

Fathers and Daughters in
Early Modern Spanish Theater

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1	
Fathers and Daughters in Peasant Honor Drama.....	21
1.1 “¡Hija de Giraldo al fin!” Family Crises and the Parallels Between Private and Public Spheres in Luis Vélez de Guevara’s <i>La Serrana de la Vera</i>	25
1.2 “la justicia más rara / del mundo:” Violated Daughter, Inviolable Law in Calderón’s <i>El alcalde de Zalamea</i>	59
CHAPTER 2	
Father and/or <i>Valido</i> ? Filial Conflict in an Aristocratic Setting.....	90
2.1 “este misero objeto:” Commodified Daughter and Economics of Marriage in Rojas Zorrilla’s <i>Casarse por vengarse</i>	96
2.2 “una dama / que padre no ha conocido:” Unstable Identity, Unstable State in Calderón’s <i>La vida es sueño</i>	129
CHAPTER 3	
Fathers and Daughters in Religious Drama.....	162
3.1 “esclava de su padre:” Obedience to God and Father in Mira de Amescua’s <i>El esclavo del demonio</i>	166
3.2 “tratar con Dios y con el mundo:” Filial Discord and the Religious Woman’s Rejection of the Secular World in Tirso’s <i>La Santa Juana</i> and Lope’s Teresian Plays.....	196
CONCLUSION.....	228
WORKS CITED.....	235

INTRODUCTION

¿Qué deshonra, mal o daño / por mujer no sucedió, / de cuyo error torpe y ciego / que su ser flaco acompaña? [...] ¡Ay, hijas!, ¿quién os desea? / No sin causa entristecéis / las casas donde nacéis. / ¡Mal haya beldad tan fea!

—Luis Vélez de Guevara, *El príncipe viñador* (vv. 2056-65)

I am no viper, yet I feed / on mother's flesh which did me breed. / I sought a husband, in which labour / I found that kindness in a father. / He's father, son, and husband mild; / I, mother, wife, and yet his child. / How they may be, and yet in two, / as you will live resolve it you.

—William Shakespeare, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (vv. 65-72)

The fifth book of Valerius Maximus's voluminous *Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium* (*Memorable Deeds and Saying*), an anthology of nearly one thousand anecdotes from the ancient world, highlights two tales as especially representative of filial devotion (De Rynck 152). In the first story, a Roman woman faces the death penalty for committing an unspecified crime. The jailer takes pity on the condemned prisoner and decides not to kill her. After some time passes, he begins to wonder why the woman has not died of starvation. The jailer's subsequent investigation reveals that the prisoner's only visitor, her daughter, has been "taking out her breast and lessening the pangs of her mother's hunger with her own milk" (180). News of the astonishing act travels up the chain of command until a committee of jurymen commutes the woman's sentence. Maximus hails the daughter's heroism and bids his readers to forgo judgment: "Someone might think that this action was against the laws of nature; but in fact, to honor one's parents is the greatest law of nature."

Maximus's second example of dutiful filial action nearly replicates the first tale but changes the parent's gender. The latter anecdote tells of Mycon (Cymon in other accounts), an old man who "suffered the same misfortune [as the mother in the previous

story] and was likewise sent to jail.” In order to save her father, Mycon’s daughter, Pero, “took his head to her breast and nursed him, as if he were a baby.” The writer references a painting that captures this moment of the story to speak on the function of visual art: “When people look at a painting of this deed, they are amazed and cannot take their eyes away. As they admire the representation in front of them, the reality of what happened so long ago is brought back to life.”¹

The story of the daughter who kept a parent alive with her own milk, which came to be known as “Caritas Romana” (Roman Charity), inspired artists for centuries to come. During the early modern period in particular, some of Europe’s foremost painters immortalized the daughter’s bold action on their canvasses (Slatkes 82). Peter Paul Rubens, for instance, composed at least five versions of the subject (De Rynck 152). The ancient tale of exemplary filial love spoke to artists’ religious sensibilities because it afforded an opportunity to illustrate, in one fell swoop, three of the seven corporeal works of mercy, namely, feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, and visiting the captive (153). Scenes of “Caritas Romana” filled many an early modern frame; however, artists depicted only *one* of the two daughter-parent tales from the *Factorum*, the much shorter story of Mycon and Pero, father and daughter. Patrick de Rynck suggests that the influence of classical texts such as the *Factorum* upon Renaissance and Baroque artists led early modern painters to focus on Mycon and Pero in their respective renditions of “Roman Charity” because Maximus did so as well in his discussion of visual art.

After highlighting the aesthetic merits of the “Roman Charity” painting, Maximus suggests that the story of Mycon and Pero would elicit just as much admiration “if the

¹ A number of frescoes depicting the tale of Mycon and Pero may have existed in ancient Rome. Three such frescoes were discovered in Pompeii in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (Thürlemann 32-34).

even more effective art of painting in words” were used to “visualize such ancient deeds” (180). As if taking a cue from the first-century writer, *theater*, which combines the “art of painting words” with visual representation, has also made frequent use of the father-daughter relationship as a focal point, particularly during the early modern period. Why have artists from different centuries and artistic mediums been so drawn to fathers and daughters? What distinguished this specific pair from other combinations of family members and rendered it particularly worthy of representation on canvas and on stage? These questions provide the theoretical and sociocultural base of this study, which analyzes the depiction of fathers and daughters in early modern Spanish drama.



Figure 1
Peter Paul Rubens, *Caritas Romana* (c. 1630)

In one of his *Caritas Romana* (Fig. 1), Rubens depicts Pero baring her breast for her shackled father while two soldiers secretly observe from behind the bars of the prison window. The scene’s figures highlight the most salient features of the father-daughter relationship as structuralist anthropologist Claude-Lévi Strauss posited in his influential work on kinship. Based on an understanding of the human species as a composite of biological and social influences, Lévi-Strauss posed a fundamental question: “Where

does nature end and culture begin?” (*Elementary* 3-4). The anthropologist sought an answer in the internal dynamics of the family. Specifically, Lévi-Strauss identified a phenomenon that he believed stood alone among social norms as common to all cultures: certain individuals derived from the same kinship group are prohibited, on legal and/or moral grounds, from having sex (“Family” 276; *Elementary* 8-9). Societies have varying criteria for determining which degrees of consanguinity render sex permissible or illicit, but ultimately no social group exists that indiscriminately allows all types of marital unions. The apparent universality of restricting sexual behavior to conform to socially-constructed obligations led Lévi-Strauss to consider the incest taboo “the fundamental step because of which, by which, but above all in which, the transition from nature to culture is accomplished” (*Elementary* 24; “Family” 278).

Rubens’s aforementioned painting captures the liminal space between biology and culture that Lévi-Strauss’s work sited in the incest taboo. *Caritas Romana* depicts the biological act of breast-feeding in a context that appears to violate social norms. The woman’s supple body gives the painting an air of voluptuousness and sensuality; however, the presence of an old, helpless man suckling at her breast nullifies the eroticism she brings to the scene. The combination of the two figures renders the biological act of breastfeeding unseemly, even unnatural. Rubens depicts the woman averting her gaze as if embarrassed, suggesting that from a cultural perspective the action depicted is not as biological as it is quasi-sexual and shameful, perhaps even *taboo*.²

Viewers thus need not have knowledge of Mycon and Pero to apprehend the incestuous undertones that permeate the scene before them.

² Other Baroque artists seconded Rubens in portraying a visibly ashamed Pero. Andrea Vaccaro (Fig. 2) and Antonio Bellucci (Fig. 3), for instance, depicted the daughter turning away from her father, underscoring the incestuous quality of her life-saving gesture.



Figure 2

Andrea Vaccaro (1604-1670), *Cimone e Pero*



Figure 3

Antonio Bellucci, *Cimon und Pero* (c. 1685)

The complex, prurient interplay of filial love and condemnable eroticism likely contributed to the popularity of “Roman Charity” in early modern art, as it provided painters with a subject at once edifying and scandalous. Yet that does not sufficiently explain why only the father-daughter version of the story came to grace so many Renaissance and Baroque canvasses. Maximus appears to acknowledge the taboo nature of the breastfeeding tale when he asks readers to look past what likely seemed an action “against the laws of nature,” but he does so only during the mother-daughter story. If the all-female scenario presents an act as “unnatural” as its male-female counterpart, why did early modern artists solely depict the latter?

The work of French sociologist Marcel Mauss provides an important part of the answer. In his influential treatise, *The Gift* (1925), Mauss proposed that well before the advent of money and commercial trade the survival of any given society largely depended on a system of “total services” in which groups and individuals exchanged both

concrete and intangible goods (4, 70). Individuals participated in rites of service- and gift-giving on a seemingly voluntary basis, but in reality they acted according to the dictates of greater cultural forces that essentially coerced them into exchange as a means of securing alliance and preventing war (5, 13). The peace and social organization that these primordial systems of reciprocity fostered eventually evolved into much more complex systems of exchange, such as law and economy (47).

Lévi-Strauss applied Mauss's work to his own theories of kinship and taboo and arrived at an important conclusion: the incest prohibition underscores the need for social reciprocity; indeed, the taboo represents "the supreme rule of the gift" (*Elementary* 62, 481). Building upon Mauss's work on the sociocultural origins of exchange, the anthropologist argued that the socially-imposed prohibition of sex between certain combinations of family relationships paved the way for exogamy, the practice of marrying outside the family. Lévi-Strauss's conceptualization of exogamy as a transaction that fostered peace by binding and creating alliances between previously unrelated groups echoed Mauss's description of exchange (*Elementary* 478, 480). Just as Mauss intimated that the system of "total services" linked the individual to a greater sociocultural will, so, too, did Lévi-Strauss assert that exogamy and the incest taboo from which it derived established "the pre-eminence of the social over the natural, the collective over the individual" (45). The incest prohibition stopped individuals from engaging indiscriminately in sexual behavior and demanded cooperation with an institution of exchange (marriage) that fostered mutual dependency between families and thus ensured the peace necessary for cultural development ("Family" 277).

