los habladores' and 'La cárcel de Sevilla') only appeared in the *Séptima parte de las comedias de Lope* in 1617. Our tentative date for *Los mirones* puts it closer to 1620. The temptation of discovering a new Cervantine text proved irresistible to the 19th century philologist Adolfo de Castro, who included *Los mirones* from this volume in his *Varias obras inéditas de Cervantes*, along with two other pieces; the eleventh *Entremés de Doña Justina y Calaborra* and the fifteenth *Entremés de Refranes*. Castro, however, was infamous for having perpetrated one of the most notorious literary frauds of the 19th century, faking a thirteenth Cervantine *Novela ejemplar*, 'El buscapié' in 1848. The catalogue's attributions appear to have relied on Castro's false claims.

The case for Cervantine authorship of *Los mirones* has been repeated recently (López-Vázquez), however, an initial analysis using Stylometry with R, confirms its attribution, proposed by Javier Blasco in 2019, to Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo. Cautioning against the difficulties of establishing authorship in relation to this short comic form, given the vicissitudes of transmission, copying and reproduction, along with textual uncertainties implicit in satirical imitation, parody and pastiche, Blasco reminds us that stylometric analysis can only ever function as a guide to probabilities. In an identical way, results which have arisen out of my collaboration with John Beusterien exploring the authorship question (see Figure 1), confirm that *Los mirones* is by Salas Barbadillo, something confirmed by the existence of another *entremés* whose title echoes that of this piece, *Los mirones de la corte* and which originally appeared in Salas Barbadillo's *La casa de placer honesto* (1620) (Cotarelo y Mori). Our analysis expanded the corpus to include several of his full-length plays with certain attribution and the result was repeated and confirmed. Although interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, as is clear from the infographic, the Cervantine *entremés* is particularly closely associated with Salas Barbadillo, sharing one of the branches of the consensus tree.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> I would like to extend our sincere and profound gratitude to David Amelang for all his indispensable help with using this technology and producing this infographic for us. The quick and dirty methodology compared the one hundred to four hundred most frequent words in a corpus of *entremeses* of

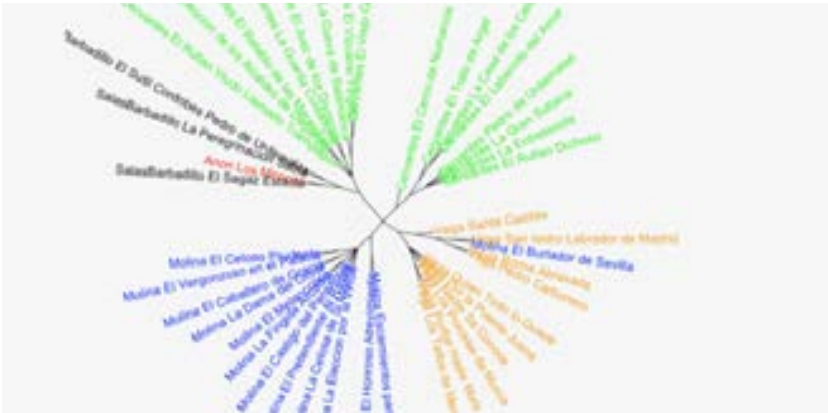


Figure 1: Word frequency (top 100 – 400) comparison of plays and *entremeses* by Miguel de Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo visualised using R.

Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo was born in Madrid in 1581, the eldest of six. His father was a solicitor for businesses in New Spain, while his mother's dowry was worth the considerable sum of seven thousand *reales* when the properties were eventually sold. He studied for a time at the University of Alcalá but soon appears to have dedicated himself to literature, writing preliminary obsequies for Agustín de Rojas' *Viaje entretenido* (1603) and Lope's *El peregrino en su patria* (1604). In 1612 his best-known novel, *La hija de Celestina*, was published and a year later he signed the final 'aprobación' of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*, as well as bringing out a further five works, including *El sagaz Estacio*, the source play along with 'El casamiento engañoso' of Fletcher, Webster, Massinger and Ford's collaboration *Rule a Wife Have a Wife* (1624) (Samson). He sought the patronage of the Duke of Sessa, which may have led him to Andalusia. Although there is no documentation to corroborate a stay there. His knowledge of Seville is apparent not just in *Los mirones* but also from other works by him such as *El*

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plays. The closeness and overlap of the different texts, according to this digital fingerprint, are then represented using the visualisation tool R on a consensus tree (Maciej et al.). We availed ourselves of the indispensable corpus created by Álvaro Cuéllar and Germán Vega García-Luengos. Salas Barbadillo presents challenges in relation to attribution due to the fact that his dramatic works were incorporated in his prose works.



*gallardo Escarramán*. Another five works appeared in 1620, but this appears to have been the zenith of his literary activities: after the last of his major works came out in 1623, he apparently eked out a living as an usher in the household of the queen until his death in 1635. He did not enjoy the success of other contemporaries with most of his works being limited to one or two editions, however, he was an innovator, inventing the academy set novel, blending picaresque and courtly elements in a number of works and most significantly for our purposes honing the novel in dialogue form, also described as ‘comedia en prosa’, a form that despite stage directions was conceived of to be read rather than performed. For this reason, he is defined as a novelist in the Real Academia de la Historia’s *Diccionario Biográfico Español* entry, which summarises his literary contribution as being that of a defender of the aristocracy, in search of the ‘caballero perfecto’, in the face of a deceitful, false, and degraded society peopled by picaros, prostitutes, procuresses, drunks and thugs; an apt enough characterisation of the world of *Los mirones* (*Diccionario biográfico español*).

In her introduction to Salas Barbadillo’s *comedia*, *El gallardo Escarramán*, Elena di Pinto elaborates on the range of intertexts ‘refundidas’/reworked by him, which include Cervantes’ *El rufián viudo llamado Trampagos* and *La Cárcel de Sevilla*, third item in the manuscript collection containing *Los mirones* (Di Pinto 41). *La Cárcel de Sevilla*, *Los mirones*, *El hospital de los podridos* and *Los habladores* (second *entremés* in the Biblioteca Colombina volume) were all attributed to Cervantes in a 2005 monograph by Vicente Pérez de León, updating Eugenio Asensio’s classic *Itinerario del entremés*. Pérez de León argued that humorous critique, the carnivalesque form of comedy characteristic of Cervantes gave way to burlesque and the satirical mockery of social types, who fail to adhere to the behavioural and cultural norms established by the ruling ideology. In Jesús Maestro’s review it is expressed in terms of a progressive substitution of ‘una *comicidad crítica* con lo normativo y convencional [characteristic of Cervantes] por una *comicidad burlesca* que escarnece socialmente a todo cuanto no se ajusta a lo normativo y convencional [typical of Calderón]’; a change that implied ‘la pérdida de complejidad argumental, la devaluación estamental de los personajes, la simplificación de los prototipos sociales – reconocidos únicamente por sus vicios o



deficiencias – así como la disolución de todo contenido subversivo’ (Maestro 203). Although using a specific form of comedy, taken to be characteristic of Cervantes, to identify other works by him runs the risk of tautology, the discussion underlines how much comic writers drew on and mutually influence each other, a factor that complicates questions of authorship. The protagonist of the frame narrative in which *El gallardo Escarramán* nestles, Salas Barbadillo’s *El sutil Cordovés Pedro de Urdemalas*, has a servant called Rinconete, in a double Cervantine echo (Di Pinto 42). This homage to the work of Cervantes underlines how complex the nexus of literary influences, plot elements and stylistic devices shared by *entremés* writers during this period were. Borrowing, pastiche and the recycling of plot situations was a stock in trade of the form. One implication of this might be that where critics have seen Cervantine borrowings, they are in fact cases of self-plagiarism of works as yet unattributed to Salas Barbadillo. Further analysis of the Seville collection will almost certainly yield further new attributions.

The section in Emilio Cotarelo y Mori’s magisterial collection of *entremés* dedicated to Salas Barbadillo brings together fourteen short comic pieces from his three last novels: *La casa de placer honesto* (Madrid, 1620), where *Los mirones de la corte* appeared, *Fiestas de la boda de la incasable malcasada* (Madrid, 1622) and the posthumous *Coronas del Parnaso* (Madrid, 1635). For Cotarelo y Mori, his work was marked by a ‘natural satírico y maldiciente, fustigando sin piedad a todas las clases y personas colectivas que veían sus ojos’, embellished by ‘agudeza de frase y de concepto’, showcasing ‘la fuerza... gráfica y expresiva de nuestro idioma’ (Cotarelo y Mori LXX – LXXI). This positive assessment of the richness of his language was echoed in Eugenio Asensio’s classic 1965 account of the *entremés*, in which Salas Barbadillo is described as ‘hombre que por sequedad de imaginación pisaba huellas ajenas’ in ‘libros misceláneos, auténticas ollas podridas de sátira costumbrista’, although they do possess ‘ingenio’ and ‘agudeza verbal’ (Asensio 97). The critical tradition’s positive assessment of Salas Barbadillo’s verbal ingenuity sits in tension with this characteristic dismissal of his work as unoriginal and ‘rotten’, rooted in purveying an inferior brand of coarse and crude comedy, at least by comparison to Cervantes. His analysis reflects the notion that the comic characters in *entremés* and *comedia*, ‘bobo’

and 'gracioso', progressively diverged: 'La suerte del bobo muestra el paulatino distanciamiento de comedia y entremés' (Asensio 39). Asensio's monograph argues that the *comedia* and *entremés* diverge because the *comedia* seeks to achieve a unified representation of the world, while the *entremés* accepts its chaos and irreducibility and relies on 'normas opuestas'; the irony of the gracioso encourages our sympathy, while the *entremés* rests on distancing effects only momentarily undercut by common human weakness; humour is only ever partial in the *comedia* but all-encompassing in the *entremés*; *comedia* is found in poetic language, while in the *entremés* the language is gesture and gesticulation, tending towards song and dance, the purely performative, beyond language itself.

Asensio's argument implies that the *entremés* is 'letra muerta' which can only be revived in 'el tablado de la imaginación', glimpsed through a glass darkly because it is 'inseparable de un contexto lingüístico, social y sentimental que únicamente a través de una niebla de erudición logramos a veces percibir', characterised by its 'flexibilidad y mutaciones incesantes' and rooted in 'lenguaje callejero' that aims only to provoke laughter (Asensio 246 – 7). The fundamental problem then is that because its context is irrecoverable we will never fully get the joke. This pessimistic view rests on a notion of legibility, proposing that the form is ultimately rooted in an orality that like theatre itself is tied to the moment of performance and contrasts with the durability of the textual or literary artefact. The lack of form or stable generic convention means that it resists anything approaching the poetic, remaining unapologetically anarchic and amoral. The *entremés* is an escape-valve for repressed unconscious desires, linked to festivity and the carnivalesque: 'la libertad con que el entremés traspone a realidad física las imaginaciones y los modos de lenguaje... traspasa la verosimilitud para internarse en la fantasía... se divierte en subrayar el desorden y rebeldía de los instintos... todos los seres son cómicos... avasallados por sus flaquezas' (Asensio 249, 251). Language becomes increasingly exaggerated and unrestrained, drifting off into a fantasy world bereft of truth, where its referents are merely linguistic, a patchwork of allusions, colloquialisms, and slang. The conceptualisation of comedy here draws on classically derived early modern ideas of *turpitude* and *deformitas*, the comic as a representation of the base and ugly, a painting of the world as worse

than it is. Laughter in this context is associated with the reproofing of folly and moral weakness, characteristic of shared, fallible humanity.

The question is whether Salas Barbadillo's comedy was rooted in the metalinguistic, beyond the formally poetic, in the base and bodily, evanescent and immanent performance, without any pretension to profundity. Underlying this reading is a notion of comedy as always context specific, whether historically or linguistically, which might confirm that jokes are always lost in translation. Laughter could be derisive or conciliatory, needling society's wounds or acting as 'healing purge' (Shrank 51), paradoxically joyous and cynical, celebratory and mocking. Understanding which variety of humour is at work depends on who is laughing at who and why. In an article on Salas Barbadillo's *entremés El descasamentero*, one of only two dramas from this period that confront the issue of divorce (Cervantes' *El juez de los divorcios* being the other), Tania de Miguel Magro notes that it was 'meant to be read, not performed' (36). She argues that it typifies his radicalism presenting 'an array of positive female characters that challenge common negative opinions' and showing that 'the supposed harmony of Christian marriage is in reality a form of torment from which one cannot escape' (39 and 46). More importantly she continues that 'it is in the theatrical form (always burlesque) that Salas finds the proper venue to denounce a society moved by falseness and greed... [and] articulate dissident points of view': he invites 'the reader, even when reading in solitude, to experience the text as if he or she were attending a performance. This imagined performance enriches the disruptive nature of the text'. For her 'Salas wants to demonstrate that theatre and utopias can be spaces to fight for social justice' (Miguel Magro 38 and 50). The text itself becomes paradoxically the means of representing orality and performance, liveness.