Lévi-Strauss's theory of exogamy as a system of social exchange invariably posits the father-daughter relationship as the familial dynamic upon which the evolution and preservation of culture rests. The anthropologist's description of a woman as "the supreme gift among those that can only be obtained in the form of reciprocal gifts" necessarily identified the woman of a given family as an "object" of exchange at the mercy of the home's male authority figure, or "exchanger" (*Elementary* 65; MacCormack 12). Lévi-Strauss considered women akin to other forms of goods and property—he called them the "most precious possession" (62)—and maintained that "the group controls the distribution not only of women, but of a whole collection of valuables" (32). Since the mother by definition lives in a sexual relationship with the father, she cannot be "exchanged" to another man. In the words of Luce Irigaray, only the virgin daughter represents "pure exchange value..., the possibility, the place, the sign of relations among men" (186). The daughter thus becomes the family member whose acquiescence to leaving the home in marriage facilitates the transition from nature to culture that purportedly results from exogamy (Boose, "House" 19-20).

Situating the father-daughter relationship at the heart of cultural evolution opens the door to a host of possible conflicts. Mauss's argument that the stringent dictates of cultural rites and social obligations force the individual to participate in exchange despite his or her actual desire resonates with the anthropological conception of exogamy as a practice that demands fathers and daughters to participate in marital exchanges. Fathers live in and respond to the social dictates of the two principal and potentially contradictory institutions of patriarchal authority: the family, over which they allegedly rule, and a greater sociopolitical system of alliances, in which they are invested (McEachern 273).

For patriarchy to function effectively, fathers must sacrifice their personal power in the home to uphold greater sociocultural authority. Exogamy forces a father to surrender personal authority, but he may not do so willingly. Instead, he might refuse to enter his daughter into the marriage “market.” For their part, daughters must remain obedient, and any sign of rebellion threatens society at its core (Boose, “House” 32; Lenker 49).

For Lévi-Strauss, the origins of culture thus depend on familial obedience to patriarchal demands. However, much as the anthropologist provided insight into how such a system of acquiescent exchange functions on an impersonal, theoretical level, he did not take into account what happens when actual emotions enter the picture—that is, when fathers and/or daughters refuse to submit to society’s demands. Throughout the history of Western culture, exploration of the complex ramifications of the father-daughter relationship, the emotional and more “human” side of the filial dynamic that anthropology does not capture, has become the purview of literary and artistic exploration. Fictional fathers, such as those studied in this dissertation, often fail to acquiesce to the exogamous demands of patriarchal society as readily as anthropological theory may have one believe. Instead, literature presents us with (often tragic) tales of fathers who lock daughters away to hide them from suitors or who, like Roberto in *Casarse por vengarse* or Giraldo in *La serrana de la Vera*, abuse paternal privileges and lead their daughters into unwanted marriages meant to ensure private, not public, benefit (Boose, “House” 37; Lenker 49). Fictional daughters have also proven unwilling to passively submit to the demands of patriarchy. Rather than remain under the smothering control of their fathers, female characters, such as Lisarda in *El esclavo del demonio* or Juana in *La Santa Juana*, are apt to flee from their homes to avoid unwanted marriages or

to elope with their beloveds. Women who escape their fathers transgress into the paternal, male space and become “detached” daughters whose behavior threatens to invert social norms and must therefore be quashed at all costs (Boose, “House” 34). The socially-subversive behavior of fathers and daughters ultimately forms part of what Lynda Boose has identified as a longstanding conflict between separation and retention that has dominated Western father-daughter texts (32).

The demands that patriarchal society impose upon the father-daughter relationship thus give rise to a pungent conflict, ripe for artistic and literary exploration. In Rubens’s painting, to take just one example, the soldiers contemplate the interaction between Pero and Mycon from behind the prison window; they are literally and figuratively barred from participating in an exogamous exchange. The fact that Pero can breastfeed means that she has lost her virginity and no longer possesses intact “exchange value.” More important, she engages in a quasi-sexual act, not with a husband or suitor, but with her father, doubly reducing the possibility of marriage for the male onlookers. The daughter saves the father’s life but endangers the continuity of patriarchy. In other words, the biological supersedes the cultural, effectively signaling a state of social devolution. The familial issues involved are complex: representations of Pero and Mycon leave the viewer wondering if the father should surrender personal wellbeing and accept dying of starvation so as to not engage in incestuous and thereby socially-threatening behavior. Similarly, one questions if Pero’s filial devotion violates greater demands of law and justice (after all, Mycon *has* committed a crime). Given the patriarchal nature of Western society, the same tensions inherent in the Pero-Mycon tale would not be operant in the

mother-daughter story, which suggests why Rubens and his contemporaries did not elect the latter as a subject for their paintings.

Yet other questions remain. Why were artistic representations of Mycon and Pero so popular during the Renaissance and Baroque in particular?³ How did the political and sociocultural conditions of the early modern period render a controversial father-daughter relationship a powerful subject for visual and dramatic art? Lagretta Tallent Lenker has argued that incest became a popular artistic motif during the Renaissance because it allowed an interrogation into the complex ties that existed between individual desires and societal well-being (60, 62). The potential disjunction between the personal and the social inherent in patriarchal exogamy took on particular relevance in Western Europe during a period in which the burgeoning of capitalism and the increasing establishment of centralized monarchies affected the ways in which individuals interacted within and across social strata. This altered sociocultural landscape threatened the longstanding notion of universal similitude and correspondence according to which the behavior of individuals within the kinship group was thought to reverberate throughout the social chain of being (Dunn 84-85). Efforts to contain an ever more mercurial society thus contributed to the emergence of a revitalized conception of the family as a microcosm of the patriarchal hierarchy (Lenker 23; Sommerville 85).⁴ In the artistic realm, the father-daughter dynamic became a metaphorical laboratory in which to explore the reach and limits of personal and political authority (McLaren 103). Painters echoed Rubens not

³ Rubens, Vaccaro, and Bellucci were but a few of the early modern artists who produced versions of “*Caritas Romana*.” Similar paintings have been attributed to Caravaggio, Dirck van Baburen, and Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (Trubowitz 40-41; Slatkes 82-83; Harris 337).

⁴ The king-father/state-household metaphor prevalent during the early modern period had its roots in classical philosophy: “the associations of a father with his sons bears the form of monarchy, since the father cares for his children”; “it is the ideal of monarchy to be paternal rule” (Aristotle 210).

solely out of a spirit of imitation but because the ramifications of a scene that complicated the very foundation of cultural evolution held particular significance during a moment of profound sociocultural questioning.

The growing corpus of critical literature on the father-daughter relationship in British Renaissance drama reveals the currency and potential of the filial dyad for early modern playwrights. The florescence of Western European theater at a time of significant cultural and political flux speaks to the capacity of dramatic art to reflect upon a given society's conflicts and changing ideologies (Cohen 15; Lenker 40). In turn, the continued presence of tense father-daughter relationships in an artistic space that Marjorie Garber describes as "a privileged site of transgression" (35) suggests that dramatists and audiences alike found in the filial pair a medium for exploring the most pressing issues of the day. The belief in the family as a mirror for the social hierarchy, as well as the potential conflicts of interest inherent in the demands of patriarchal exogamy, transformed discord between fathers and daughters into a productive metaphor for the individual's complex relationship to the state (Lenker 2). Fissures created between fathers and daughters on stage gave playwrights a platform from which to contribute to ongoing discussions regarding such major topics as the nature and limits of monarchy, the place of women in society, and the debate concerning free will.

The brunt of critical scholarship regarding fictional fathers and daughters has focused on English theater in general and on Shakespeare in particular. As Tom MacFaul has proposed, English dramatists created complex fathers who vacillated between their private, emotional selves and the demands of their public roles (2). The resulting vulnerability of the paternal figure created a relative power vacuum that dramatists filled

increasingly with authoritative and self-affirming daughters in plays produced during the first two decades of the seventeenth century (173). Indeed, between 1600 and 1610, father-daughter relationships became more important and dramatically powerful than their father-son counterparts (138). Shakespeare, whose status as a writer of universal renown explains why so many studies of filial relationships have focused almost exclusively on his corpus, both participated in and contributed to the evolution of the father-daughter plot on the English stage. The playwright's penchant for exploring the dramatic possibilities of family interaction led him to include the filial pair in twenty-one plays (Lenker 9; Boose, "Father" 325), and, like his fellow dramatists, Shakespeare varied his treatment of fathers, gradually undermining the figure's power and allowing daughters greater authority, especially in his later plays (MacFaul 84; 178).

Daughters in early modern Spanish theater, on the other hand, have largely remained hidden in the critical shadows. Studies have elucidated the significance of female characters in their role as daughters in individual plays, but to date this study represents the first attempt at considering this unique social identity across the genre. The dearth of scholarship ought not mislead us. Daughters from all social classes grace comedia plots in myriad contexts, whether as vengeful bandits acting as their own agents of justice, maidens conjuring wily schemes to secure the love of their beloveds, or peasant girls victimized by impudent military leaders. Delving deeper into portrayals of daughters on the Golden Age stage, a notable thread emerges: the actions these characters undertake, like those of their British counterparts, are often grounded in problematized relationships with their fathers. If a *doncella* schemes her way into her beloved's arms, her father has likely demanded that she marry someone else. Similarly, if a daughter falls

prey to sexual victimization, it is likely because the prospect of acquiring wealth and prestige has blinded her father, who carelessly leaves her in a precarious position. The filial conflicts in Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca do not differ significantly from the battle of wills that pit Shakespearean heroines against their fathers, yet early modernists have mostly ignored fictional Spanish families. The present study begins to fill this gap in critical scholarship.