Richard Preiss has argued that the posthumous publication of *Tarlton's Jests* (1590), commemorating the renowned English clown Richard Tarlton, sought to console his audience and compensate for their grief at the loss of his irreplaceable presence. The move away from theatre into print held out the possibility that his extemporising inventions could be perpetuated and live on, reconciling the opposed claims of improvisation and textuality: the 'contradiction between presence and absence, between the autonomous performance that motivated the clown's authorship, and the anonymous performance

such authorship dictated' (131). The dramatic script like a musical score only comes to life through the dialogic, interactive nature of performance, the translation or traducing of a script by performers in unique and unrepeatable momentary iterations. Controversy over the extent of Will Kempe's improvisations may have led to his replacement by Robert Armin as the principal clown/fool character for the Lord Chamberlain's Men around 1600. The tension between authorial control and actorly improvisation reflected opposed claims concerning the nature of dramatic mediation, whether the actor was merely a transparent and empty vessel, the conduit of another's language, or whether as an 'absolute interpreter' the play only exists through the bodily presence, 'autonomy, immediacy and generativity' of the player (114 and 116). For Preiss, Tarlton's textual commemoration reflected this paradox, as the famous clown's afterimage merged with his author-function and '[h]aving used him up' literary history abandoned him 'not in Helicon, but marooned in Hell, singing other people's songs to the damned, confined to a walk-on part in someone else's story', unable to represent himself any longer (140). This problem afflicts comic parts most sharply where familiarity with the physical presence of the comedian or contextual familiarity with the 'material' are key to the humour.

In developing performances of two *entremeses* by Quevedo in 2019, the shadow puppet troupe Dragoncillo had to adapt 'cultural references... to enhance their intelligibility (and humour) across cultures', seeking 'to duplicate the inherent familiarity of *Siglo de Oro* works by tapping into easily recognizable themes and subjects for contemporary audiences': even where these cultural reference necessitated 'significant departures from the original plays, the themes, characters, plots, and flow of the *entremeses* were not compromised' (Fernández, et al. 12 and 14). The substitution or replacement of references in the adaptation, however, was an iterative process because 'the audience responded favorably to certain choices and less favorably to others, creating a feedback loop that encouraged both improvisation and experimentation in each of the translations' (Fernández, et al. 15). Humour is in this sense a question not just of adaptation to context, both cultural and temporal, but also an on-going improvisatory and experimental adaptability in relation to each unique performance and audience. This returns us to the central question of relevance and whether the

representation of these occasional comic pieces can retain their force with contemporary audiences when the downstream context, to use Terence Cave's phrase, is so different (21). For Dragoncillo '[e]ach *entremés* presents a carnivalesque world turned upside down where the protagonists play with multiple identities and social expectations are constantly under the microscope. Given how the plays subvert gender and beauty norms, the comical situations proposed by these three farces are visionary within their own context and relevant to 21st-century audiences' (Fernández, et al. 17). Whether discourses that seem central to us were merely emergent or whether the representations themselves are continuously reanimated by the evolving nature of contemporary language, at the heart of the issue of comedy is relevance, the nature of the truth it reflects concerning society and the times, then or now. If '[t]he puppet epitomizes the abjection of being ventriloquized by "interpreters",' the self-authorizing performer foregrounds their presence (and fame), their being another while being themselves, their license to extemporise, to literally be out of time to the extent that they expend themselves in the moment of performance through speech acts that are not fixed or fixable in text (Preiss 113 – 4). This opposition reflects the contrast between seeing the text as empty vessel filled up by the subjecthood of performer and audience or the actor as empty vessel filled up by the text. The adaptation of drama whose references and immediate contexts have become ghostly afterimages of an original may in fact reveal fundamental logics buried in the *realia* of language and its metaphors uncovering social dynamics dressed and obscured by formal qualities of tone and diction. Mapping social and power relations through translation is one of the most controversial but fruitful challenges of working with classical theatre, aiming at productive analogy and creative anachronism, as opposed to forced or failed parallel.

Our research question was can *Los mirones* work for contemporary audiences, what forms of translation are required to make the text live, to reanimate the nature of its humour, especially given the prominence of derisive mockery, cruel and dehumanising laughter.<sup>123</sup> A staged reading took place at the Cervantes Theatre in London

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<sup>123</sup> We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Instituto Cervantes, University College London and Texas Tech University, as well as contributions from staff

following a symposium on comedy at the Instituto Cervantes on 28th June 2022 to explore this hypothesis. In the opening scene, the nature of the confraternity set up to divert the Licenciado Mirabel and his student disciples during carnival is revealed to the other two characters ‘on stage’ at the outset; the noblemen, Don Diego and Don Francisco, who play a crucial role in directing the reception of the anecdotes that the *mirones* bring back from their explorations of the city and its inhabitants. Mirabel explains that spreading out like friars, ‘a lo disimulado mirando’, they seek the ‘gustoso’ and ‘extravagante’, returning with ‘baratijas o basura... que contar y que reír’ (MS 56-4-36, fols. 20r – v). Diego immediately qualifies that it is ‘sin perjuicio de nadie... y aun con provecho de los que fueren de esta cofradía porque con ir aduertidos y mirones van cultivando los ingenios y adquiriendo experiencias de todo lo que vean para hacerse prudentes’ (MS 56-4-36, fol. 20v). Despite their spying on the inhabitants and search for the laughable, in a delightful subversion of humanist injunctions, their actions are not just harmless but positively improving cultivations of prudence. The exclusive nature of the *cofradía* is delineated by the Licenciado who makes clear that it is not enough merely to see but that the brothers are required to demonstrate perceptiveness and discernment:

**Licenciado:**... ¡Cuántos jumentos o caballos pasean por las calles de Sevilla con los ojos abiertos siendo mirones de todo lo que pasa que preguntados que han visto o que han ponderado en lo que han visto no darán razón dello! Lo mismo sucede a muchos hombres que pasan por lo que ven con el mismo descuido que un caballo.

**Don Francisco:** ¡Cuántos conozco yo de estos! Infinitos que solo parece que nacieron en el mundo para gusanos de seda duermen lo más de la vida comen y beben el resto y al fin muérense dentro del capullo. (MS 56-4-36, fol. 20v)

The theme of seeing and blindness, physical or moral, resonates with the framing conceit of voyeurs using the city as their theatre. A series of comic episodes about the blind, from the two who walk

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and students from UCLA’s Diversifying the Classics, Shakespeare’s Globe and the indefatigable and brilliant team at Grumelot.

into each other and set about berating the other for not looking where they are going, to Briones who upon marrying insists on going straight to bed with his bride, only for their nuptial bliss to be thwarted by her bestial fart, or the man blinded by an excess of sex in his uncle's brothel. Don Diego concludes from their discussion of the blind that they must envy Lazarillo's blind master and attempt to imitate him 'en la ruindad de las costumbres' (MS 56-4-36, fol. 21r). Picking up on a commonplace from the period the Licenciado observes: 'Sevilla es una Nínive es otra Babilonia de lo que rueda por esas calles si hay quien lo note cada hora puede hacerse una crónica' (MS 56-4-36, fol. 21r). Babylon and the associated Tower of Babel was a metaphor for the racial diversity of Spain's major Atlantic trading port, whose black population may have been as high as 12%. This trope connected imperial diversity and sinful corruption provoking providential destruction. Nineveh reinforces the association through the story of king Sardanapalus, who was an emblem of worldliness and hedonistic sensuality linked to his transvestism and implied homosexuality. The implicit moral critique has racial, gender and class dimensions.

This is one obvious way in which 'downstream' context amplifies the thematic concerns of *Los mirones*. The attempt to come to terms with a global cosmopolitan city, shopwindow for universal knowledge, calls forth voyeurism and an impulse to learn but also confusion at the fragmentary, unassimilable flow of information. The presentation of Seville as a paragon and ideal of universal, global knowledge is twinned with a moralising vision of decline, palpable in the tensions implicit in its racialised, misogynist, classist, ageist and ableist humour. The supposedly witty stories of the *mirones* are not, however, the voice of the text. An ironic distance hovers around the edges of their anecdotes, which are increasingly self-referential. In the final one, a seduction gone wrong, the *mirón* almost drowns in a rotten Roman pumpkin dropped on his head by one of the male relatives of the woman he is courting. The offending vegetable is then hailed as a relic, a miraculous punishment sent from heaven.

Similarly, in a tirade against old women, the Licenciado reflects momentarily 'pienso que lo hacemos las más veces por encubrir lo bien que las queremos', before Don Diego and Don Francisco



return to their offensive insults (MS 56-4-36, fol. 28r). The third and fourth *mirones*, Vozmediana and Robles, return to communicate their amazement at coming across a bridle-maker filing down a piece of tack and harness wearing ‘unos calzones y ropilla de terciopelado, medias de seda y ligas con rapacejos y una valona con puntas’, an outfit more appropriate for ‘un caballero principal el día de su boda’ (MS 56-4-36, fols. 25v – 26r). Vozmediana comments that it reflects ‘la disolución del tiempo que hoy corre a tal extremo’, which the Licenciado echoes suggesting ‘es uno de los abusos vergonzosos que se ha introducido en este pedazo de siglo en que vivimos’ (MS 56-4-36, fols. 25v – 26r). The story is picked up by a merchant friend who tells the *mirones* about a handyman entering his shop asking for a pair of crimson stockings. Unsure if it is a joke or not, he agrees with the neighbouring shopkeepers to seek him out on Sunday and sure enough they spot ‘hombrón con unas medias de seda carmesí en unas piernas con unas pantorrillazas que no cupieran aquí’ (MS 56-4-36, fol. 26v). Although the racial identity of the handyman is not alluded to at the outset of the anecdote, he is described as black before they identify him in part through his brawny physique and massive calves, a stereotype associated with Black Africans connected to dance and hypersexuality. The merchant concludes his story linking this individual’s ostentatious dress with the exorbitant cost of labour.

Complaints that status and social hierarchy were being undermined by the ubiquity and availability of silk cloth to a far broader range of consumers than before, a democratising of dress, was associated by the *arbitristas* with an economically injurious addiction to foreign luxury goods, imported as demarcators of class and a cosmopolitan habitus. In his research on the guilds and social disturbances in Seville, Igor Knezevic argues that this diffusion and its subversion of class ‘was certainly obvious to contemporaries, due to the social meanings attached to silk garments. Once reserved for the nobility and wealthy urban merchants, thanks to the general prosperity of the times silk was making its way down the social ladder, expanding its consumer base’ (218). He illustrates the point with reference to this anecdote in *Los mirones*. The silk industry in Spain entered terminal decline by the mid-seventeenth century, following the expulsion of the *moriscos* 1609–12, a series of devastating floods, associated with the Little Ice Age, that uprooted mulberry plantations in Granada and Seville, and growing competition from East Asia,



which exchanged silk for New World silver on the Manila galleon. The policing of class boundaries takes on a racial complexion in this central section of the *entremés*, which builds on other episodes like the physical altercation between a ‘mulata’ and ‘moza de harto buena cara y no mal vestida’, who being shoved in the queue to buy cherries tells the former to kiss her where the sun does not shine. This she duly does in front of the entire crowd, saying ‘Mirad como os obedezco ¿queréis que os bese más o en otra parte?’ The outraged victim complains to the magistrate, who summons the ‘mulata’ who in turn states in her defence ‘como soy esclava y he de hacer lo que me mandan no pude dejar de obedecerla’ and is ordered as punishment ‘que... no fuese tan obediente’ (MS 56-4-36, fol. 22v – 23v). The joke derives from inversion, the world upside down when an enslaved figure is too obedient, humiliating a social superior by taking her at her word, interpreting commands literally. The upending of hierarchy is then authorized by the *corregidor* whose own response is an attempt to contain his own laughter. At the very end of the *entremés* the fourth and fifth *mirones* dance off to the house of a neighbour, who it transpires is Seville’s supreme civil authority, the Veinticuatro.

Bestial or humanising, laughter can reconcile or distance, include or exclude. The *mirones* themselves exclude and are egged on in this by the Dons in ways that wilfully intensify the satirical, mocking direction of their gaze. For Roy Norton the *gracioso* figure engenders ‘dialogue between social unequals at the heart of the *comedia* an intellectually and dramatically productive dualism’ (201 and see Pedraza Jiménez et al.). In this *entremés* that dualism is dissolved and transformed into a struggle for power that undermines and questions class and other distinctions through a carnivalesque humour that asks: who is laughing at who? who is looking at who? who has authority in relation to who? The length, presentation in prose, anecdotal dialogic structure and attribution to Salas Barbadillo all suggest *Los mirones* was designed to be read, with the imagined performance enhancing, as Miguel Magro argues, the disruptive nature of the text. The constitution of the brotherhood of the Gawkers makes the key distinction that the comedy thematises, that looking is not the same as seeing, that a lively intelligence is required to ascertain the humour and truth of contemporary society. The metaphor of the silkworm

invoked at the outset implicitly criticises those who do not open their eyes and look at the world around them, contentedly living and dying in their ‘capullo’/cocoon and this reflects the irony back on the *mirones* themselves, as well as the authority figures they entertain. Salas Barbadillo’s work is critical of society’s greed and falsity, constituting itself as a dissident, oppositional voice through its manipulation of the space between the textual and the performative.