The similar ways in which English and Spanish dramatists depicted father-daughter relationships in their works respond to parallels in the sociopolitical climate of the two empires during the early modern period. England and Spain entered the seventeenth century wary from the plagues, failed harvests, wars, and economic depression that affected much of Western Europe at the end of the medieval period (Kamen 223). The two world powers looked to their sovereigns for hope and direction, only to find that neither the Spanish Philip III (1598-1621) and Philip IV (1621-1665), nor the British James I (1603-1625) could prevent their respective empires from becoming embroiled in further political and economic crises (Cohen 255-56). England and Spain saw unbridled increases in court patronage and the rise of royal favorites—Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset and George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham in England, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval, Duke of Lerma and Gaspar de Guzmán, Count-Duke of Olivares in Spain—whose controversial political careers called into question not only their respective sovereigns but also the tenets of monarchy itself (268, 272). Furthermore, the ruling regimes of both empires proposed solutions to conflicts at home and abroad that yielded mixed results at best and further fomented distrust among the citizenry. Whether profligate court expenditure in either realm, James I's reputed homoerotic

behavior and questionable tactics with regard to Spain, or Philip IV's multiple mistresses and inability to control the value of Spanish currency, the vicissitudes of rule created debate regarding the ways in which kingdoms ought to be ruled.⁵ Concerns about political "fathers" subsequently found an outlet for exploration in the fathers depicted on both the English and Spanish stage.

As Walter Cohen proposes in *Drama of a Nation*, parallel sociopolitical conditions contributed to shaping theatrical traditions that in many ways set Spanish and English drama apart from the rest of Europe. Permanent public theaters appeared in Madrid and London during the 1570s, and over the course of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries drama in both countries evolved into a synthesis of popular and neoclassical traditions that existed separately elsewhere in Europe at that time (17, 264). While Spanish and English plays differed in source material, versification, style, and act division, drama in both countries demonstrated an overarching commitment to hierarchy that manifested in sustained esteem of monarchy, aristocracy, and church (19, 140-41). Significantly, both theatrical traditions also evoked the Horatian tradition of delight-instruction and thus frequently included moralistic themes and depictions of reward for virtuous behavior and punishment for sin (158). The combined commitment to patriarchy and didacticism thus rendered public theater in both countries a "crucial mediation between drama and society" (157), a space in which drama could comment on the *status*

⁵ Lavish spending at court and allegations of "blatantly homoerotic" behavior on the part of the king, particularly with George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, purportedly marked the Jacobean period (Lenker 16). James's failed attempts to marry his son to the Infanta María Anna and his inability to intervene on his daughter's behalf at the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War exacerbated distrust among the English citizenry and engendered disillusionment with regard to the king's role as *magnus pater-familia* (McLaren 107, 112; MacFaul 191). Increased criticism of James's rule coincided with what critics have identified as a growing skepticism regarding masculine authority of all kinds manifested on the English stage (MacFaul 173). The present study treats the more pressing domestic and foreign concerns of Philip III and Philip IV's respective regimes, as well as the subsequent exploration of these issues on the Golden Age stage.

quo while entertaining the masses. It was a space, moreover, in which the father-daughter plot functioned as a dramatic mask behind which dramatists could comment on the prevailing state of theological, political, and sociocultural affairs.

The present study considers how Spanish dramatists used the metaphorical possibilities of the father-daughter dynamic to comment on their historical milieu. Cohen's cogent analysis of the similarities between English and Spanish public theater implicitly highlights the gap in critical literature regarding the place and function of the father-daughter plot in the *comedia*. Like their English counterparts, Spanish dramatists showed a keen interest in exploring potential conflicts between private and public spheres (McKendrick, *Theatre* 173). Shakespeare inserted family conflict, especially between fathers and daughters, into marriage plots to dramatize the often conflicting demands of patriarchy and the difficulty of balancing personal and public duties (McEachern 273; Lenker 28); so too did Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and their contemporaries. Plots, characters, and motifs may differ, but one common thread links together the works in this study: an active engagement with the private-public dimensions of the father-daughter relationship and an exploration of the most pressing political, legal, economic, social, and theological issues of the period.

In describing the historicist underpinnings of her study of fathers and daughters in Shakespeare and George Bernard Shaw, Lenker poses a vital question:

“Does art mirror life or does life mirror art?” In the case of both William Shakespeare and Bernard Shaw, the answer is “yes” to both. The dramas of both artists are formed by, as well as inform, the social fabric..., weaving a complicitous critique, a reciprocal arrangement whereby the plays both comment on the times in which each man worked and simultaneously shaped the discourses and ideologies of those times. (2)

The present study takes a historicist approach to early modern Spanish theater and assumes a similar give-and-take between playwright and historical reality. Lenker rightly cautions that an analysis of how the economic, political, and social systems of a given era influence that period's literary production must not privilege the strictly historical over the literary (e.g., sources, traditions, conventions; 4). MacFaul similarly argues that politics do not provide an all-encompassing explanation for a given society's questioning of patriarchy; nonetheless, he acknowledges that "events on the nation's biggest stage [are] at least a minor factor in changing representations of fathers on the theatrical stage" (157). Guided in part by the preceding assertions, this project explores the diverse ways in which Spanish dramatists responded to their historical milieu by means of conflicted father-daughter relationships. I insert each play into its respective social context to shed greater light on the cultural zeitgeist underlying the period's dramatic production. The historicist components of each chapter strive to enrich the corresponding literary analyses, as well as to underscore the masterful craftsmanship of Spain's most highly-respected dramatists during a time in which theater became a principal form of entertainment for the cultured and uncultured alike.

The study that follows samples nearly thirty years of Spanish theatrical output (1612 to 1640) and includes plays written by some of the empire's foremost dramatists: Luis Vélez de Guevara, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, Antonio Mira de Amescua, Tirso de Molina, and Lope de Vega. The popularity and influence of these playwrights, both in their day and in subsequent centuries, speaks to the ubiquity of father-daughter relationships in the Spanish theatrical tradition. Analyzing the works of such well-known dramatists allows for a rich historicist analysis, as the amount of

biographic and bibliographic information available on each playwright facilitates situating each play in its specific historical context. Beyond being canonical, the plays I have chosen permit a thorough analysis of the father-daughter relationship in a variety of dramatic contexts specific to early modern Spanish theater, including peasant honor drama (chapter 1), plays that treat the king-*valido* relationship (chapter 2), and theological/hagiographical drama (chapter 3).

MacFaul indicates that questions of honor became central in English drama between 1600 and 1610, likely as a result of the sociocultural anxieties that new patterns of social mobility and the decline of the aristocracy provoked (181). The shift in thematic focus increased the number of plots focused on conflict between familial and political honor, a trend that continued into late Jacobean drama (183). Around the same time, Spanish theater saw a surge in the production of peasant honor drama, a subgenre that also focused overarching social tensions on the family and pitted peasantry against nobility in contentious disputes that called into question the nature and limits of honor. In the first chapter of this study, “Fathers and Daughters in Peasant Honor Drama,” the father-daughter plot centers on a woman’s dishonor at the hands of a noble. In Vélez de Guevara’s *La serrana de la Vera* (1613), a father’s social pretension leave his daughter vulnerable to dishonor. More important, his inept parenting and inability to defend his family, which contributes to his daughter’s identity as a remarkably *masculine* woman, also leads her to take justice into her own hands and set out on a violent killing spree that requires monarchical intervention to diffuse. By contrast, Calderón’s *El alcalde de Zalamea* (1640) presents us with a loving and concerned father who does all he can to uphold justice following his daughter’s victimization. The king also makes an

appearance, this time to validate the father's seemingly questionable approach to law.

The fathers' divergent responses to a noble's violent incursion into their respective homes implicate social hierarchy, gender expectations, and the administration of law and justice.

An aristocratic milieu provides the setting for the plays considered in this study's second chapter, "Father and/or *Valido*? Filial Conflict in an Aristocratic Setting."

Criticism of Philip IV's *valido*, the Count-Duke of Olivares, became widespread throughout the 1630s (Kamen 213). Accordingly, plays such as Rojas Zorrilla's *Casarse por vengarse* (1636) and Calderón's *La vida es sueño* (1635) incorporate *privados* to comment on the appropriate formation and function of the royal favorite. While the depiction of king-*privado* relationships is not unique to these plays, the two dramas in this chapter stand out because the *validos* presented in both also prove themselves poor fathers who leave their daughters vulnerable to violence and dishonor. The conflict between private and public spheres takes on a unique dimension in these paternal figures charged with balancing duty to family and to king. Besides the question of the *privado*, *Casarse* also delves into Spain's multiple economic crises in its extensive use of commercial terminology. The play's protagonist suffers the ramifications of her father's imprudent management of personal and private roles and becomes a (social) commodity at the whim of her husband, her father, and her king. *Vida*'s filial plot also goes beyond the *privanza* issue to consider the role and limits of monarchy in its depiction of a prince whose father tries to prevent him from inheriting the crown out of fear that the kingdom will fall under tyrannical rule. In both works the health of the family mirrors that of the state, revealing an intimate link between public and private spheres.

The fallout from the Council of Trent and the interminable battles against the Protestant Reformation created a unique religious climate in Spain. As with political and social debates of the period, religious anxieties also appeared on stage in depictions of conflicted father-daughter relationships. The final chapter of this study, “Fathers and Daughters in Religious Drama,” begins with an analysis of contrasting depictions of two daughters, one humbly obedient and the other brazenly sinful, in Mira de Amescua’s *El esclavo del demonio* (1612). The sinful daughter’s fall and path to conversion reveal the dramatist’s position on the *de auxiliis* polemic concerning the role of grace and free will in salvation, a major theological debate in early modern Spain. The chapter ends with Tirso’s *La Santa Juana I* (1613) and Lope’s *La bienaventurada madre Santa Teresa de Jesús* (1614), plays that focus the filial relationship on a battle of wills between fathers who try to impose their authority in the marriage market and daughters whose religious inclinations lead them to reject marriage and leave the secular world behind. The filial plots in these hagiographical works delve into two notable Counter Reformation issues, female monasticism and woman saints. In both plays, the tensions between the protagonist and her father represent the religious woman’s inner struggle to come to terms with her pious vocation.

The scholarship on English Renaissance referenced in this introduction serves as the torch that will guide our steps down the untrodden road of father-daughter relationship in Golden Age drama. The path will bring us face-to-face with some of the most important issues Spain and its people faced during the early modern period. Moreover, it will show us how theater responded and contributed to the cultural narrative that evolved in response to the tensions and anxieties these issues fomented at all levels

of society. The plays analyzed in this study constitute an initial venturing onto this road for the field of early modern studies. They may not take us to the end of the journey, but they nonetheless begin to pave the way.

CHAPTER 1

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS IN PEASANT HONOR DRAMA

In *Adulterous Alliances*, Richard Helgerson traces a phenomenon that developed in nearly identical fashion in seventeenth-century Dutch genre painting and Spanish Golden Age peasant drama: a pronounced focus on scenes of nonaristocratic households disrupted by an intruder of superior social rank who lusts after a woman in the home (3-5). The scholar proposes that the home stands in for the state in these works, and the danger in which the peasant woman finds herself represents a threat to private (home) and public (state) spheres alike (4). The home's symbolic function suggests that just as a father must protect his daughter as "king" of his home, so too must a monarch protect the honor of his subjects as "father" of his kingdom. This interplay between public and private permeates Spanish peasant honor drama, a subgenre of the comedia in which the wide reach of an intruding noble's misdeeds justifies the king's emergence at play's end as a *deus ex machina* that has the final say in the plot's resolution.

Helgerson's analysis of a genre painting by the Dutch artist Gerard ter Borch (Fig. 4) provides a notable example of parallel and tension between home and state. The painting, set in an unidentified domestic space, shows a man talking to a woman who is standing with her back to the observer while a second woman watches. The work's most common title, *Paternal Admonition*, attests to the frequency with which critics have interpreted the scene as a father castigating his daughter while the mother (or some other older woman) silently looks on. Contrary to this view, Helgerson holds that Borch actually depicts a man, in all likelihood a soldier, propositioning a prostitute (81). The critic blames the work's prevailing yet erroneous interpretation on the disappearance of a

coin in the man's right hand that was probably visible in an earlier version of the painting (85). The fact that the soldier could be so easily considered the woman's father reveals a porous boundary between private and public spheres, as the male figure stands just a coin shy of being an intruder rather than a concerned head of household. The viewer's inability to see the standing woman's reaction to the soldier's indecorous proposal adds to the scene's tension. Will she accept? Will her father arrive in time to protect his daughter and reaffirm authority over his home? Whatever the outcome, one constant remains: the daughter's body serves as the principal source of contention, a veritable battleground upon which the home (father) and state (soldier) vie for supremacy.



Figure 4
Gerard ter Borch, *Paternal Admonition* (c. 1654-5)

The presence of fathers and daughters in works, such as *Paternal Admonition*, that depict conflict between private and public domains can be explained from an anthropological perspective. As outlined in this study's introduction, structuralists such as Lévi-Strauss defined exogamy in patriarchal societies as a process of intergroup marriage

in which males exchange women from their respective kinship groups in order to forge alliances and minimize intergroup rivalry (*Elementary* 481). As procurers of marital exchanges, fathers must sacrifice some personal authority over the home and allow their daughters to move into different kinship groups. For their part, daughters must strike a balance between desires for personal liberty and the demands of male authority figures. Their role as veritable objects of exchange in exogamy renders daughters a marketable commodity with high social and economic value. Borch's depiction of sexual solicitation highlights the economic nature of the daughter's identity as marriageable commodity. The woman's ambiguous posture in the painting puts in doubt the social benefits of exogamy: if she accepts the soldier's offer, she loses her value in the marriage market and significantly complicates her father's ability to participate in marital exchange.

As for the longstanding uncertainty regarding the male figure's identity, this perhaps reflects a projection of an unconscious fear of losing authority on the part of the male viewer. As Helgerson notes, seventeenth-century genre painting often reflects a growing concern among male Dutch householders that a martial monarchic regime would supplant their authority in state affairs (84).⁶ Seeing the male figure in Borch's painting as a chastising father implies that the latter still rules over his home. More unsettling, and yet more likely according to Helgerson, is that the man is in fact a soldier and has displaced the father. The absence of a father suggests that control over the home, and by extension control over the state, is about to or has already been lost, and the viewer's inability to see the girl's face makes it impossible to determine what the future holds for either home or state. A threat to the filial pair constitutes an affront to the state itself.

⁶ The Dutch relied on hired soldiers during their revolt against Spain. Once peace was achieved, however, these same soldiers became a threat to the freedom they had been hired to secure (Helgerson 89).

Luis Vélez de Guevara's *La serrana de la Vera* (1613) and Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *El alcalde de Zalamea* (ca. 1640) are two notable examples of Spanish peasant dramas that focus the trespassing of a nonaristocratic home on a father-daughter relationship. Both plays depict the abusive actions of a military captain against a peasant woman and her family that ultimately requires monarchical intervention to resolve. Despite these basic similarities, the two dramatists take very different approaches to the question of restoring family honor. In *Serrana*, a father's mishandling of his daughter's betrothal leads to her victimization. He does not defend his dishonored daughter, who therefore decides to take justice into her own hands. She does not seek to secure just retribution, however, but instead desires to quench a thirst for violent vengeance and break with conventional gender and class limits. The king eventually punishes her as well as her father for his inability to fulfill the social demands of his masculinity. Unlike *Serrana*, the dishonored father in *Alcalde* goes to great lengths to achieve retribution for his daughter, and although his actions appear to violate the law, the king rewards him for acting appropriately in the name of justice. While the two plays take divergent paths following the daughter's victimization, in both cases the filial relationship serves as a springboard from which the dramatists probe the limits of gender and class as well as the distinction between vengeance and justice.

1.1 “*¿Hija de Giraldo al fin!*” Family Crises and the Parallels Between Private and Public Spheres in Luis Vélez de Guevara’s *La Serrana de la Vera*

[M]arriage is not, is never, and cannot be a private business.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, “The Family” (270)

Por qué virgen quiero estar: / Sé que Dios ha de encarnar / sin dudar / y una virgen ha de parir [...] de mí ha de nacer, / que otra de mí merecer / no puede haber / en bondad ni hidalguía.

Gil Vicente, *Auto de la Sibila Casandra* (vv. 429-32, 508-11)

Audience and characters become spectators in the final scene of Luis Vélez de Guevara’s *La serrana de la Vera* (1613): “Entre Don Fernando y Doña Isabel, y el maestre y los que pudieren de acompañamiento, y corren el tafetán, y parezca Gila en el palo arriba, llena de saetas y el cabello sobre el rostro, y [salga] abajo Giraldo” (204).⁷ Several notable faces stand out among the crowd: a king contemplates what he deems a “justo castigo” (v. 3284); a queen declares that the spectacle before her has moved her soul; a father laments the misfortune of losing a daughter. What has brought them together is the corpse of a peasant woman, Gila, whose death the king showcases as an “ejemplo” (v. 3297) for all of Spain. Gila’s position above the other characters makes her the clear focal point; nonetheless, we cannot discount the role of the monarchs, Fernando and Isabel, and the woman’s father, Giraldo, in contributing to the scene’s didactic intent. Quite the contrary: their presence indicates that the *serrana*’s exemplary function encompasses issues of justice (Fernando), gender (Isabel), and the individual’s place in society (Giraldo). The dramatist draws our attention to Giraldo, “Éste es su padre” (v. 3288), shining the deictic “éste” like a verbal spotlight upon the grieving man. Fernando states that Giraldo will be set free from the duties of the Santa Hermandad once he buries his daughter. This final royal pardon suggests that if Gila’s crimes deserve a *justo*

⁷ Textual citations are from Enrique Rodríguez-Cepeda’s edition of *Serrana*.

castigo, so, too, has Giraldo's behavior been worthy of censure. More than the spectacle of an executed *bandolera*, then, the scene highlights the mutual failures of a father and daughter. For their part, the Catholic Monarchs have seemingly restored order, but they, too, have lost a child, the heir Prince Juan, whose death leaves unanswered questions of succession that threaten the future of the empire. Justice may have been served, but family crises at opposite ends of the social spectrum forebode kingdom-wide instability and suggest that order has not necessarily been restored. Vélez establishes a parallel in the fates of two sets of parents, and the fracture of the peasant filial relationship lingers as an omen of future crisis in the loss of the heir to the throne.

Critical scholarship on *Serrana* has largely focused on the eponymous protagonist and attendant issues of gender. Some critics, such as Piedad Bolaños, have interpreted Vélez's characterization of Gila as evidence that the dramatist recognized the marginalized place women occupied in society and strove to make known the injustices they suffered (14). Others, such as María Caba, consider *Serrana* proof of the playwright's disdain of powerful women, such as Isabel I and Margaret of Austria (148, 161). These lines of scholarship have contributed to new readings of the text, but in centering on Gila as an individual they have given insufficient attention to larger social structures. As other scholars have long observed, the essence of a character on the early modern Spanish stage emerges not in the articulation of an autonomous inner self but as a function of social role in interaction with others (Greer 416; González 62). To understand Gila the character one must analyze Gila the *daughter*. The present study argues that the father-daughter relationship lies at the core of Gila's social identity and sets in motion the play's major conflicts. In turn, understanding Gila the daughter allows us to come to

terms with Gila the *woman* who remains at odds with prevailing gender expectations and Gila the *peasant* who attempts to violate the social hierarchy. Both transgressions merit punishment, and both can ultimately be traced back to her father.

“Tu honra es mi espejo amado, / si le procuras quebrar, / ¿cómo me podré mirar / en un espejo quebrado?”⁸

Juan Luis Vives divided his influential treatise on the education of women, *De institutione feminae christianae* (1523), into three books that provide instruction specific to virgins, wives, and widows. The treatise’s tripartite division reflects a propensity on the part of Spanish moralists, theologians, and other men of letters to relegate women to a restricted number of viable social identities—maiden, wife, widow, nun—each of which presupposed static enclosure within a domestic space and upheld a patriarchal ideology of male domination (Nicholson 302; Vigil 11). Although the prescriptive literature reifies these limiting categories, recent historical approaches to early modern Spanish society suggest that women actually enjoyed much more flexible roles in everyday life. Historian Allyson Poska’s study of Galician peasantry indicates that nearly ten percent of Spanish women never married, and some peasant women served as heads of households who cultivated their own lands and remained largely independent of men (42, 56).⁹

Analogously, Mary Elizabeth Perry’s review of notarial documents from sixteenth-century Seville reveals that women bought and sold property and made wills, while literature on royal and aristocratic families reveals that noblewomen managed estates,

⁸ Tirso de Molina, *Quien no cae no se levanta* (vv. 77-80).