Collaboration with the brilliant Madrid-based theatre company Grumelot,<sup>124</sup> directed by Carlota Graviño, underlined the power of performance studies approaches in uncovering the ironies and comedic possibilities foregrounded by contemporary reception. Her direction and mise-en-scène brought out the key question about who is looking at who and where authority lies, by throwing up images of the audience watching themselves on screen as the play on stage begins, our looking and participation as an audience makes us part of the performance. Laughter was also problematised with the use of canned laughter and the cast spontaneously laughing for no apparent reason to underline the question of who laughs and why and whether we should be laughing or finding this funny? The framing of the three staged readings explored how the piece might function as something ‘entre el espectáculo teatral y la conferencia performativa’ (“Mirar a los mirones”). The projection of framing contextual information about black life in Seville in the 17th century and in particular the infamous stand-off between the Cofradía de los Negros and the white religious brotherhoods over their processional route through the heart of the city provided a key to situate the text in relation to tensions in the city over how to rationalise racial diversity and radical Christian egalitarianism. Interestingly, the protests demanding the black confraternity be forced outside the city walls eventually fell on deaf ears. Their successful appeal to the Pope saw them reinstated at the heart of civic religious culture. Racially diverse casting made it harder for the audience to misread the racial discourse in the text literally and allowed contemporary stories about police brutality to be introduced with bitter irony. In their publicity for the show, the troupe dubbed the piece ‘[u]na oda

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<sup>124</sup> For information on the company see: <http://www.grumelot.com/>. I would like to thank Lorenzo Pappagallo for all his energy and effort in making the project happen.

al valor de la mirada y a su capacidad para generar realidad y relato además de ser un excepcional retrato de la diversidad social y racial de la España del XVII' ("Mirar a los mirones"). There is no question that *Los mirones* is an important document for the social history of Seville in the first decades of the century. But further than that it is funny, even if the acerbic comedy has become almost unpalatable in the light of the weight of Black Atlantic history and our own inaction on issues of racial justice in the 21st century.

*The Gawkers* are early modern flauers, listening secretly, overhearing but protected by their anonymity, voyeurs whose illicit pleasure overflows any knowledge or understanding their errant wandering in the city might proffer. Their anecdotes are valueless rubbish, as the Licenciado states. The interest of the two dons, Don Diego and Don Francisco to whom all is explained, probably says more about them than their subjects. In relation to our research question—'what are the limits of the performable in the 21st century given the 'comedy' of this interlude making light of slavery, race, misogyny, disability, class and religion?'—, the staged readings underlined how much we can learn from performers' embodiment of text. Framing, staging and a diverse cast allowed the actors to confront troubling aspects of the piece, forcing the contemporary audience to reflect even more than is implicit in the piece itself on who is laughing at who, who is observing who and ultimately who the joke is on, while deepening their understanding of racial discourse and tension in 17th century Spain's most diverse city, the 'tablero de ajedrez'/chessboard, Seville. Salas Barbadillo's *Los mirones* explores the paradoxical tension between presence, immanence and the improvisatory and the textual, authorial, and comic. A 21st century performance sharpened elements of the irony and humour showing how social others, like the Black population of early modern Seville in aping the customs and habitus of their social superiors unjustly provoked their contempt and derision. It plays in sophisticated way with hypocrisy and the trope of seeing versus perceiving, a reenvisioning of the Baroque trope of appearance versus reality. Are we as readers supposed to laugh at the mocking satirists who fail to recognise the hypocrisy of their own laughter because their derision reveals their lack of humanity rather than saying anything about those at whom they jeer? Or are we as bad as they are? Have we

been tricked into laughing by misrecognising the profound ironies of jokes whose injustice should be a thing of the past? This may reveal that the times have not really changed as much as we might like to think.

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## MUSIC AND PERFORMANCE IN THE INAEM/CNTC PRODUCTION OF LUÍS VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA'S *LA SERRANA DE LA VERA*

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**Abstract:** This article centers on how Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (INAEM), under the direction of María Ruiz, sponsored by Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC), successfully stage in Madrid's Teatro Pavón the 2004 premiere of a version of Luís Vélez de Guevara's (1579-1644) *La serrana de la Vera* (1603). Luís Landero's script, which, apart from a few modifications, closely follows the original, leans heavily on music by the esteemed José Nieto (Madrid 1942- ), who composed specifically for this production. José Nieto's cinematographic approach to incorporating music in *La serrana de la Vera's* production echoes the conventions of Spanish Renaissance and Baroque theatrical music practices. Like many of the Golden Age Comedia playwrights and composers undoubtedly intended, Nieto's music provides flexible and pragmatic special effects; it highlights *performative* and ideological aspects of the play while making it attractive and accessible to modern audiences.

**Resumen:** Este artículo analiza cómo el Instituto nacional de las artes escénicas (INAEM), bajo la dirección de María Ruiz, y con el

patrocinio de la Compañía nacional de teatro clásico (CNTC), exitosamente montaron con música una versión de *La serrana de la Vera* (1603) de Luís Vélez de Guevara (1579-1644) en el Teatro Pavón de Madrid en 2004. El guion de Luís Landero, salvo de algunas modificaciones, sigue fielmente la obra original y se respalda en la música del preeminente compositor José Nieto (Madrid 1942- ), quien compuso específicamente para esta presentación. La aproximación cinematográfica de imbricación musical para la representación de *La serrana de la Vera* refleja las convenciones de la práctica teatral de la temprana edad moderna. Como muchos de los dramaturgos y músicos auriseculares sin duda propusieron, la música de Nieto proporciona unos efectos especiales flexibles y pragmáticos, enaltece aspectos ideológicos y performativos mientras atrae, entretiene y hace la representación accesible al público de hoy en día.

**Keywords / Palabras clave:** Vélez de Guevara, *La serrana de la Vera*, performance, function of music, adaptation of music / Vélez de Guevara, *La serrana de la Vera*, función de la música, adaptación de la música

A hallmark of the so-called Spanish Golden Age Comedia is its pursuit of creating an identifiable reflection of life through an innate amalgamation of—among many other metaphorical “worlds” and spaces—art, culture, history, philosophy, and a plethora of metaphysical, existential, religious, courtly, and secular preoccupations of the times. Lope de Vega (1562-1635), in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609) proposes to “... imitar las acciones de los hombres, / y pintar de aquel siglo las costumbres” (García Santo Tomás 134 vv. 52-53), in part through the deliberate application of music in the theatrical space to represent as well as to stimulate the public, and Luís Vélez de Guevara (1579-1644), one of Lope’s most famous disciples, was no exception to this practice (Stein 40-41). Centuries later, the lyricism and musicality in Vélez’s works still inspire modern productions. To confirm the assertion, we need only examine Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico’s (CNTC) and Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música’s (INAEM) staging of *La serrana de la Vera* (1603), under the direction of María



Ruiz, which premiered in Madrid's Teatro Pavón in 2004. Luís Landero's text, which, apart from a few modifications, follows closely Vélez's original, leans remarkably on music by the esteemed José Nieto (Madrid 1942- ), who composed specifically for the production given that there are no known extant scores for the play. Since Nieto had previously composed for productions such as *Los locos de Valencia* (1986), *No puede ser* (1987), and *Premio Max winner, El burlador de Sevilla* (2003)—, the 39th Festival de Almagro made him the first musician to be honored in 2016.

Leaving an abundance of prestigious nominations and awards aside, Nieto's *Música para la imagen* compiles his approach to composing music for film, foundations on which he also relies to compose for the theater. Nieto borrows from various theorists who draw on narrative, semiotic, and psychoanalytic models that flourished in film studies in the 1970s, particularly Claudia Gorbman, to split the function of music for the image as "Diegetic" and "Non-diegetic." Diegetic music refers, for example, to musicians, singers, dances, instruments, and ensembles, or the music characters themselves hear or see in the image (or in the play in question). "Non-diegetic music" includes music that somehow modifies or contributes to the rhythm of the image, affects the continuity of the narration, helps transmit emotions, emphasizes certain aspects of the image to affect the point of view of the audience, and enhances the communication of semiotic codes (Nieto 21-34). Drawing on the metaphorical and artistic worlds of theater, music, and performance, this essay will focus on José Nieto's cinematographic approach to incorporating music in CNTC's production and illustrate how today's *comedia* performances can most effectively compensate for the lack of extant period music in early modern theater. His deliberately anachronistic score is consistent with seventeenth-century applications of stage music as a pragmatic and special effect to communicate various performative and ideological aspects of plays.

Born in Écija, Spain, Luís Vélez de Guevara (1578/79-1644) graduated from the University of Osasuna in 1596, entered in the service of Seville's Cardinal, assisting in Philip III and Margarita's nuptials. His popular flattering personality must have attracted the friendship and tutorship of Lope de Vega and the graces of both Philip III and Philip IV, serving as usher of chamber for

almost twenty years. After a brief stint in Italy, Vélez enlisted in Count of Fuentes's army. He returned to work for the Count of Saldaña (1602?), during which time he married and wrote his first poetic compositions. In these courtly circles, Vélez de Guevara undoubtedly was privy to privileged matters, including rising and developing literary and musical tendencies (Peale 931-32), which probably helped mold his dramatic vision.

Vélez's dramaturgy, according to Ignacio Arellano, contains two predominating characteristics: 1) A high implementation of lyricism in the form of songs, ballads, or glosses of traditional poetry, with variant degrees of integration in the plot; 2) an interest in the visual development of scenes, especially integrating groups of actors in ceremonies that require some elaboration in costumes and ritualized gesture. *La serrana de la Vera's* lyricism not only tends to embellish the action using colorful metaphors in the *culteranismo* fashion (Arellano 311-12), but the action dramatizes a traditional ballad with some twenty-one versions in the lore of the Extremadura region (Menéndez Pidal and Goiry 134-36), which had also previously inspired Lope de Vega's play with the same title.

The action in Vélez's play centers on Gila, a gorgeous, sensual, strong, masculine (Boyle 159), and ultimately unhinged mountain woman turned *bandolera*, full of anomalous qualities who vows to savagely kill all men until ending Captain Lucas de Carvajal's life for deceiving, dishonoring, and abandoning her. While there has been an influx of excellent analyses of this play, there is little research on the impact of music in Vélez's works. Among notable exceptions are song-textual connections with Lope's works by Alín and Barrio Alonso, and the relatively recent publications by Lola Josa and Mariano Lambea, whose research assert a new kind of "romancero lírico" specific to the seventeenth century, cataloguing these poetic-musical compositions available for further collaborative study. This is a monumental task; paradoxically, playwrights, starting even before Lope's time, frequently borrowed from popular ballads, *romances*, *seguidillas*, *villancicos*, *tonos*, just to name a few, and while they mixed and edited them here and there to imitate and cultivate "national" tradition, they inadvertently convoluted the *lirica antigua* for posterity (Stein 27-28; 45-46). Moreover, the challenge of defining and framing the music-text interrelationships in the theater of Spanish early modern

period is that so many scores did not survive the passage of time, or are waiting to be identified in scattered songbooks across the globe. Nonetheless, this gap of information provides opportunities for scholars, practitioners, and artists today to negotiate ways to rescue, preserve, and promote the artistic, historical, and performative value of these oft-perceived irrelevant or archaic theatrical works to an increasingly desensitized audience.

It must also be noted that not all music meant to appear in Spanish early modern plays is explicit in stage directions or anywhere else on the original manuscripts, yet, for the purpose of shorthand while individual playwrights produced such an enormous number of plays in little time—up to several plays per week—, a substantial amount of music was a given. Still, in comparison with other plays, *Serrana* is average in terms of the number of explicit music, with 16 places for musical references and 3 musical scenes split almost evenly throughout the three acts (see appendix). Although *La serrana de la Vera* is hardly the only play by Vélez in which the metaphorical worlds of theater, music, and performance potentially converge, what makes this play's CNTC production singular is how José Nieto fleshes out the musical component from the text for maximum dramatic impact, undoubtedly, in similar fashion to how seventeenth-century playwrights and theater company composers had previously envisioned. Nieto elucidates a long-standing conception that musicians, rhythm, tonality, timbre, texture, and instrumentation affect the interpretation of an “image,” or a scene, potentially becoming a work's overarching *actant*.

*Música e imagen* deliberately delineates Nieto's vision of the importance of music in film, methods he also applies composing for the theater. In CNTC's production of *La serrana de la Vera* there are, for instance, situations where musical interludes slow and speed up dramatic rhythm throughout the acts: “... mencionaremos como la primera de sus posibles funciones ... su capacidad de aportar ritmo a la imagen o de modificar la percepción del ritmo de ésta” (Nieto 36). Music, therefore, becomes a metaphor for the perception of time helping to speed up the transition between the first and second acts. Although in the original play there is a break, the CNTC performance utilizes music to discreetly connect the two acts, in essence, directly jumping from the first and second to accommodate CNTC's cuts

and edits. For example, instead of lowering the curtain after the Catholic Monarchs' praise of Gila's bravery during the development of the secondary action, the stage darkens, a lone mezzo-soprano visible onstage sings Gila's theme song. While the stage lights return, Gila takes a new position in a space referencing the mountains of Garganta la Olla. Gila, lying on the floor visibly enjoying the solitude, as keyboard music mimics her every move, until Mingo appears as act 2 begins. This relationship between Gila's pantomime and music creates a pacifying mood—a semiotic calm before the storm—in which Gila enjoys a connection with and a refuge in nature, far away from the corrupt Captain Carvajal and his troops.

In symmetrical fashion to the first act, as act 3's curtain rises, the stage is almost dark except for a dimmed red light (instead of blue in act 1) overcasting the stage—foreshadowing the heights of Gila's thirst for vengeance—and a glowing zigzagged crack on the floor under various small round white spots representing stars in the night. Lighted poles in the form of trees appear ascending through holes slowly from under the stage, illuminated by white light, echoing once again the mountain range and vegetation of act 1. These images appear while bells, keyboard, and drone accompany a soloist singing Gila's *romance* stretch dramatic time, stimulating spectator anticipation and suspense that results in Gila descending upon the unsuspecting traveler (“caminante cantando” vv. 2202-2260). The production's score, therefore, in both introductory interludes of acts 1 and 3 emanates music that creates visceral and suspenseful tones and intervals that slow or speed-up the perception of dramatic rhythm and tempo (Nieto 36, 50).

Nieto's vision of how music affects dramatic rhythm extends to its structure, which he maintains depends on the preestablished design of each work (59-70). For this reason, in *La serrana de la Vera's* production there is music throughout from the first raising to the last lowering of the curtain. In the exposition of the play, for instance, the introductory interlude frames the vastness of Garganta la Olla's mountains and valleys. Then, in the play's complication, the Mezzo-Soprano underscores Gila's first entrance, Gila's intransigence against Captain Carvajal and then instruments help connect the secondary plot during the monarchs' entrances in act 1. Music also supports the successive complications of the play with the interlude

transition to act 2, followed by Magdalena's expository monologue depicting Carvajal's abuses of power, and most importantly, Gila's vow for violence after Carvajal dishonors her at the end of act 2. Nieto's score mirrors the play's symmetry in act 3 with another interlude introduction, contributes to the suspense during the sung *romance* during the entrance of Caminante, signals the play's turning point when drums mimic soldiers' tumbling down a hill getting lost and a disoriented Carvajal serendipitously finds Gila's hide out, and heightens Gila's climactic revenge, all the way up to the play's resolution with Gila's execution. In addition, every time there is a musical sequence in the performance, there is a deliberate fading in and out of music to signify a sense of continuity. Music, then, not only supports dramatic transitions, but more importantly, helps define the dramatic arc of the work.

Aside from defining the action's exposition, development, suspense, turning point, climax, and dénouement, Nieto maintains an effective way to enhance dialogue is to facilitate the hearing of two simultaneous voices and establish between them a counterpoint relationship: "Podríamos concluir que el buen resultado final de la mezcla de diálogo y música dependerá básicamente de la diferencia de articulación, registro, timbre e intensidad que establezcamos entre ambos elementos sonoros o, mejor dicho, de la diferencia de articulación, registro, y timbre que nuestra música presente respecto a esos mismos aspectos del diálogo" (Nieto 79). Music in CNTC's production not only supports the structure throughout, but it functions as a metaphorical voice, a principal counterpoint, if you will, to the play's dynamics, proxemics, and kinesics, significantly intensifying long expository monologues. For instance, in Gila's detailed narration of her hunt in act 1, or Gila's playful body movements in the introduction of act 2, or Gila's predatory crawling and facial expressions while she stalks Caminante in act 3, music—arpeggiated electric bass in staccato in crescendo / decrescendo fashion—plays in counterpoint to mimic the character's movements, facial expressions, and support dramatic intensity.

Moreover, Nieto's compositions also demonstrate how the type of music selected can emphasize individual components of the action, such as flashbacks. One of the flashbacks in *Serrana* occurs during Maestre's sudden arrival in act 1. As Isabel and Fernando

express admiration of Gila's beauty, bravery, and strength—indeed, she had saved the townspeople from a raging bull—drums announce Maestre's entrance (Fernando: "estos atambores, qué son? v. 948). CNTC's production substitutes the drums of the original play with a dynamic prerecorded drone sound that intensifies throughout Maestre's abbreviated expository monologue recounting the events. Something similar occurs at other junctions of the performance, such as when in act 2 Magdalena visits Gila up in the mountains and recounts the various offenses and injustices the captain commits in Garganta la Olla. The harmonic drone crescendos and decrescendos at various points in relation to the extent of the offenses, and the sound becomes fuller with added dissonant chords on a keyboard when on a different dream-like plane, we see simultaneously how the captain abuses and mistreats Giraldo. Whether the Maestre or Magdalena provides flashbacks, instrumental music plays counterpoint, facilitating a type of dialogue within the expository monologues, highlighting key dramatic points with versatile dynamics.

Another determining factor Nieto asserts is that musical genre is essential in defining a particular work:

Por enumerar algunos de estos géneros cinematográficos, podríamos citar el western, el cine negro, la comedia, el cine de terror, el fantástico, el musical, el cine bélico y el histórico... enseguida nos damos cuenta de que no todos estos géneros ofrecen el mismo grado de definición en sus rasgos específicos, y así vemos cómo el género negro, el western o el cine bélico presentan una notable diferencia, en cuanto a lo acusado y concreto de sus aspectos más característicos se refiere, con la comedia, el cine histórico o el fantástico." (Nieto 83)

Of course, early playwrights and theater composers experimented with types of music and dance genres to help define certain scenes (*villancicos*, *romances*, *ensaladas*, *tonos*, etc.), from weddings, funerals, religious feasts, to carnivals, courtly soirées, and royal entrances, among many others, frequently, within a single play. Nieto echoes this technique in CNTC's production of *Serrana*. Since not all musical genres offer the same defining characteristics, in this case in which music seamlessly integrates into virtually every aspect of the

spectacle, Nieto opted for electronic keyboard ambient, space, and new age music. Whether to depict through sustained and arpeggiated chords, to mention only some examples, the vastness of the mountains surrounding Garganta la Olla in introductory interludes, Gila's extraordinary beauty, strength, and wrath, or the cathartic crucifixion, Nieto's selection of musical genre successfully provides Vélez de Guevara's tragedy with a flexible, relatively low cost, and practical way to help create for a modern audience a consistently dark blue, dream-like far away world with a hint of the supernatural.

Along the same lines, the semiotic meaning instruments emit is paramount. Nieto plays with timbre in instruments to support the signification of certain types of scenes: "... no deberemos obviar las connotaciones semiológicas de algunos instrumentos como las trompas, el violonchelo o la guitarra eléctrica, así como las históricas o localistas de algunos otros como el banjo, la guitarra española, la flauta dulce, la cornamusa o el clavecín" (Nieto 50). We can hear, for example, electronic keyboards switching to harpsichord mode during the courtly scenes featuring the Catholic Monarchs in acts 1 and 3. Also, frequent bells and drums play throughout the play, such as when Giraldo's intransigence causes the dramatic complication with Captain Carvajal to escalate. Drums ritualistically used to motivate troops into battle resonate here to intimidate Giraldo, based on the character's defensive kinesics portrayed on stage. Bells, on the other hand, sound at the beginning of act 1 and then at the end of act 3, intensifying the suspense.

Curiously, Nieto notes how in the movie *Prometheus* (1911), the composer Alexander Scribin (1872-1915) utilized a keyboard with keys on a musical scale (Do=red, sol = orange, etc.) connected and associated with different colors of the spectrum (91). In early modern theatrical music, color, texture, tonality, and chord progressions would have been central to conveying meaning. Nieto's vision of the role of music in the production of *Serrana*, therefore, is also echoes the dramatic technique of early modern dramatists and theater composers. The significance of what Nieto calls musical color, or timbre—albeit now supported by today's technology and stagecraft—manifests itself in the recording (91-92). When the stage is black, the tonalities emanate a darker quality, and brighter chords predominate when the stage lights come on. In the first and



third acts, if we recall, the curtain rises and reveals a dark stage, except for a zigzagged crack of light (blue in the first, red in the third) dividing the floor under various small round white spots on the ceiling representing the night sky. Electronic keyboard playing arpeggios (higher pitched notes in the first, lower pitched notes in the third act) over a prerecorded drone appear to leverage lights to slowly expand as if metaphorically narrating a mountain range, eventually leading to the sounds of somber church bells. These tonalities and arpeggiated chord progressions are carefully connected to the lighting and to the general atmosphere of each act. In the first act, the blue lights and high-pitched arpeggios are brighter than the lower-pitched arpeggios and red lights of the third act, which signal a dark, eerie atmosphere. The CNTC performance, thus, plays with an electronic sound texture that semiotically correlates to the predominant dark and somber overtones that permeate the tragedy.

Perhaps one of the main functions of music in drama and film is to mirror kinesics and define physical as well as the psychological characteristics of personages. Apart from connoting physical attributes and underscoring conflicts, emotions, and the psychological status of characters, music can signify a character's mental process or its cultural or intellectual level if the composer is careful about selecting the appropriate harmonic and melodic language, just as different timbres can represent certain codes (95). *Serrana's* score emphasizes conflict, emotional and physical characteristics of the characters, most explicitly, for example, in the first act's *admiratio* scene. In the play, Gila, returning from a hunt, makes a grand entrance with an entourage of townspeople interrupting Captain Carvajal and his troops' forced garrison in the village of Garganta la Olla (vv. 205-420). Vélez's text offers detailed stage directions—quite uncharacteristically of most *comedias*—calling for “relinchos de labradores,” carrying lances crowned with heads of a wolf, a bear, and a boar, as Gila herself appears on a horse majestically dressed in hunter's clothing. Based on these stage directions, the introductory song in Vélez's work, “Quién como ella...” (v. 205), is probably meant to be polyphonic, wherein most characters on stage sing to the aggrandizement of the beautiful and amazing hunter-swordswoman. In CNTC's production, however, Gila is on foot and the musical scene is led by a solo mezzo-soprano:



Mirala puesta a caballo  
 rojos labios,  
 los ojos negros y graves  
 blancas manos  
 risa frente, hermoso,  
 pelo de ámbar  
 viene enamorando el aire,  
 la serrana... . (vv. 205-220)

The choice of incorporating the sounds of chimes, bells, and keyboard to accompany a full and deep mezzo-soprano operatic voice to sing the theme song connotes, on the one hand, physical strength, boldness, and passion, while on the other, the lyricism and pleasant tone underscore the beauty, sensuality, and *gallardía* that Captain Carvajal will come to ironically envy and admire: “No he visto en hombre jamás / tan varonil bizzaría” (vv. 205-250).

Something similar occurs at the beginning of the third act. This time, however, the music emphasizes the drastic psychological change in Gila. Although in Vélez’s work a lone traveler sings Serrana’s *romance*, in the CNTC performance, it is, again, a mezzo-soprano hovering on/off-stage. The production edits the song-text:

*Allá en Gargantalaolla,  
 en la Vera de Plasencia,  
 salteóme una serrana  
 blanca, rubia, ojimorena...  
 El cabello sobre el hombro ...  
 al lado izquierdo un cuchillo,  
 y en el hombro una escopeta.  
 Si saltea con las armas,  
 también con ojos saltea.* (vv. 2202-2223)

The *romance*’s dramatic function is clear: the audience is to conclude that Serrana’s fame has already inspired ballads. In an exquisite scene full of irony, the song recounts the legend of the beautiful and ferociously vengeful lone fatal male-traveling-assaulting *Serrana* and sets up her first in a prolific string of murders throughout the final act. As Gila descends upon the unsuspecting traveler (vv. 2202-2260 *caminante cantando*) the singer’s tone emits intervals, tempo, and

rhythm, coupled with the suspenseful and other-worldly sounding instrumentation in the *romance* that effectively codifies the main character's dramatic identity.