⁹ The reputation of the Galician women as strong and independent lasted well beyond the early modern period. As Emilia Pardo Bazán relates in the nineteenth-century novel *Los pazos de Ulloa*: “en los últimos confines de Galicia...las mujeres se distinguen por sus condiciones físicas y modo de vivir: son una especie de Amazonas [que] destripan terrones...aran, cavan, siegan, cargan carros de rama y esquilmo...y viven...sin auxilio de varón” (282).

wrote poetry and memoirs, and endowed and supervised hospitals (Perry 14; Nader 3). Regardless of class, women enjoyed a degree of involvement in public life and exercised competencies that contradicted the moralist sentiment that a “good” woman “stay at home and be unknown to others” (Vives 72).

That is not to say that the proscriptive literature did not reflect genuine social and gender concerns of the period. To analyze *Serrana* as a commentary on the dramatist’s sociopolitical milieu vis-à-vis the father-daughter relationship we must locate the play within its specific historical context, particularly with regard to the conceptualization of *honor* and an overarching sociocultural preoccupation with female sexuality.

Contemporary historians tend to dismiss the comedia archetype of the husband who opts to murder his wife rather than endure a loss of *honra* as more of a literary convention than an accurate portrayal of quotidian reality. Nonetheless, current approaches to honor acknowledge that the social ramifications of the relationship between men and women largely depended on sexual behavior (Poska 7). Masculine reputation in particular was founded on female sexual conduct, and men were charged with controlling and safeguarding the sexual purity of their wives and daughters if they hoped to preserve personal and familial reputations (Taylor 2-3, 158).

Rather than ensnare Spaniards in a labyrinth of violent vengeance, as popular literature would have one believe, practices related to honor granted men and women alike a variety of options, including formal adjudication, for managing interpersonal discord (7-8, 21). Scott Taylor posits that honor constituted not a stringent code of sex and violence but a *rhetoric*, a “conscious use of phrases, gestures, and actions” that men and women invoked in the legal arena when their reputations were called into question.

Legal records of the period reveal that Spaniards indeed had a variety of choices for settling personal discord, while juridical tracts and theological decrees that outlawed dueling encouraged Spaniards to seek nonviolent methods of addressing disputes (Taylor 72; Sullivan 22). Between 1500 and 1700, Castilians experienced what Richard Kagan calls a “legal revolution” during which formal adjudication increased exponentially and litigation became nearly habitual across social classes (xx-xxi). In the final analysis, honor did not constitute a call to arms but instead represented a multifaceted conception of personal reputation that could, and frequently did, seek legal recourse.

What happened when a violation of a woman’s sexual purity did in fact occur? In the case of a woman “tricked,” like Gila, into having sex by a suitor who promised his hand in marriage but later fled or reneged, the victim’s father did not typically force the seducer into marriage at knifepoint or threaten to kill his own daughter for blemishing the family’s honor. Cases of *estupro bajo palabra de matrimonio* (seduction by marriage promise) that appear in Spanish legal ledgers reveal that the accused seducer would, instead, have been taken to court (A. Dyer 439).¹⁰ Once an accuser initiated litigation, the defendant could either marry her or pay her a dowry large enough to ameliorate the decline in marriage prospects she would face after losing her virginity (Kagan 240; A. Dyer 441; Barahona 30-31). Regardless of the outcome, the case would have usually been settled without resorting to extralegal violence. Spanish drama may have presented honor as a priceless possession restorable only through violence, but in practice honor

¹⁰ Castilian law defined *estupro* as the rape of a virgin; however, the qualification *bajo palabra de matrimonio* made this specific crime one of “seduction” and indicated that the sex involved was consensual (Taylor 93; A. Dyer 444). The *Siete partidas* denotes as “gran maldad” the act of taking a virgin from her home “con engaño, o halago” (Partida VII, Title XIX, Law i). Vélez treats the issue of seduction in a more satirical vein in *El diablo cojuelo* (1641). The work opens with Cleofás “huyendo de la justicia, que le venía a los alcances por un estupro, pretendiendo que el pobre licenciado escotase solo lo que tanto habían merendado” (70). A woman who has been dishonored by a military captain accuses the protagonist of seduction in an effort to “tomar satisfaccion...en otro inocente” (72).

constituted a legally quantifiable commodity that could be at least partially restored through nonviolent means (Barahona 119). The legal record thus demonstrates that rather than keep their domestic matters out of the public domain and turn to private vengeance, fathers of seduced daughters helped them sue for “seduction” in court (A. Dyer 451).¹¹

How did the rhetoric of honor in the face of seduction by false promise of marriage take shape on the Golden Age stage? In plays such as Vélez’s *Serrana*, seduced women bypass adjudication and engage in behavior that threatens to upset the norms of gender-determined conduct and bring about social chaos (Nicholson 296). Whereas Spanish legal records suggest that women were active in the legal restoration of their violated honor, on stage a seduced woman represents not a connoisseur of the legal system but a violent self-appointed agent of justice who threatens to usurp male power (McKendrick, *Woman* 261). Once the captain violates Gila’s honor, *Serrana* becomes what Elizabeth Rhodes refers to in her analysis of *Valor, agravio y mujer* as a justice narrative that does not accommodate personal justice (i.e., revenge) and which invariably judges the violated woman according to her acceptance or rejection of social reintegration and state-imposed justice (“Redressing” 315). Rhodes’s description of justice in *Valor* can be extended to *Serrana*, but with an important additional element. I argue that Giraldo’s neglect of paternal obligations prior to his daughter’s seduction complicated the audience’s judgment of Gila. To the extent that she acts as her own agent of justice in a social milieu that gives men the final say in matters of law and order, her actions reveal a failure on the part of her father to intervene on her behalf. Giraldo’s inability to defend

¹¹ Castilian women were not allowed to litigate on their own behalf and could only initiate a lawsuit if a male guardian or relative represented them (Kagan 10).

Gila's honor after Lucas seduces her becomes a springboard for her murderous rage. How are we to judge a woman when the men in her life leave her vulnerable to dishonor?

“¡Hija de Giraldo al fin!” (v. 419)

“Gila...vestida a lo serrano de mujer, con...un cuchillo de monte al lado...y puesta una escopeta debajo del caparazón del caballo” (pp. 77-78). From her very first appearance, Gila embodies a famed character of Spanish folklore, the beautiful but deadly *serranilla*.¹² Gila's garb, complete with knife and shotgun, aligns with the *serrana* character's traditional attire and stereotypical violent inclinations. Similarly, Giraldo's boast of his daughter's “presencia hermosa,” “gran valor” (vv. 133-34), and insatiable desire to challenge men in feats of physical prowess sets Gila on par with previous incarnations of the *serranilla*.¹³ More than establish Gila as a typical *serrana*, however, the father's praise underscores the uniqueness of the father-daughter dynamic.

We also learn from Giraldo that his daughter likes to hunt (“salió...al monte a cazar,” vv. 157-58), a detail that would signal to an early modern audience that the father has permitted Gila a degree of personal freedom inconsistent with conventional female upbringing (McKendrick, *Woman* 242). Giraldo's boast confirms the skill set and temperament of the *serrana* of yore; however, it also reveals his complicit role in encouraging her transgressive behavior. The *serrana* departs from the norm, despite

¹² The presence of a character from popular lore in Vélez's play speaks to the playwright's tendency to base his dramatic works in Spanish history and legend. Scholars have described *Serrana* as a polygenetic reinscription of a variety of folkloric and Renaissance tropes, medieval lyric songs, the *romancero*, Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*, and a play of the same name written by Lope de Vega circa 1595 (Cotarelo 622; Strother 164; Morreale 105).

¹³ “no hay labrador...que a correr no desafíe, / a saltar, luchar, tirar / la barra” (vv. 135-39). Lope's *serrana* displays similar abilities: “juega las armas, tira bien la barra, / y con el arcabuz ... pasa desde la villa al blanco el plomo” (17).

outward trappings of femininity, (after all, she dresses “a lo serrano de mujer”), as a woman ill-suited to fulfill her expected social roles. As Giraldo’s description of his daughter’s physical exploits intimates, Gila possesses traits her contemporaries would find threatening in a woman, such as unruliness and strength (Strother 170). Although early modern women exercised more freedom than previously thought, that does not take away from Gila’s characterization as a bold exception to the norm.

What function does this peculiar relationship between father and daughter play in the drama? Notable in the opening scene is the litany of social descriptors Giraldo employs to identify himself while trying to keep the captain, Lucas, from entering the home. The peasant may not be an “hidalgo” (v. 14), but he is nonetheless “un labrador / con honrado nacimiento” (v. 15-16) as well as a “cristiano viejo y honrado” (v. 17). Ultimately, these social markers lack practical significance: whatever connotations Giraldo hopes to deploy in using terms such as *villano* or *cristiano viejo* are rendered useless as they neither dissuade the captain nor spur the peasant to action. The only identity that will hold any weight will be the final one the audience hears before Gila’s appearance on stage: “padre de hijos” (v. 123). While he never had a son, Giraldo *has* fathered a daughter who “vale / por dos hijos” (v. 131) in her resemblance to her male predecessors and her capacity to defend the family’s honor. The father’s affirmation renders Gila’s mix of masculine and feminine traits, her valor and beauty, a product of nature and nurture alike, a cause and effect of being considered son *and* daughter. Giraldo does not necessarily order Gila to act like a man, but his inaction in the face of the captain’s harassment leaves her little choice, and she must single-handedly expel Lucas at

gunpoint. Her actions highlight the irony in Giraldo's earlier claim of having "valor invencible" (v. 28) capable of repelling any offense.