Furthermore, towards the play's resolution, keyboards, prerecorded drones, and alternating sustained and arpeggiated chords take turns while guards escort Gila to be executed. Over an intense low drone alternating between sustained and arpeggiated chords, a lone loud electronic recorder plays a descending but disjunct melody paralleling Gila's vocal anguish and cadences in dissonant chords, repeating the process while she walks to her executioners. As the music pauses except for a low intense drone that dramatically decrescendos, the disowned and chastised yet still intransigent Gila tells onlookers not to pity her (v. 3226). The music's intensity picks up when she reproaches her father for having condoned her nature and especially for his blindness and ambitiously marrying her to Carvajal in the first place. The same music replays as witnesses Pascuala and Madalena meticulously narrate the execution, cadencing in dissonant chords respectively as they begin to crucify her and archers ready their arrows, until a final cadence at her death when piercing bells resound.

Finally, Nieto applies what he calls, musical clichés, which he defines as “[U]na pieza de música compuesta con arreglo a una combinación de códigos que se corresponden exactamente con los de un patrón conocido, razón por la cual su efecto sobre el oyente también se conoce antemano” (85). Though the music for this production is mostly electronic and quasi-new-age, —at times with modern atonal qualities signaling other-worldly sonorities—, Nieto also embedded in *Serrana's* theme song a recognizable traditional and popular musical cliché. Curiously, the song begins backwards to how the *romance* originally appears in Vélez's play. The mezzo-soprano is on a shadowy part of the stage in long robes singing selected verses from the *romance's coplas* anticipating the protagonist's first grand entrance describing her beauty and valor:

Mírala puesta a caballo  
rojos labios,  
los ojos negros y graves  
blancas manos  
risa frente, hermoso,

pelo de ámbar  
viene enamorando el aire,  
la serrana ... **[Pause and slight modulation]**  
¡Quién como ella,  
¡Quién como ella **[andalusian cadence inserted]**  
la serrana de la Vera **[insert trills and crescendo]**  
la serrana de la Vera **[crescendo]**  
de la Vera **[trills and climax].**

Once Gila finally arrives high on stage with her bow and arrows, the song then returns to the beginning of the original *romance's* refrain: “¡Quién como ella, / la Serrana de la Vera!” (vv. 205-306). Church bells, and an arpeggiated accompaniment contrasts with a compellingly sweet, dramatic, and tragic melody, eventually featuring triplets, with a Phrygian mode character, known as Andalusian cadences (González Lapuente 87-88). These cadences permeate traditional and popular tunes and were frequently used by nationalistic minded composers to rescue authentic folkloric sounds, which were considered emblematic of Spanish authenticity, or “Spanishness.” The music, undoubtedly, is most likely borrowing from the nineteenth-century zarzuela musical tradition, codifying this characteristic into the song. This is precisely one of the reasons seventeenth-century dramatists used music in their plays, for most songs and dances were utterly recognizable. *Serrana's* theme melody, therefore, becomes a leitmotif throughout the production to reinforce Gila's identity.

In conclusion, throughout CNTC's production of *La serrana de la Vera*, music dynamically supports Gila's (and other characters') movements, facial expressions, monologues, and pantomimes with bright sounds of fast-moving chimes versus grave suffocating bells; the light, lively melodic arc of arpeggiated chords versus the dark, tenebrous drone, all juxtapose the numerous contradictions of Gila's free, incendiary, and uncompromising spirit, with her desire to be valued and accepted in a world that, by all indications, is morally and socially ill-equipped to understand its role in her inexpiable murderous rampage. Although Nieto's score may be unavoidably anachronistic, this production of *Serrana* merges the metaphorical “worlds” of theater, music, and modern performance practice, and music is the anchor; it can seamlessly integrate into the play's fabric so that its essence is not interrupted and it contains

clear codes relevant to the epoch or place, with pertinent images (Nieto 93). CNTC's production utilizes the musical component to maximum effect diegetically and non-diegetically, incorporating it throughout, as it occurs in film. After all, these conceptualizations of theatrical music were already present in seventeenth-century performances of the Comedia. Rather than passively inserting incidental music in performances, such as the oft-go-to strategy of playing stereotypical Flamenco, Nieto's compositions modify the "image" by introducing it as a dramatic, structural, and ideological element. In some instances, the score embeds music "secretly" (the idea of inaudibility "que debe ser percibida por el espectador de una manera [sub]consciente" 117); in others, it does so indiscreetly as the scene mandates, but consistently with agency. The utilization of leitmotifs masterfully organizes the action by associating them with essential characters or events, reinforcing semiotic relationships. The production's music, tempo, and rhythm (slow and severe) never lose sight of the tragic outcome of one the most subversive of the *mujer varonil* characters in the *comedia* repertoire.

## APPENDIX

### Comparison of Music in Vélez's Play vs. CNTC performance of Play

Comparison of Music in Vélez's written playtext vs. CTNC performance	Velez's Written Play Text  (Acts 1-3)	CNTC Production  (Acts 1-3)
# of places for Musical References	16 (5 / 7 / 4)	10 (b/c of cuts)
# of Explicit places for music references	----	24 (10 / 4 / 10)
# of places for musical scenes	4 (2 / 1 / 1)	4 (2 / 1 / 1)
TOTAL	20	38

## Music in CNTC Performance

<b>Act 1</b>
1. Opening of the act as curtain rises (musical interlude)
2. Giraldo's intransigence (military drums)
3. Gila's entrance (mezzo-soprano sings theme romance)
4. Gila's narration of her hunting successes (Bass sound staccato)
5. Gila dishonors Captain Carvajal (drone sound)
6. Scene transition between Giraldo's house to somewhere in the countryside (keyboard plays arpeggios)
7. Prerecorded drone sound plays as Gila escorts Captain out of town
8. Keyboard mimics harpsichord over tense drone sound at Catholic Monarchs' first stage entrance
9. Drums sound at Maestre's arrival with news of the prince's fall
10. Bells, cymbals, and melancholic music plays as Isabel urges Fernando to leave for Granada, Mezzo-Soprano sings theme song
<b>Act 2</b>
11. Music transitions performance from act 1 to act 2 without a break and mimics the desolate countryside where Gila is in hiding
12. Dramatic drone sounds as Magdalena enters to inform Gila of the Carvajal's offenses on the townspeople
13. Electronic keyboard music plays Serrana's theme melody to support a scene transition from Giraldo's house where the unexpected engagement of Gila/Carvajal occurs, to the night when he dishonors her
14. Serrana's theme melody plays with distorted and foreshadowing dissonance. Dramatically crescendoing drums and electronic music play after Captain dishonors and abandons Gila
15. When Gila realizes Carvajal's deceit, intense music and drone support her wrath

<b>Act 3</b>
16. Musical interlude plays as the curtain rises in symmetry to act 1. Mezzo-Soprano sings theme song and Gila attacks Caminante
17. Horn sounds interrupting Gila when she is about to kill Mingo. Fernando enters and finds Mingo bound to a tree
18. Drums roll when Carvajal, Andrés, García, and company tumble down a mountainside getting lost
19. Keyboard drone sounds as the lost Carvajal serendipitously arrives at Serrana's hide out. The drone and keyboard crescendos until Gila fatally stabs him
20. Keyboards sound loudly when the Santa Hermandad arrive at the scene to arrest Gila
21. Keyboards play dramatic and sustained chords during the scene transition between the mountainous countryside to the outskirts of Plasencia where Gila is to be sentenced
22. Keyboards imitate harpsichord sounds while the Catholic Monarchs agree Serrana must be punished and transitions to the next scene when García comes across Magdalena and Pascuala on the outskirts of Plasencia
23. Keyboard, prerecorded drone, chords, and arpeggios play in support of dramatic dynamics while Gila is escorted to her execution and the play ends with an image of her crucifixion

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## EL SIGLO DE ORO EN *TIK-TOK*

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**Resumen:** Esta propuesta surge de una investigación aplicada desde la práctica docente con adolescentes de la Ciudad de México en contextos de alta vulnerabilidad social y económica a partir de obras del Teatro del Siglo de Oro como *La vida es sueño* (1635) de Pedro Calderón de la Barca y *La vengadora de las mujeres* (1621) de Lope de Vega. La pedagogía crítica de Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux y Peter McLaren, se toma como base metodológica para el desarrollo del proyecto educativo “El Siglo de Oro en *Tik Tok*”, el acercamiento al drama áureo se establece como una práctica de intervención social para revisar las problemáticas e inquietudes de las y los adolescentes realizando “analogías marcadamente contemporáneas” (López Antuñano 5). El objetivo es explorar, buscar y reconocer los comparativos análogos entre los personajes de Segismundo y Laura con la situación personal de cada estudiante. El resultado fueron videos hechos a través de la plataforma de *Tik Tok* donde las y los adolescentes interpretaron los versos de los personajes brindando un nuevo significado a través de la música y el uso de filtros como elementos de utilería y vestuario o para recrear espacios escenográficos. Los personajes, las situaciones y las temáticas que abordan los versos escritos en el Siglo XVII se transforman para crear puentes de significación en la era digital del siglo XXI.

**Abstract:** This proposal arises from an applied investigation from the teaching practice with adolescents in Mexico City in con-

texts of high social and economic vulnerability based on works from the Teatro del Siglo de Oro such as *Life is a dream* (1635) by Pedro Calderón de La Barca and *The Avenger of Women* (1621) by Lope de Vega. The critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren, is taken as a methodological basis for the development of the educational project “The Golden Age in Tik Tok”, the approach to the golden drama is established as a practice of social intervention to review the problems and concerns of adolescents making “markedly contemporary analogies” (López Antuñano 5). The objective is to explore, search and recognize the analogous comparisons between the characters of Segismundo and Laura with the personal situation of each student. The result was videos made through the Tik Tok platform where adolescents interpreted the verses of the characters, providing a new meaning through music and the use of filters such as props and costumes or to recreate scenic spaces. The characters, situations and themes that the verses written in the 17th century address are transformed to create bridges of meaning in the digital age of the 21st century.

**Palabras clave / Keywords:** Siglo de Oro, adolescencia, intervención social, zonas de vulnerabilidad / Golden age, adolescence, social intervention, vulnerability zones

## Introducción

Esta propuesta surge de una investigación aplicada sobre la pertinencia de las obras clásicas del Siglo de Oro en la educación secundaria para favorecer el análisis y la reflexión de temas que se relacionan con las problemáticas que enfrentan las y los adolescentes en zonas de alta vulnerabilidad social y económica, donde la comedia es un instrumento eficaz para que puedan expresar sus inquietudes, necesidades y problemáticas sin sentirse evidenciados o expuestos. A través de los textos áureos se realizaron comparativos análogos entre las situaciones que enfrentan los personajes de las obras seleccionadas con las vivencias y problemáticas de las y los estudiantes. Los propósitos educativos del proyecto se enfocaron en la experimentación práctica del teatro a partir de ejercicios de improvisación, expresión verbal y gestual, así como la posibi-

lidad de integrar formas de expresión dramática y audiovisual del lenguaje áureo, en plataformas como *Tik Tok*. Los personajes, las situaciones y las temáticas que abordan los versos escritos en el Siglo XVII permitieron crear puentes de significación en la era digital del siglo XXI.

Esta investigación aplicada se realizó a partir de la experiencia docente como profesora de teatro de secundaria en Iztapalapa, una de las zonas vulnerables de la Ciudad de México con altos índices de violencia, acoso, abuso y feminicidio. Iztapalapa es una delegación de la Ciudad de México, cuyo significado proviene del náhuatl (*iztapal-li* ‘adoquín o piedra labrada’ y *á-tl* ‘agua’) que se traduce como ‘lugar donde las aguas atraviesan’. Se ubica en el oriente de la ciudad donde antiguamente se ubicaba el lago de Texcoco. Actualmente tiene 1,835,486 habitantes, los cuales hablan lenguas indígenas como Náhuatl, Mixteco, Mazateco, Mazahua, Zapoteco, Otomí, Totonaco, Chinanteco, Tlapaneco y Mixe. La mayor parte de la población trabaja como empleados de ventas, despachadores, dependientes en comercios, conductores de autobuses, camiones, camionetas y taxis. Un 90.4 % cuenta con telefonía móvil, 49.1% cuentan con ordenador y 69.3% tiene acceso a internet según *Data México*. En esta zona se realizó una evaluación de gobernanza del año 2015 al 2020 por parte de una iniciativa global financiada por el Departamento de Asuntos Económicos y Sociales de las Naciones Unidas (UNDESA) implementada por la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas contra la Droga y el Delito (UNODC) y que se realiza en cuatro localidades del mundo St. Michel y Christ (Barbados), Mathare en Nairobi (Kenia), Taskent (Uzbekistán) e Iztapalapa en la Ciudad de México (México). En el caso de México se eligió Iztapalapa debido a que es la zona más poblada de la ciudad, donde la mayoría de sus habitantes son jóvenes.

La revisión de la comedia áurea en las aulas de secundaria con adolescentes de Iztapalapa en la Ciudad de México, zona de alta vulnerabilidad social y económica, ha permitido trazar puentes teatrales, educativos y literarios para crear vínculos e integrar saberes. Metodologías que transforman la significación de mundos y que en ocasiones se piensan distantes, como es el mundo del teatro y el mundo de la educación. En las zonas de alta vulnerabilidad la desigualdad y la violencia forman parte de la cotidianidad en las aulas,

por esa razón, es necesario que las y los docentes realicen una intervención educativa significativa. Para garantizar este objetivo es necesario atender las situaciones de violencia que viven las y los adolescentes como soledad, abandono, insultos, golpes y comentarios racistas y clasistas. En este ambiente los textos áureos se vuelven una herramienta indispensable para la revisión de conflictos y problemáticas a través de las situaciones que plantean. Por esta razón, la selección de las obras en el aula se enfocó en los intereses de las y los adolescentes quienes a través de los versos del personaje de Segismundo en la obra “La vida es sueño” (1635) de Pedro Calderón de la Barca, reflexionaron sobre las situaciones donde han sentido la misma sensación de tristeza, encierro e injusticia. Posteriormente, buscando posibilidades de solución ante esas circunstancias, relacionaron el título de la obra con la toma de decisiones para alcanzar sus sueños en el futuro. A su vez, la obra “La vengadora de las mujeres” (1621), de Félix Lope de Vega, permitió revisar la violencia que viven las mujeres en México haciendo un comparativo análogo entre el personaje de Laura y las situaciones que viven las adolescentes en Iztapalapa, quienes identificaron que la educación es la forma de mejorar y cambiar sus circunstancias actuales.

El teatro se constituye como un espacio de expresión, exploración y análisis crítico de la realidad a partir del cual las y los adolescentes pueden tomar decisiones y fortalecer su identidad. Desde esta perspectiva el teatro rompe con la ideología individualista que ha traído como consecuencia la competencia y la soledad, para centrar las acciones educativas en el beneficio del aprendizaje colectivo. Para responder a la necesidad de utilizar la comedia como instrumento pedagógico, haré una revisión general sobre los contenidos de los planes y programas de estudio de la Secretaría de Educación Pública de México en donde se integra el estudio del teatro del Siglo de Oro. Posteriormente haré una revisión de los conceptos generales que establece la pedagogía crítica a partir de autores como Paulo Freire, Henry Giroux y Peter McLaren como propuesta metodológica para realizar una intervención educativa con perspectiva social desde el teatro áureo. Finalmente hago una descripción didáctica de la metodología aplicada en el desarrollo del proyecto integrando la evaluación y los resultados analizados desde la práctica docente. Considero que los fundamentos de la pedagogía

crítica permiten analizar las necesidades educativas de las y los estudiantes para desarrollar un aprendizaje significativo, es decir que se relaciona el aprendizaje, el conocimiento y los contenidos con sus vivencias. Además, los versos áureos permiten crear puentes entre las temáticas que propone la escena y las situaciones que viven las y los adolescentes a partir del análisis y la reflexión del lenguaje, los versos y las intenciones de los personajes.

## **El uso de obras del Siglo de Oro en el aula.**

El estudio del Siglo de Oro en nivel secundaria forma parte de los temas contemplados en los planes y programas de estudio de la Secretaría de Educación Pública de México, la revisión de la época desde el contexto histórico, lingüístico y teatral resulta difícil en la práctica, debido a la falta de motivación de parte de las y los adolescentes (Pérez 29), quienes consideran que es un tema inaccesible, complicado y alejado de sus intereses. La educación positivista establece un modelo pedagógico tradicional basado en la memorización de datos, el aprendizaje academicista (García 79) y la relación dominante del profesor que limita la participación de los alumnos, esto ha tenido consecuencias en la formación de las personas, según Dewey, debido a la perspectiva competitiva e individualista que fomenta el sistema capitalista.

La escuela se ha constituido como un espacio de instrucción con métodos basados en el control, cuyo resultado ha sido que la enseñanza se convierta en un proceso mecanizado. El aprendizaje deja de ser un descubrimiento para convertirse en una repetición convencional reflejada en las políticas educativas que responden a las necesidades actuales de producción y consumo (Giroux 41). El individualismo enfocado en el éxito personal y el beneficio propio, contribuye a garantizar la competencia en función de la productividad como bases fundamentales de la estructura social. Las consecuencias son evidentes en las problemáticas que enfrenta actualmente la sociedad como la violencia y la desigualdad.

Es posible describir las presentes circunstancias históricas como un escenario en el cual grotescas y sublimes hibridaciones de nuestros mundos y de nuestras identidades sociales compiten por el espacio abierto por la erosión de la certidumbre, el cambio de pa-

radígramas, la desnaturalización de las fronteras y el carácter cada vez más controvertible que ostentan conocidas dicotomías del pensamiento, fenómenos acarreados por los albores de una portentosa época posmoderna. Nos vemos ante una liza pública de superficial optimismo, vulgaridad y trivialidad grandiosas, vastos aparatos de vigilancia, y brutales estructuras de violencia, las cuales atraviesan la carne y la médula de la vida cotidiana. La desesperanza se ha convertido en nuestra consejera, en tanto permanecemos en el desierto del deseo producido electrónicamente y de una compra anticipada del juicio crítico. ( McLaren, *Pedagogía 3*)

Ante este panorama la pedagogía crítica de autores como Paulo Freire (1970), Henry Giroux (1990) y Peter McLaren (2005), permite crear espacios de reflexión para analizar la realidad política y social dentro de las escuelas en busca de soluciones para atender las necesidades educativas de las y los adolescentes. En zonas de alta vulnerabilidad social, es necesario crear estrategias y metodologías adecuadas para lograr el interés por el conocimiento y el aprendizaje en las y los alumnos, quienes viven en condiciones de pobreza, marginación y violencia. Las y los docentes deben transformar la relación con el estudiante “sin categorizarlo, sin utilizar alguna operación de cálculo, medida y comparación. No es un número, no es un apellido, no es un apodo, es un ser semejante a mí y a la vez único, singular, irrepitible” (García 84). Esta acción permitirá crear espacios de confianza y cercanía con las y los estudiantes, como elemento indispensable para el aprendizaje.

La revisión de técnicas y procesos que integran la pedagogía y la didáctica permiten crear estrategias eficaces para posibilitar una práctica educativa donde las y los docentes se conviertan en investigadores como lo estipula Lawrence Stenhouse:

Ni profesores ni alumnos consideran la enseñanza como un arte. Por eso, los profesores no advierten que su propio desarrollo constituye una clave para la situación, del mismo modo que sucede con actores, escultores o músicos. Y los alumnos no comprenden – ni por lo general comparten los profesores la comprensión con ellos- el significado del experimento en la clase y su papel al respecto. (105)

El diseño, la planeación y el desarrollo de las actividades deben contemplar la interacción entre las y los adolescentes como seres



sensibles en constante cambio, donde se atiendan de manera consciente sus necesidades brindando especial atención a la forma en la que se relacionan “los profesores necesitan descubrir cómo construyen sus estudiantes activamente el significado a través de las múltiples formaciones de experiencia vivida que despiertan en sus vidas una sensación de esperanza y posibilidad” (Giroux 18). Escuchar a las y los alumnos, conocer sus inquietudes y atender sus circunstancias vitales permitirá crear vínculos que fortalezcan la curiosidad por aprender.

En Iztapalapa, como zona vulnerable, las políticas educativas de un sistema desigual tiene repercusiones más graves como el bajo rendimiento, la deserción escolar y la falta de comprensión ante las problemáticas que viven las y los adolescentes (UNODC 15) . La educación desde una perspectiva interdisciplinaria es recomendable en estos contextos para integrar el desarrollo de la sensibilidad a través del arte para hacer frente a la indiferencia, la crueldad y la violencia. El teatro permite desarrollar proyectos artísticos educativos desde la colectividad alejados del individualismo para fortalecer la subjetividad de las y los adolescentes como explican Fernando González y Albertina Mitjás:

La subjetividad se constituye en las condiciones sociales, históricas y culturales específicas, pero ella es una producción y se define no por los acontecimientos y hechos que caracterizan esas condiciones, sino por los sentidos subjetivos que se generan en el curso de la experiencia vivida dentro de esas condiciones. (262)

El teatro como medio de expresión para la sensibilización, el autoconocimiento, la resolución de conflictos, la promoción de convivencia pacífica y el análisis de la realidad, posibilita la mejora y transformación social que estipula la pedagogía crítica. Un aspecto fundamental en cualquier tarea educativa, tanto para los alumnos como para los profesores es “la dimensión de la creatividad en el proceso de desarrollo humano, con posibilidades de transformación no sólo por el cambio de circunstancias objetivas que definiría

la sociedad, sino por las diferentes formas de organizar y producir subjetivamente las prácticas y valores humanos en una determinada cultura” (Goulart 7). La creatividad, la imaginación y la creación en colectivo permiten el desarrollo de un aprendizaje significativo en las y los adolescentes.

La pedagogía crítica estipula como primer paso investigar el contexto antes de desarrollar una intervención educativa con el objetivo de “articular los más diversos procesos vivenciales –como las vivencias que ocurren en la educación y la salud– en un mismo espacio y momento de vida” (Goulart 9). Investigar el contexto es una responsabilidad ética, social y política de las y los docentes como la define Giroux en la introducción del libro *La naturaleza política de la educación* de Paulo Freire:

Los educadores tienen que trabajar con las experiencias que los estudiantes, los adultos y otros educandos traen a las escuelas y otros centros educativos. Esto implica someter aquellas experiencias, en sus formas públicas y privadas, a debate y confirmación; significa legitimar tales experiencias a fin de brindar un sentido de autoafirmación a los que las viven y experimentan, y a proporcionar las condiciones para que los estudiantes y los demás puedan desplegar una voz y una presencia activas. La experiencia pedagógica se convierte aquí en una invitación a exponer los lenguajes, sueños, valores y encuentros que constituyen las vidas de aquellos cuyas historias son, con frecuencia, activamente silenciadas. (22-23)

Comprender la realidad que enfrentan las y los estudiantes, analizar el sistema de significados culturales y sociales, así como saber

cuáles son sus intereses y gustos es una información imprescindible para integrar a la experiencia educativa. Según Daniel Goulart:

Esa experiencia estimula que esos participantes se asuman como protagonistas, caracterizando un posicionamiento activo en un espacio social determinado. Ese posicionamiento activo se favorece por la posibilidad de intercambio, reflexión y crítica, promoviendo un espacio de desarrollo tanto en las personas implicadas, como en la propia instancia social en que esos procesos ocurren. Desde este punto de vista, la educación es inseparable de la construcción de procesos de ciudadanía, por medio de la apertura de nuevas posibilidades de integración social, comprometiéndose con la condición social de cambio de sus participantes (11).

En Iztapalapa esta acción desde el teatro donde las y los adolescentes se vuelven protagonistas de sus acciones y de su aprendizaje desde el contexto teatral permite la identificación, el cambio y por lo tanto la construcción de una ciudadanía ética, responsable y comprometida con la comunidad. El teatro desde su función social, permite revisar los espacios de significación a través de la representación, integrando sensaciones, emociones y situaciones como elementos de análisis de la realidad. La búsqueda de soluciones para la resolución del conflicto propicia la búsqueda de soluciones y cambios que primero ocurrirán en la ficción, pero que se espera tengan una repercusión directa en la toma de decisiones y en el desarrollo de la identidad de las y los adolescentes. El teatro en contextos educativos vulnerables implica diseñar actividades basadas en la investigación previa del contexto, la observación y el desarrollo de actividades enfocadas en la práctica y el disfrute por aprender con una dimensión de sentido e identidad “como un terreno cultural que promueve la afirmación del estudiante y su auto transformación” (McLaren 265).

## **Primer paso: Análisis del contexto**

El proyecto se desarrolló en una secundaria ubicada en Iztapalapa donde las carencias sociales limitan el desarrollo de los habitantes debido a los altos índices de violencia. En ese sentido es necesario hacer referencia al triángulo de Galtung que establece una estructura de los tipos de violencia y la temporalidad en la que suceden dentro de la sociedad: “La violencia directa es un suceso; la violencia estructural es un proceso con sus altibajos; la violencia cultural es inalterable, persistente, dada la lentitud con que se producen las transformaciones culturales” (154). La mayor parte de la población no tiene cubiertas las necesidades básicas, estas circunstancias generan tipos de violencia directa y estructural, descritos por Galtung como agresiones a la vida. Es decir, cada necesidad básica no cubierta, aparece como negación que genera violencia, la falta de bienestar provoca sufrimiento, acoso, mutilaciones, sanciones, miseria y explotación, la falta de identidad provoca falta de socialización, alienación, muerte espiritual y la falta de libertad provoca negación, represión y degradación. La violencia estructural que sufre la comunidad se refleja en el contexto escolar, donde las y los adolescentes establecen dinámicas de convivencia a partir de la violencia directa “una estructura violenta no sólo deja marcas en el cuerpo humano, sino también en la mente y el espíritu” (Galtung 153). El teatro se consolida como una opción para analizar de manera crítica las situaciones de violencia de tal forma que las y los adolescentes puedan expresar sentimiento y emociones, así como reflexionar situaciones a partir de las temáticas que presentan los textos áureos.