"Father" represents Giraldo's only social descriptor that produces positive action, yet his daughter must ultimately intervene on her family's behalf to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in that identity. The resultant situation problematizes both the filial relationship and Gila's gender and social roles. Far from being called to bold action, daughters of the period were enjoined to be silent and discouraged from any form of speech that did not represent submission to male authority (Belsey 149). Gila, however, acts arrogantly gallant before men and declares that she does not want to "parecer mujer" (v. 1086). I do not suggest that Gila does not legitimately desire to be a man, but one can argue that her drive to prove herself "hombre, y muy hombre" (v. 1579) springs from Giraldo's inability to fulfill the social demands of his masculinity. As her name implies, *Gila Giralda* is her father's double, a female *Giraldo Gil* who mirrors him in name but compensates for his weakness in her action. The opening scene posits that the daughter, not the father, will defend the family's honor. The dramatist casts the spotlight on the daughter, tacitly critiquing the man left in the shadows.

"corre un caballo mejor / que si en él cosida fuese" (vv. 149-50)

Gila's appropriation of conventionally masculine behavior reaches its zenith later in the first act in a scene that emphasizes the private-public correlation of the father-daughter relationship. As maximum proof of her strength, Gila takes down a bull, drawing the amazement of none other than the Catholic Monarchs. Unfortunately, what begins as an occasion of personal triumph ends in disappointment when Fernando and

Isabel receive word that their son, Juan, has fallen from a horse and promptly leave to tend to him. The juxtaposition of *serrana* and prince is significant. Vélez creates an anachronistic portrayal of Juan's death that foreshadows a state of political and social chaos.¹⁴ The horse, long considered a phallic symbol, represented the animalistic passion and carnal desire that men needed to keep at bay through the power of reason. Accordingly, a fall from a horse signified a man's inability to rein in his passion and was generally understood as an ominous sign (Valbuena Briones, "Simbolismo" 61, 69, 72).¹⁵ Vélez's use of this foreboding trope alludes to the legend that Prince Juan died of excessive passion—a legend grounded in actual concerns that he and his wife, Margaret of Austria, engaged in unending nights of lovemaking after their marriage (Caba 159-60; N. Rubin 536, 539-40).¹⁶ Vélez creates a striking contrast between prince and *serrana*: he falls off his horse, she "corre un caballo mejor / que si en él cosida fuese" (vv. 149-50); he gives in to passion, she demonstrates unmatched strength and zeal. Traditional

¹⁴ Prince Juan died of illness in 1497 (Weissberger 264n). Ramón Menéndez Pidal noted that Vélez drew from the *romancero* in his depiction of Juan's death, resulting in confusion regarding the deaths of the prince and his brother-in-law, Alfonso of Portugal, who died in 1491 after falling off a horse (157-58). Regardless of its origins, the legend of the prince's death was commonplace during the seventeenth century, as Diego de Saavedra Fajardo asserts in his political treatise, *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano*: "Y una caída de un caballo entre los regocijos y fiestas de sus bodas no dejó que llegase a empuñar [la antorcha del Estado] el príncipe don Juan, hijo de los Reyes Católicos" (115). My concern here is not whether or not Vélez had knowledge of the actual circumstances surrounding Juan's death but how he incorporates a known literary device to suggest that the prince's lust may have precipitated his demise.

¹⁵ The horse as symbol of passion appears often in the *comedia*: "Refrena pues tu apetito, / porque es bestia maliciosa / y caballo que no para / sino le enfrenan la boca" (*El esclavo del demonio*, vv. 316-19); "¡Tirad la rienda, / razón superior; corcovos / no dé el caballo apetito, / que si camina brioso / dará con la carga en tierra!" (*La mesonera del cielo*, vv. 1558-63).

¹⁶ Peter Martyr, chaplain to the Spanish court, feared the newlyweds' prolonged honeymoon would precipitate Spain's demise: "Nuestro joven Príncipe empalidece, consumido de pasión. Los médicos y el propio Rey exhortan a la Reina para que interponga su ascendiente separando a los cónyuges. Piden que se abra una tregua en las incesantes expansiones del amor [...] Una y otra vez llaman su atención sobre la flacidez del rostro de su hijo y su fatigoso andar" (qtd. in Maura Gamazo 194). Vélez references the myth of the amorous prince in *La luna de la Sierra* in his characterization of Juan as an "amante impaciente" (v. 1790) who blames his indecorous behavior on his youth: "mozo soy, y es natural / en los hombres, y en las fieras, / amor" (vv. 1538-41).

conceptions of man as master of his passion and woman as docile and lustful are subverted, creating fissures at both ends of the social spectrum. These fissures reveal that the conflict in the peasant family projects tensions onto a much wider social plane.

The threat of destabilization the prince's fall foreshadows is paralleled within the peasantry via Gila's betrothal, an event structural anthropology deems one of the most significant to the father-daughter dynamic. In a comic scene that precedes the captain's marriage offer to Gila, a playful exchange in the fields between the *serrana* and Mingo parodies Petrarchan love tropes and perverts the sacred nature of the marriage proposal, foreboding trouble for the play's protagonist.¹⁷ Mingo mockingly declares his love to Gila and marvels at her beauty, particularly her "orejas de corinto" (v. 1258). The reference to Gila's ears perhaps alludes to the literary *serranilla* tradition;¹⁸ nonetheless, Mingo's request that his beloved allow him to nibble on her ears also presages the moment later in the play when Gila bites off her father's ear as punishment for his improper parenting: "esto merece quien pasa / por las libertades todas / de los hijos" (vv. 3251-53). Vélez refashions the parodic treatment of courtly love imagery into a symptom of a dysfunctional father-daughter relationship. In keeping with the scene's subtle references to the social disorder that the filial dyad will provoke, Gila accepts Mingo's offer, not as a token of submission to a man, but as a reaffirmation of her own strength.

¹⁷ As Boose affirms in her study of father-daughter relationships in Shakespeare, the parodying or profaning of an otherwise socially meaningful ritual (in this case a betrothal) takes on portentous significance on the early modern stage ("Father" 330).

¹⁸ One of the *serranas* in Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* injures the protagonist's ears: "diome con la cayada tras la oreja...era mal golpe de oído" (977-78).

Like the horse, the hand also possesses phallic overtones.¹⁹ Unlike Prince Juan, who does not conquer the play's other phallic symbol (the horse), Gila has no qualms emasculating her "suitor" and crushes his hand ("Los huesos me has hecho harina," v. 1289).²⁰ In terms of honor and family dynamics, the scene echoes the moment in Guillén de Castro's *Las mocedades del Cid* (c. 1605) when Diego Laínez squeezes his sons' hands to determine who possesses the bravery needed to avenge the affront committed against the family's honor.²¹ Manual strength in *Serrana* also underscores a character's capacity to defend familial honor, but in this case a woman reveals *braveza* and threatens to dispel the notion that nature only endowed men with the capacity for bold action.²² A man's hand, symbol of his potency, should take hold of his beloved's hand in a marriage proposal as a reaffirmation of his sexual and social dominance.²³ In the exchange between Gila and Mingo, however, the hand becomes an agent of emasculation and inverted social roles. In a prefiguring of the corrupted betrothal to follow, Mingo does not take Gila's hand and prove his masculinity; on the contrary, she asserts control over her own sexuality and confirms her role as defender of family honor.

¹⁹ The tradition of the hand's phallic connotations originates in the Biblical *Song of Songs* and extends into Golden Age erotic poetry and drama (McGrady 18n).

²⁰ Leonarda, Lope's *serrana*, engages in a similar display of brute strength, but not in the context of a marriage proposal: "La mano ayer me pidió, / y de suerte me apretó, / que me crujieron los huesos" (25).

²¹ Indeed, Mingo's response to Gila's squeeze, "Que me matas, Gila, ¡suelta!" (v. 1279), echoes the reaction of Laínez's son, Hernán: "¡Padre, padre!, ¡que me matas! / ¡Suelta, por Dios, suelta!" (v. 435-36).

²² Lope links the hand to male propensity for action in *El castigo sin venganza* (1631), reflecting prevailing gender notions of the period: "Naturaleza el llorar / vinculó por mayorazgo / en las mujeres, a quien / aunque hay valor, faltan manos" (vv. 1428-31).

²³ Tirso underscores the sexual connotations of the hand with regard to the marriage proposal in *El burlador de Sevilla* (1617) in Don Juan's punishment for repeated sexual transgressions and false marriage promises: "asiéndole de la mano / comenzó el muerto a apretarle...y le aprieta hasta quitarle / la vida" (vv. 3046-48; Hesse 20-21).

The playwright gives his audience additional clues about the disastrous nature of Gila's betrothal well before her next encounter with Lucas. When the captain approaches Giraldo to ask for Gila's hand in marriage, the peasant initially dismisses the captain's overtures as mockery and claims adherence to social convention when he (thrice) denies Lucas's proposal on account of class difference. Despite this initial resistance, the captain need only suggest the union of Giraldo's estate to his own to convince the father that accepting the noble's alleged "merced" in fact benefits "a Gila y a mi sangre" (vv. 1515-16). Off stage, moralists and lawmakers touted class distinction as an insurmountable obstacle to marriage, but this did not stop families from seeking economic and social advantages via unions that crossed class lines (Vigil 88).²⁴ On stage, playwrights continually mocked and criticized such efforts at social ascension (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 315). Accordingly, Giraldo's misguided ambition quickly gives way to dishonor and disorder. He forgets about class distinction and turns over "hacienda... honor...[y] Gila" (vv. 1529-30) to Lucas. The scene does not depict a successful deployment of a marital exchange founded on a father's submitting his will to the betterment of society. Rather, Giraldo hypocritically demands that his daughter temper her personal desires to better suit "la humildad del nacimiento" (v. 1567) only to violate class division himself in hopes of personal gain. Giraldo transforms Gila from token of exchange on a public scale to an economic commodity limited to his own private benefit. Moralists such as Vives identified parents who looked "only to riches, noble lineage, wealth and power in their son-in-law" as "vendors of their own daughters" that acted as

²⁴ The *Partidas* censured marital unions that did not respect class boundaries: "pues que el linaje hace que la hayan los hombres así como herencia, no debe querer el hidalgo que él haya de ser de tan mala ventura, que en lo que otros se comenzó y heredaron, mengue o se acabe en él. Y esto es cuando él menguase...casando con villana" (II.XXI.iii; emphasis added).

“enemies, not parents” (157). Giraldo disregards the limits of social hierarchy and exposes his daughter to the captain’s vengeful will.

“Esa razón me puede obligar sola, / por imitar...a la gran Isabel” (vv. 1613-15)

Gila’s response to the marriage proposal demonstrates similarly selfish ambition and fulfills her role of Giraldo’s double. The protagonist echoes her father when she rejects the proposal in the name of class distinction: “El señor capitán busque...mujer de su nobleza que le iguale, / que yo soy una triste labradora / muy diferente de él” (vv. 1589-92). Significantly, she also rebuffs the marital offer on grounds of her virginity, which she equates with her professed masculinity: “creo / que mientras no me caso que soy hombre” (vv. 1584-85). It is appropriate that Gila, characterized as a masculine-feminine amalgam, appeals to chastity, a paradoxical construct that moralists deemed woman’s “most beautiful and priceless possession” and a virtue that required virility and strength not typically associated with women (Vives 65; Sánchez 151).

Virtue, a term whose Latin root, *vir*, referred concretely to a male, was for a long time considered out of women’s reach. Before Christianity endowed the term with a strong moral connotation, *virtue* referred to strength, bravery, and self-control, all of which were assumed inherent and exclusive to men (Sommerville 48).²⁵ The term’s original connotations persisted through the early modern period, as Fray Luis de León reveals in *La perfecta casada* (1583) when he identifies women of valor as rare and

²⁵ In Vélez’s *El rey naciendo mujer*, the Salic law of succession leads the French king to raise his daughter as a prince to ensure that the Crown does not pass to another royal family. The princess has the appearance and behavior of a prince, and boasts that her *valor* has changed her very gender: “Valor invencible mío, / que en otra naturaleza me has convertido” (vv. 981-82). The Salic law also accounts for a daughter’s treatment as a son in Mira’s *Amor, ingenio y mujer*. As in *Rey*, the princess’s actions belie her biological gender: “Tan varonil te he criado, / que en tus acciones se engaña / la propia naturaleza” (vv. 81-83).

difficult to find (“son pocas las tales”) and thus deserving of the epithet “mujer varonil” (85-86). When applied specifically to a woman, the term *varonil* suggested an exemplary departure from the female norm, that is, from her supposed “natural” inclination toward lust and irrational passion (McKendrick, *Woman* 62; Fernández Rodríguez 20-21).²⁶ Gila’s declaration that she is a man while unmarried appears to underscore her chastity and renders her initial rejections of the captain’s proposal a sign that she accepts social hierarchy and has committed to moral perfection.

However, the history of the *mujer varonil* in her varied literary manifestations suggests that Gila’s apparent moral superiority will prove a facade. Melveena McKendrick defines the *mujer varonil* as a woman who deviates from the early modern feminine norm in any significant way. The scholar affirms that regardless of the guise this deviance may take on (*mujer esquivia*, bandit, warrior, cross-dresser, etc.), the woman in question invariably represents a social rebel who poses a threat to the gender and social constructs of her day (*Woman* ix, 133). Gila takes a cue from her literary predecessors when Lucas convinces her that marrying him will make her “otra Semíramis, / otra Evadnes y Pala española” (vv. 1611-12), that is, legendary. The captain successfully turns Giraldo’s social ambition against him and takes a similar approach when he alludes to these three mythical women to make Gila believe that her own masculine strength can solidify her fame for generations to come.²⁷ Gila accepts, believing she can attain the legendary status of none other than “la gran Isabel” (v. 1615). She echoes her father’s

²⁶ Juan Pérez de Montalbán’s *monja alférez*, desirous to deny her femininity, continually attempts to align herself with traditionally male endeavors: “desnuda / de la mujeril flaqueza / en acciones varoniles / me ocupaba [...] La labor que es ejercicio / de la más noble doncella, / la trocaba por espada” (127).

²⁷ Semiramis was a legendary Assyrian queen and a symbol of the woman warrior in seventeenth-century Spanish theater (138n). Evadne was the wife of the Greek warrior Capaneus who threw herself upon her husband’s funerary pyre (151n). Pallas Athena was a Greek goddess of wisdom and war (Shepherd 6).

grandiose aspirations albeit to a more socially menacing degree: Giraldo intends to ascend into the nobility via Gila's betrothal, while she wants no less than to reach the stature of a monarch. She reveals the defense of her virginity as a claim to a degree of power incompatible with her gender and class.²⁸ Gila proves as vain and prideful as previous literary *mujeres esquivas*, such as Gil Vicente's Casandra, whose refusal to marry does not constitute a sign of chastity but an arrogant belief that only she ought to mother the incarnate God. Like Casandra, Gila will also face scorn for being "humosa, / soberbia y presuntuosa" (vv. 537-38).

As noted, the notion of a *mujer varonil* could have a positive dimension when it described a woman who showed strength and valor in the defense of her chastity. On the other hand, the image of the warrior woman could be linked to a conception of the Amazon that became popular during the seventeenth century, that of a willful, disobedient woman whose hatred of men led her to reject marriage and family (Shepherd 2, 14; McKendrick, *Woman* 174). Both conceptions of the warrior woman prevailed during the early modern period and appear in Vélez's characterization of Gila and Isabel. In the case of the historical Isabel I, a social milieu that deemed women unfit to rule necessitated a propaganda campaign that manipulated gender stereotypes to mold a public persona characterized by "rhetorical masculinization" and "hyperfeminization" of the queen (Weissberger 15, 82).²⁹ The propagation of this multifaceted persona was

²⁸ Gila's feats of physical strength—hunting, racing, fencing, etc.—indicate not just a departure from conventional femininity but an incursion into the ways of life of the nobility. As José Marí Díez Borque suggests, these activities were valuable facets of public life among the upper class (*Sociología* 276).

²⁹ Many theologians and political theorists of the early modern period maintained that women were physically weaker, intellectually inferior, and less capable of regulating their emotions than men (Sommerville 10). Women were thus believed to be divinely ordained to fulfill roles of domestic and political subordination: "Nature herself has [made] the man more fit for governing than the woman [...]"

partly achieved through the works of court-appointed writers who alternately depicted Isabel as a Marian figure of exemplary chastity who represented the Virgin's counterpart on earth, or a combination of virgin and warrior, a true *mujer varonil* (Weissberger 82, 119; Maura Gamazo 128). The multiple identities linked to the queen surged from an attempt to justify female capacity to rule and ameliorate the anxieties that Isabel's ascension to the Castilian throne had created.³⁰

“ha de quedar contra la edad ligera / fama de la serrana de la Vera” (vv. 1618-19)

Gila and Isabel's first onstage encounter appears to intimate a potentially sexually and socially polemical relationship. If we keep in mind Isabel's unique self-fashioning and the public persona she manipulated during her reign, however, we will find the relationship between fictional queen and *serrana* as more exemplary than morally questionable. Poska indicates that Galician mothers often taught their daughters about popular female figures, such as the Virgin Mary and various virgin martyrs, whose stories conveyed regional gender expectations (195, 204).³¹ Ideal deployments of these models of acceptable female behavior underscored the value of determination and independence, traits considered invaluable in the formation of the strong, often economically autonomous Galician peasant woman (196). In actual practice, however, young girls

since more frequent perturbations arise in women, their judgment is always influenced by some emotion and it is less consistent” (Vives 194).

³⁰ Vélez's characterization of Isabel in *Luna* reveals understanding of the queen's multifaceted public persona. The playwright casts Isabel in the light of the woman warriors of yore, continually calling her heroic and hailing her as “nueva Palas castellana, / Semíramis española” (vv. 235-36). Isabel presents as decisive and wise, and in the absence of Fernando (who appears on stage only once) proves herself a pragmatic and capable ruler who places justice and the needs of the kingdom above personal interests (Pérez Pisonier 17, 33). At the same time, she is a loving mother concerned about her son's health.

³¹ Perry also notes that hagiographical tales effectively disseminated gender norms because religious symbols functioned as a readily accessible language that represented common beliefs and attitudes (33, 41).

received little instruction about the appropriate ways to interpret hagiographical tales. Many came to view the transgressive actions of the virgin martyrs, including disobeying their fathers, not as guides to achieving greater theological ends but as normative models for confronting male authority (211, 214). Gila's conception of Isabel constitutes a similar misreading of a female model, one that ultimately leads to tragedy.

Scholars have read Gila's declaration of love to Isabel, "de vos, alta señora / a muchos días que estoy enamorada" (vv. 871-73), as a manifestation of lesbianism compatible with the *serrana*'s masculine self-identification. While this interpretation makes for a compelling reading, alternative explanations merit equal consideration. Gila's use of the term *enamorarse* may in fact be synonymous with *aficionarse*, a verb that in the early modern period did not exclusively connote amorous sentiment but could also describe an inclination toward another person "por alguna virtud o prenda natural" (*Autoridades*). Indeed, the *Autoridades* and Covarrubias's *Tesoro* both include a form of the verb *aficionarse* in their respective definitions of the term *enamorarse*. Gila qualifies her declaration of love when she affirms that Isabel's valor and accomplishments have enamored her: "de los triunfos que gozáis / de las cosas que habéis hecho, / que bien el valor del pecho / en el semblante mostráis" (vv. 874-78). Coupled with her later confession of wanting to imitate Isabel, Gila's awe of the queen's reputation reveals her professed 'love' as *admiratio*, a sense of wondrous fascination at the "calidad...valor...o grandeza" (*Autoridades*) of a contemplated object that elicits not necessarily a sexual impulse but a yearning to imitate (Parr and Albuixech 24; Caba 150).