## **Segundo paso: Planificación pedagógica**

Una planificación útil para contextos vulnerables implica centrar el aprendizaje en actividades prácticas, considerar la pertinencia de acuerdo a sus intereses y tomar en cuenta la variedad de significados que pueda tener la actividad según el contexto social y cultural. El objetivo principal de la enseñanza del teatro desde la pedagogía crítica consiste en proporcionar herramientas que ayuden a las y los adolescentes a tomar decisiones, fortalecer su identidad y comprender la vida desde una perspectiva colectiva. En los contextos vulnerables,

muchas veces las y los adolescentes muestran actitudes de hostilidad, desánimo, aburrimiento y actitudes agresivas, por esa razón los conflictos, así como los inconvenientes que aparezcan serán apreciados como áreas de oportunidad. Los profesores ante la violencia deberán hacer un alto para invitar a las y los adolescentes a la reflexión crítica de la acción como intelectuales transformadores afirman que “la naturaleza política de su misión pedagógica, que es enseñar, aprender, escuchar y movilizar en beneficio de un orden social más justo y equitativo” (Giroux 168). El conflicto como elemento indispensable para el teatro, permite que las y los profesores como creadores críticos desarrollen una visión reflexiva dentro de la cotidianidad del aula utilizando el teatro áureo como medio de expresión.

En el desarrollo de los proyectos escénicos educativos resulta imprescindible la diferencia del juego al conflicto real, como lo describe Declan Donnellan “el teatro nos provee de un marco seguro dentro del cual podemos explorar situaciones peligrosas desde la comodidad de la fantasía y la protección de un grupo” (13). Trabajar en contextos de vulnerabilidad implica vincularse con las necesidades y demandas sociales, de tal forma que el conocimiento y el aprendizaje no esté desvinculado de la realidad social de la comunidad en la que se imparte la clase. Es necesario que las problemáticas observadas sean parte de las actividades en el desarrollo del proyecto a partir de los textos áureos seleccionados de tal forma que surjan preguntas: ¿Cómo puedo usar este aspecto de la realidad para el desarrollo de la actividad teatral? ¿Cómo podemos analizar esta situación a través de la acción dramática? ¿Cómo se relaciona esta situación con la temática del texto áureo? ¿Qué soluciones podrían plantear las y los adolescentes ante este conflicto? En muchas ocasiones se comete el error de ver a las y los adolescentes como individuos inmaduros cuyos instintos son olvidados y tratados como perjudiciales o cuyas características o emociones son consideradas como rasgos peligrosos que han de ser suprimidos como menciona Dewey. Es necesario evitar los prejuicios y la estigmatización para dar lugar a la observación y el análisis a través del texto áureo.

### Tercer paso: Proyecto educativo

Una vez analizado el contexto social a partir de la investigación de los intereses de las y los adolescentes se toma en cuenta los elementos que motivarán el aprendizaje, en este caso, los textos del Siglo de Oro seleccionados son “La vida es sueño” (1635) de Pedro Calderón de la Barca y “La vengadora de las mujeres” (1621) de Félix Lope de Vega. El uso de las redes sociales como herramienta innovadora resulta un espacio fundamental para la interacción y la comunicación con las y los adolescentes en la actualidad, el proyecto educativo “El Siglo de Oro en *Tik Tok*” utiliza la red social para compartir videos cortos en formato vertical que permite interactuar con elementos digitales como la música, imágenes, textos y filtros así como grabaciones en tiempo real y efectos. A través de los textos áureos se busca realizar comparativos análogos (López Antuñano 5), que permitan analizar las problemáticas que enfrentan las y los adolescentes. Los beneficios del recurso logra generar interacciones con otras disciplinas, en ese caso la aplicación *Tik tok* favorece que los participantes no solo hagan uso del lenguaje verbal, sino también del no verbal, lo que posibilita la concienciación de los usuarios sobre el empleo del cuerpo y los gestos en cualquier acto comunicativo. En ese sentido, Alfredo Blanco Martínez y Mercedes González refieren lo siguiente:

*Tik tok* se define como una red de colaboración y de difusión de contenidos que prioriza la creación de experiencias creativas desde múltiples ángulos. Además, se confiere como un espacio comunicativo en el que se generan ocasiones para la interacción y la conectividad. Su componente creativo es una característica muy definitoria en tanto que permite la entrada de música, imágenes, textos, así como grabaciones en tiempo real y efectos. Del mismo modo, favorece que los participantes no solo hagan uso del lenguaje verbal, sino también del no verbal, lo que posibilita la concienciación de los usuarios sobre el empleo del cuerpo y los gestos en cualquier acto comunicativo. (175)

Fomentar el interés por los textos áureos utilizando la plataforma de *Tik Tok*, a través de la cual, las y los adolescentes realizarán

videos de corta duración a partir de los versos áureos vinculados a las situaciones o reflexiones de su contexto que podrán compartir en sus redes sociales. El desarrollo de la sensibilidad, la conciencia corporal y el movimiento a partir de la creación de videos les permitirá expresar emociones y sentimientos a partir de los versos, de tal forma que la expresión dramática y la representación de los textos áureos fortalezca su identidad. El uso de la plataforma *Tik Tok* motivará a las y los adolescentes a jugar con el lenguaje artístico y audiovisual para representar los textos del Siglo de Oro desarrollando el pensamiento crítico para expresar su punto de vista sobre la realidad social y el contexto en el que viven.

Para el desarrollo del proyecto en el aula es necesario realizar ejercicios de sensibilidad y confianza a través de juegos dramáticos, ejercicios de respiración, calentamiento y relajación. Es recomendable iniciar con una reflexión grupal para identificar los comparativos análogos entre las obras del Siglo de Oro seleccionadas y el contexto de la comunidad. Es imprescindible que las y los profesores permanezcan atentos a las actitudes, opiniones y formas de significación que pueda presentar el grupo durante toda la actividad. A continuación se verá una tabla detallada donde se explica el proyecto:

<p><b>PROYECTO: EL SIGLO DE ORO EN TIK TOK</b></p>
<p><b>Propósito:</b> Representar textos del Siglo de Oro a través de la plataforma Tik Tok para fomentar el interés por los textos áureos de manera lúdica. Realizar comparativos análogos entre los temas de las obras de teatro de Félix Lope de Vega y Pedro Calderón de la Barca con el contexto actual de las y los adolescentes.</p>
<p><b>Duración:</b> 3 sesiones (50 a 60 min.)  <b>Espacio:</b> Aula con espacio libre.  <b>Organización.</b> Individual, por equipos y grupal.  <b>Materiales:</b> Bitácora de teatro, textos impresos de los versos seleccionados, música de diferentes partes del mundo y diferentes géneros, teléfono móvil, aplicación <i>Tik Tok</i>.  <b>Instrumentos de evaluación:</b> Bitácora.  <b>Interdisciplina:</b> Literatura, Música y Tecnología.</p>

<p><b>Sesión 1</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inicio: Identifica las diferentes emociones. Bienvenida al grupo a partir de preguntas ¿Cómo se sienten hoy? Enojado, contento, triste, enamorado, etc.</li> <li>• Ejercicios de calentamiento</li> <li>• Ejercicios de respiración y relajación.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desarrollo: Se presenta en plenaria la obra a partir de una pregunta detonadora. ¿De qué creen que trate “La vida es sueño”? A partir de las referencias que brinden las y los adolescentes se identifican elementos cercanos a su contexto.</li> <li>• Identificación de comparativos análogos entre aspectos de la obra y la realidad social.</li> <li>• Lectura de la selección de versos de Segismundo.</li> <li>• Representación por grupos de los versos a partir de la imaginación y la creatividad.</li> <li>• Reflexión grupal de los ejercicios prácticos tomando en cuenta, las emociones, los recuerdos o las experiencias personales que identifican las y los adolescentes a partir de los versos.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cierre: Elabora bitácora de clase a partir de las preguntas ¿Qué hicimos? ¿Qué aprendí? ¿Cómo me sentí? Ilustra la experiencia que vivió en la clase. (5 minutos)</li> </ul>



<p><b>Sesión 2:</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inicio: Identifica sus emociones. Bienvenida, mientras se pasa lista, cada alumno va tomando su lugar en el círculo al centro del salón. Una vez en círculo se realiza un calentamiento con música suave, empieza de los pies a la cabeza, concentrando la atención en la sensación de cada parte del cuerpo, se pregunta a los alumnos ¿Cómo te sientes hoy? ¿Estás contento, enojado, triste?</li> <li>• Ejercicios de respiración.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Desarrollo: Se vuelve a la lectura en grupo de los versos de la obra seleccionada, en este caso se revisa “La vengadora de las mujeres” (1621) de Félix Lope de Vega y se inicia la actividad a partir de la pregunta detonadora ¿Qué diría la vengadora de las mujeres sobre la violencia que viven las mujeres en México?</li> <li>• Se abre foro de reflexión tomando en cuenta datos, noticias y referentes bibliográficos sobre la problemática social identificada.</li> <li>• Identificación de los referentes análogos entre la obra y la realidad del contexto.</li> <li>• Se lee en voz alta los versos seleccionados del personaje de Laura.</li> <li>• Se realiza el juego “Ensalada de frutas” para dividir el grupo en equipos. Se elige un director de escena, el cual deberá coordinar las propuestas del grupo.</li> <li>• Cada equipo representa de manera libre los versos seleccionados a partir de sus intereses, creatividad e imaginación.</li> <li>• Presentación frente al grupo de las representaciones que ha creado cada equipo.</li> <li>• Reflexión y análisis en plenaria sobre el tema, la obra, los versos y las inquietudes que presenten las y los adolescentes a partir del tema.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cierre: Valora su experiencia. Elabora bitácora de clase a partir de las preguntas ¿Qué hicimos? ¿Qué aprendí? ¿Cómo me sentí? Ilustra la experiencia que vivió en la clase. (5 minutos)</li> </ul>

<b>Sesión 3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Inicio: Compara la relación de sus emociones con el teatro. Bienvenida, pase de lista, compartir en plenaria la experiencia de la sesión anterior y su relación con las emociones a partir de la pregunta: ¿Cómo se relacionan las emociones con el teatro? Los alumnos comparten experiencias y opiniones utilizando su expresión corporal, gestual y vocal. (5 minutos)</li><li>• Ejercicios de calentamiento y respiración.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Desarrollo: Tomando en cuenta las opiniones, inquietudes y preguntas que a lo largo de las dos sesiones anteriores han realizado las y los adolescentes se elaboran preguntas detonadoras como ¿En la actualidad importan los sueños? ¿Qué ocurre con la sensación de tristeza y encierro como le ocurre a Segismundo? ¿Es importante lo que dice el personaje de Laura en la actualidad?</li><li>• A partir de las respuestas se hará una significación actual de los versos utilizando la aplicación Tik Tok.</li><li>• El resultado debe ser un video corto que contenga música relacionada al comparativo análogo propuesto para cada obra, es decir sobre el tema que trata la obra o sobre el tema que se identificó a partir de los versos revisados. Uso de filtros para identificar un fondo escenográfico y elementos de utilería y vestuario a partir de stikers.</li><li>• Se explica que el proyecto “El siglo de Oro en Tik Tok” busca poner énfasis en la lectura contemporánea de los versos del Siglo de Oro en el lenguaje audiovisual de la aplicación por lo cual pueden compartir el resultado en sus redes sociales.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cierre: Evalúa su desempeño y aprendizaje. A partir de una autoevaluación individual y una coevaluación grupal se identifica el aprendizaje. Elabora bitácora de fin de proyecto a partir de las preguntas ¿Qué hicimos? ¿Qué aprendí? ¿Cómo me sentí? Ilustra la experiencia. Y responde la pregunta ¿Considero importante el estudio de los textos del Siglo de Oro?</li></ul>

## Descripción y resultados del proyecto

El primer comparativo análogo se realizó con la obra “La vida es sueño” (1635) de Pedro Calderón de la Barca a partir de una pregunta detonadora ¿De qué creen que trate esta obra de teatro? Las y los adolescentes relacionaron el título con los sueños que se pueden plantear en la vida, el tema se vinculó hacia una perspectiva a futuro, elemento que se consideró fundamental debido a los altos índices de violencia que genera crueldad y la degradación de la vida humana, donde el miedo limita la esperanza y donde los grupos delincuentes imponen su poder opresor ante las comunidades que ya son vulneradas por la violencia económica que ejerce el sistema económico. Posteriormente se realizó una reflexión grupal sobre las situaciones que impiden la realización de esos sueños como el miedo, la soledad, el maltrato, los problemas personales y la violencia, algunos alumnos expresaron que los sueños no se podían alcanzar, que por eso se llamaban sueños y que no existen en la realidad. Ante este panorama se dio lectura a noticias y estudios que confirman que en la población joven existe un alto consumo de alcohol y drogas que comienza, según la evaluación realizada, entre los 12 y 18 años con marihuana, inhalantes y crack. Los factores de riesgo aumentan con las desigualdades estructurales, la falta de oportunidades de estudio y laborales, así como la violencia en el hogar y hacia la mujer que se traducen en comportamientos delictivos y de violencia que aumentan la inseguridad.

A partir de la lectura y el análisis crítico de la realidad se preguntó ¿Qué se podría hacer y qué podrían hacer ellas y ellos como adolescentes? Después de plantear propuestas como la necesidad de ser mejores personas, de no drogarse o de no ser violentos se brindó la posibilidad de conocer los versos de Segismundo protagonista de la obra y se dio lectura a los siguientes versos:

¡Ay mísero de mí! ¡Y ay infelice!  
 Apurar, cielos, pretendo  
 ya que me tratáis así,  
 qué delito cometí  
 contra vosotros naciendo;  
 aunque sí nací, ya entiendo  
 qué delito he cometido.

Bastante causa ha tenido  
vuestra justicia y rigor;  
pues el delito mayor  
del hombre es haber nacido. (Calderón 102 – 112)

Después de la lectura de los versos, la reflexión de las y los adolescentes debía vincular una analogía con alguna situación que tuviera relación con algo que estuvieran viviendo o sintiendo, posteriormente se haría la lectura sobre las cifras de violencia que se han identificado en Iztapalapa. Una vez que se hizo la analogía se solicitó a las y los estudiantes que llevaran esa reflexión a la representación por grupos de los versos seleccionados vinculados a una situación a partir de sus vivencias. El resultado fue una variación de juegos escénicos que vincularon los versos de Segismundo a las situaciones de violencia a partir de la tristeza y el encierro. Otros equipos relacionaron los versos a la posibilidad de alcanzar sus sueños o hacerlos realidad. Al final de la tercera sesión realizaron la creación en video de un minuto utilizando la plataforma Tik Tok en el cual usaron música de reguetón y filtros para recrear espacios escenográficos o usar elementos de utilería y vestuario a partir de los *stickers* de la plataforma.

En la segunda sesión se revisó el segundo comparativo análogo a partir de la obra “La vengadora de las mujeres” de Félix Lope de Vega, en la cual se trabajó en el aula a partir de la pregunta detonadora: ¿Qué diría “La vengadora de las mujeres” si fuera testigo de los niveles de violencia que viven las mujeres en México? Las y los adolescentes permanecieron en silencio hasta que muchos alumnos empezaron a opinar sobre la violencia hacia la mujer y sobre la necesidad de cambiar esa realidad, mientras las alumnas permanecieron en silencio. Ante la falta de participación de las adolescentes se habló de la importancia de vencer el miedo y la timidez a través del teatro para denunciar la violencia y se leyó el siguiente texto: La violencia hacia la mujer sucede en el entorno familiar y en el comunitario como el acoso y el abuso sexual “De acuerdo con cifras de la Fiscalía General de la Ciudad de México, tanto en 2019 como en 2020 la mayoría de las víctimas que reportaron abuso sexual, acoso sexual y violación eran mujeres jóvenes entre 10 y 19 años” (ONU 65). Esto abarca el periodo escolar de educación secundaria (11 a 15 años), así como el bachillerato (16 a 18 años).

Las trabas que imposibilitan a las niñas y mujeres ejercitar su derecho a estudiar, obtener un diploma y beneficiarse de la educación, se encuentran diferentes factores como la pobreza, el aislamiento geográfico, la pertenencia a una minoría, la discapacidad, el matrimonio y el embarazo precoz, la violencia de género y las actitudes tradicionales relacionadas con las funciones y tareas asignadas a las mujeres, por el patriarcado. (Blas y Contreras 52). Después de la lectura pocas fueron las alumnas que decidieron participar, en los contextos de alta vulnerabilidad social como Iztapalapa es muy común que se haga presente “el condicionamiento ideológico al cual fueran sometidos en la «cultura del silencio»” (Freire 48). Para motivar la participación se hizo una reflexión grupal sobre el silencio y sobre las condiciones en las que viven las niñas y adolescentes en estas comunidades. Una de las problemáticas más frecuentes en el contexto escolar e incluso las acciones violentas de los alumnos hacia las alumnas son evidentes en la dinámica cotidiana de los salones de clase. En muchas ocasiones las profesoras y profesores, así como el personal administrativo no intervienen en las acciones de violencia debido a la falta de atención e identificación de las situaciones donde la violencia está normalizada.

En el desarrollo de esta investigación fue indispensable intervenir, “dar seguimiento y espacio para el análisis y reflexión” (Coliolla y otros 168), ante el silencio resultado de las condiciones de violencia en la que viven las y los adolescentes. El diálogo sobre la violencia y el acoso fue importante para identificar las conductas agresivas que no se consideraban violentas y que son parte de la dinámica escolar y social. En esa reflexión se dio lectura a los versos de Laura:

Hallaba en todos los hombres  
 tan fuertes, tan arrogantes,  
 tan señores, tan altivos,  
 tan libres en todas partes,  
 que de tristeza pensé  
 morirme, y dije una tarde  
 a una dama a quien solía  
 comunicar mis pesares:  
 «Filida, ¿qué puede ser  
 que en cualquier parte que traten  
 de mujeres, ellas son

las adúlteras, las fáciles,  
las locas, las insufribles,  
las varias, las inconstantes,  
las que tienen menos ser  
y siguen sus libertades?» (Lope 61 – 75)

Después de la lectura, las alumnas dijeron sentirse identificadas, mientras los alumnos mostraron su desacuerdo ante el texto, el debate permitió la reflexión de puntos de vista y analizar situaciones comunes en el contexto. Posteriormente se hizo una reflexión grupal sobre las condiciones actuales en su comunidad haciendo la lectura al siguiente texto: “En Iztapalapa persisten dinámicas delictivas [...] Entre 2015 y 2020, la violencia familiar registró un aumento del 47.5%, mientras que delitos como el abuso sexual (141%) y la violación (94%) tuvieron un aumento de más del doble” (UNODC 15). Las alumnas y los alumnos argumentaron que la violencia hacia la mujer era una realidad que vivían constantemente, se mostraron muy interesados por la obra y por el texto de Lope de Vega cuando supieron que se había escrito alrededor de 1621. Se realizaron representaciones por equipo a partir de las situaciones de violencia hacia la mujer, en algunas escenas donde se presentaban situaciones de acoso, las adolescentes recitaban los versos de Laura para defenderse de la agresión. A partir de estos espacios de análisis crítico y escénico, se invitó a las y a los adolescentes a usar la plataforma *Tik Tok* para crear un vídeo de treinta segundos eligiendo los versos de Laura que les parecieran más significativos e interesantes y que pudieran brindarle un significado actual.

Por otro lado, en la revisión de la obra “La vengadora de las mujeres” (1621), generó mayor polémica, debido a que en los contextos vulnerables, la desigualdad y la violencia hacia las mujeres está normalizada, es común que se digan insultos y señalamientos hacia las mujeres, así como el acoso verbal y la violencia física a partir de golpes y peleas entre las adolescentes. El argumento femenino de Laura quien rechaza el matrimonio por su deseo a estudiar y vengar mujeres a través del estudio, educando a sus damas, va en sentido contrario a los rasgos culturales que aún son visibles en Iztapalapa, donde las prácticas sociales impiden que las adolescentes continúen sus estudios y decidan casarse y tener hijos. El impacto de la lectura de los versos lopescos generó que las adolescentes concluyeran que

era necesario emanciparse y surgir como heroínas, como el personaje de Laura quien muestra fuertes rasgos morales y éticos.

En la interpretación de los personajes de Laura y Segismundo en la plataforma Tik Tok, las y los adolescentes dieron otros significados a los versos de Lope y Calderón. El resultado fue la presentación de videos cortos en el aula, donde las y los adolescentes mostraron mujeres golpeadas que se emancipaban, hombres tristes y deprimidos que decidían salir y luchar por sus sueños utilizando filtros, *stickers* y música. En la escritura de la bitácora de teatro escribieron que al principio los versos áureos les parecían aburridos, con un lenguaje difícil que les costaba trabajo entender, esto se debe a la dificultad que enfrentan las y los adolescentes hacia las tareas que exigen atención y dedicación resultado de una “crisis de enseñanza y, en ella de las humanidades y de la literatura” (Ayuso 3), al final dijeron que se divirtieron haciendo los videos de *Tik Tok* e interpretando los personajes de Laura y Segismundo.

#### **Cuarto paso: Evaluación**

Los resultados pedagógicos en el desarrollo del proyecto “El Siglo de Oro en *Tik Tok*”, permitió crear un espacio significativo para el aprendizaje tomando en cuenta los intereses y gustos de las y los adolescentes. La construcción del conocimiento a partir de creaciones individuales que se compartieron en colectivo permitió la revisión de los contenidos estipulados en el plan de estudios. A través de este proyecto se movilizó el aprendizaje y cambió la dinámica pasiva que generalmente tienen las y los adolescentes en la red social como “solo leer comentarios o solo ver videos” (González y Ugalde 18), a una dinámica activa al hacer videos con un contenido educativo. Por otra parte la actividad los motivó para presentar sus creaciones al grupo, compartir sus proyectos en la plataforma y brindar nuevos significados al los textos del Siglo de Oro. La experiencia de las y los adolescentes para vincular los versos áureos con sus vivencias permitió crear otros significados a partir de las analogías donde el lenguaje dejó de ser ajeno y descontextualizado de su realidad, para transformarse en un mensaje cercano hacia otras y otros adolescentes utilizando la plataforma de *Tik-Tok*.

Finalmente la evaluación que se realizó fue cualitativa basada en la reflexión donde se dio énfasis a la importancia de aprender y generar una curiosidad por el conocimiento. El objetivo fue tomar en cuenta los procesos del aprendizaje y no enfocar el resultado, ya que es imprescindible contemplar la variabilidad de contextos en los que viven las y los adolescentes para desarrollar las actividades y obtener el conocimiento. Se establecieron indicadores de evaluación en el desarrollo del proyecto en tres aspectos: conceptual, que supieran reconocer aspectos del Siglo de Oro; actitudinal, que tuvieran una convivencia de respeto y consideración con sus compañeras y compañeros, así como con la profesora; y, finalmente, el procedimental, la manera en la que involucraron la creatividad y el empeño en el desarrollo del proyecto. Se brindó un espacio de autoevaluación a partir de la *Bitácora de teatro*, donde las y los adolescentes escriben lo que aprendieron y cómo se sintieron en clase, dibujar y realizan escritos de tal forma que les brinde un espacio de expresión escrita que beneficia el desarrollo de la identidad. Cada uno de las y los estudiantes escribió una reflexión personal sobre el compromiso personal hacia la actividad, los logros y las áreas de oportunidad o lo que les faltó mejorar para finalmente brindar una evaluación numérica a su aprendizaje.

## Conclusiones

La revisión de la pedagogía crítica ha permitido destacar las cualidades, necesidades y posibilidades de la educación dentro de la sociedad. Contemplar una postura crítica establece la necesidad de saber que la significación de las acciones, temas, contenidos, actitudes y saberes resulta imprescindible en los contextos educativos de zonas vulnerables. Los versos del Siglo de Oro dieron voz a las y los adolescentes de Iztapalapa, en la Ciudad de México a través del proyecto realizado permitiendo que dos mundos aparentemente lejanos tuvieran un encuentro significativo. Las obras de Calderón de la Barca y Lope de Vega en manos de las y los adolescentes se transformaron en elementos indispensables para hablar de problemáticas, emociones y situaciones que enfrentan en la actualidad. Por lo tanto, acercar los textos clásicos a los adolescentes, a través de la pedagogía crítica. Permite el análisis y la reflexión a través de la



escena como una acción educativa y humana que posibilita desarrollar en ellos la conciencia social y asumir el poder político de transformar sus circunstancias. La respuesta que brinda el teatro en los contextos vulnerables es el aquí y el ahora que fundamenta la acción del actor en el escenario. Las y los adolescentes buscan respuestas y soluciones en el lugar seguro que representa la escena y la ficción. Es necesario seguir buscando posibilidades artísticas y educativas donde las y los adolescentes puedan desarrollar responsabilidad socioemocional, analizar la realidad y buscar soluciones ante las problemáticas que enfrentan. Los textos clásicos permiten la revisión del pasado para posibilitar un encuentro a través de la experiencia teatral y educativa, donde las y los adolescentes logran crear nuevos significados en el presente. Por último, este ensayo demuestra cómo el teatro y la educación se entrelazan entre la realidad y la ficción, la escuela y la escena, las y los profesores y las y los adolescentes, consolidando puentes entre el mundo áureo del Siglo XVII y la era digital del siglo XXI.

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