Vélez situates Gila's tragic demise within a framework of *admiratio*. The *serrana* leaves no doubt about her lofty pretensions in the betrothal scene. When Giraldo tells her

that she will receive “la dicha mayor que mujer tuvo” (v. 1554), Gila asks if she has been elected “general...rey, obispo o papa” (v. 1556) or called to serve as “princesa / de Castilla...del Cairo gran señora, / o de Alemania y Roma emperadora” (vv. 1560-63). Gila wishes to imitate Isabel, not as mother or wife, but as queen, the one role incompatible with the *serrana*’s social status (Caba 150-51). After vowing to kill every man she encounters, Gila demonstrates sensibility to the socially-determined nature of gender when she refrains from harming Fernando on account of his position as divine vicar: “el rey es Dios en la tierra, / y en lugar suyo, Fernando, / la justicia representas. / Y pues no eres hombre” (vv. 2565-68). When it comes to the queen, however, Gila, much like the peasant Galician girls who misinterpreted stories of the virgin martyrs, ignores the subtleties of Isabel’s public persona. She fails to acknowledge that the queen can fashion her own public image because of her unique position as royal heiress (Caba 147).

There can only be *one* “castellana / Evadnes” and “Semíramis cristiana” (vv. 1927-28), *one* “invencible católica española” (v. 1929), and that person is not Gila. Isabel’s masculinized public persona formed part of a political agenda aimed at uniting Spain under a common crown; Gila, on the other hand, wishes only to elevate the fame she has in her village as a valorous beauty to the level of myth. She therefore continually refers to herself with the epithet “la serrana de la Vera” as if such a title were on par with the legendary *Isabel la católica*.³² She attempts to project herself on the same plane as Isabel by referring to the queen as “bella” (v. 633) and “brava mujer” (v. 634) because these descriptors resonate with her own reputation as a strong beauty. Gila’s claim to freedom, “No quiero ver que nadie me sujete” (vv. 1586), intimates that she is not the diplomatic Isabel of the imperial slogan *tanto monta, monta tanto / Isabel como*

³² Gila calls herself “la serrana de la Vera” no less than five times (vv. 814, 1054, 1450, 1619, 2841).

Fernando willing to share responsibilities of state and family with her husband.³³ Instead, she strives for radical independence in a society that demands women to be bound to men whether fathers, husbands, or confessors.

Our *serrana* attempts to manipulate the perception of her femininity, but her questioning of gender limits neither takes into account class divisions nor reflects an underlying desire for the common good. “Unless the heavens them lift to lawful sovereignty,” as Edmund Spenser wrote of female rulers, women were not supposed to actively forge their public image (qtd. in Shepherd 29). On the contrary, the ideal woman of the period “should not think that she deserves honors” or seek public opinion: “in the end, the best woman was the one of whom there was least talk, whether in praise or blame” (Vives 117, 126). Isabel could negotiate gender stereotypes because as heir to the throne she represented God on earth, making her somewhat impervious to conventional binary gender distinctions, a condition no *serrana* could ever hope to achieve (Caba 162). More importantly, the Spanish queen’s manipulation of her public image formed part of a grand project aimed at uniting her diverse subjects under the authority of a single crown. Gila, on the other hand, only strives for power and status and acts according to a yearning to forge her own myth, not a desire to better woman’s place in society. As McKendrick point out, Gila’s is a feminism “based not on a reasoned dissatisfaction with woman’s lot but on personal pride, flanked by vanity and self-esteem” (*Woman* 116).

Gila does not follow the trajectory of prototypical comedia Amazons or *mujeres esquivas* who wind up falling in love and submitting to the patriarchal institutions of

³³ Isabel acted jointly with Fernando in many matters of state, including the Reconquest, and participated in the provisioning and medical care of soldiers during multiple military campaigns (Weissberger 135; Pérez Pisonero 16). As mother, she closely oversaw her children’s education, and historians have admired the pedagogical methods used in the formation of Prince Juan (Kamen 10; Maura Gamazo 34).

marriage and family (171, 176). She assents to the betrothal, but not because of what Enrique Rodríguez Cepeda identifies as a “recovered” sexuality catalyzed by feminine feelings of love (175). Instead, the marital exchange becomes an opportunity for taking control of her own sexuality and using it (or at least intending to use it) to undermine the principal intentions of patriarchal exogamy, namely, social stability and the propagation of legitimate heirs. Giraldo does not sacrifice personal authority to uphold order but instead uses his paternal exogamic privileges for his own private good, threatening the social hierarchy. Analogously, Gila turns the community-oriented marital exchange into an instrument of self-promotion. The family accords marriage for all the wrong reasons, and both father and daughter are left to face the fallout from Lucas’s betrayal.

“al cuerpo faltan remedios” (v. 1655)

Lévi-Strauss’s line of structuralist anthropology would see in the perverted marital union that takes place in Giraldo’s home (i.e., within the private sphere) a threat against the underpinnings of society at large. The oscillation between peasant and royal family depicted in *Serrana* bears this out when yet more news of tragedy involving Prince Juan interrupts another moment of apparent personal triumph for Gila. The royal family retakes center stage during the celebration of Gila’s betrothal when Lucas hears of the prince’s death, a tragedy that brings “luto a Castilla / y general llanto a España” (vv. 1691-92). The scene’s dramatic tension is by no means hyperbolic, as the historical prince’s demise was genuinely considered an “infausto día [que] llenó a España entera de hondísimo duelo” due to the sociopolitical turmoil it provoked (Pedro Mártir, qtd. in Maura Gamazo 202). While Juan’s birth had signaled the joining of the contested crowns

of Castile and Aragon under a single heir, Juan's death meant the Spanish crowns would pass to a foreign sovereign, Juan's brother-in-law Philip the Fair, archduke of Austria (N. Rubin 242; Kamen 6). Ballads and chronicles of the prince's death and ensuing dynastic crisis were widespread, and the play's contemporary audience would have been aware of the subsequent history following the play's end.

Within the play's historical setting, Juan's death brings a temporary halt to "la famosa guerra / de Granada" (v. 69-70). Seventeenth-century Spanish society remembered the battle as a time when the kingdom's heterogeneous subjects set aside their differences to confront a struggle that promoted loyalty to a common crown (Kagan 36). The patriotic ramifications of the military campaign were perhaps more myth than historical reality; nonetheless, Vélez follows in the footsteps of his fellow playwrights who included the Reconquest in their plays to signal the glories of days past when Spain seemed predestined to greatness (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 196). The sudden interruption of the Granada campaign in Vélez's play thus constitutes a threat to the Reconquest's mythical undertones and reminds his audience of how far Spain had strayed from the heroic times of the Catholic Monarchs under Philip III.

The (re)conquest of Granada (1482-1492) constituted part of an overarching sociopolitical project that sought to foment an exclusively Christian identity as a catalyst for uniting rival kingdoms into a unified Spanish nation state (Weissberger xiii). To this end, the crown enacted a "purging" of the body politic that included not only the expulsion of Jews (1492) and the forced conversion of Muslims to Christianity but also *statutos de limpieza* that prevented subjects with non-Christian ancestry from holding high ecclesiastic, academic, and government posts (99). Vélez's milieu holds significant

parallels with *Serrana*'s historical setting. The dramatist penned the play during the expulsion of the *moriscos* (1609-1614), a time when reaffirmation of *limpieza de sangre* made it difficult for *cristianos nuevos* to climb the social ladder (Cohen 319).³⁴ Yet unlike the sense of national unity the conquest of Granada left in the cultural consciousness, the expulsion of the *moriscos* was perceived as an ill-advised political act that exacerbated depopulation and played a major role in the kingdom's downfall (Kamen 221-22).³⁵ Moreover, whereas the political strategies of Fernando and Isabel worked toward consolidating power exclusively in the monarchs' hands, Philip III's reign witnessed a gradual process of decentralization that culminated in a system of rule through a single minister, the *valido* (209). Vélez writes *Serrana* less than a year after a decree granting the Duke of Lerma's signature equal authority as that of the king confirmed the *valido* as chief executive and set Spain on a course of government by favorites (Blue 300). In other words, the playwright composed *Serrana* precisely when the ideal of personal rule that the Catholic Monarchs had taken to glorious heights (at least according to historical memory) and that continued to be strongly valued through the end of the sixteenth century started to be betrayed (McKendrick, *Playing* 15). The promise of imperial grandeur deployed onstage via the Reconquest stands in sharp

³⁴ Vélez came from *cristiano nuevo* blood and, despite his reputation as a foremost dramatist, could not secure the same royal favor other literati in the same aristocratic circles who boasted *cristiano viejo* backgrounds enjoyed (Cotarelo 622; Davies 24). The frustration Vélez may have felt at his inability to obtain major posts or glean financial security in spite of his close ties to the Spanish elite may account for what critics have identified as a tendency in his corpus to take on an ambivalent position as "flattering interpreter and mordant critic" of court life (Davies 26, 34).

³⁵ Miguel de Cervantes presents a melancholic view of the *morisco* expulsion in *Don Quijote* (1605). Sancho, while serving as governor of Bataria, runs into his former neighbor, "Ricote el morisco," who recounts with sadness how the king's "pena del destierro" forced all *moriscos*, even the "cristianos firmes y verdaderos," to leave their land: "Doquiera que estamos lloramos por España" (960-61, 963).

contrast to the offstage reality, and the sudden halt of the fictional Granada campaign highlights the extent to which a legacy that *ought* to have been fulfilled has fallen short.

While the grieving monarchs attempt to resume the Granada campaign, Lucas abandons Gila, who then faces the daunting task of recovering her honor. Two families at opposite ends of the social spectrum find themselves in precarious situations. Giraldo's dream of ascending into the noble ranks by uniting his and Lucas's estates suddenly becomes a nightmare as he faces the prospect of having a dishonored, and thus potentially unmarriageable, daughter and no way of extending his family line. Similarly, the promise of imperial greatness implicit in the conquest of Granada becomes tarnished when Fernando loses the male heir who could propagate his dynasty. The families' parallel change of fortune reinforces the notion of a reciprocal dynamic between public and private spheres. The health of the family is reflected in and reflects the health of the state, and the doctor's lament at Juan's deathbed that "al cuerpo faltan remedios" (v. 1655) can be extended to both the prince's body and the body politic. Accordingly, the resolution of Giraldo's domestic crisis can provide insight into the royal family's own destiny. The outlook is grim: as stated, Giraldo does not channel his private discord into the public sphere via legal adjudication but instead allows Gila to set out on a mission of private vengeance that ultimately leads to her death. Fernando, father of the empire, will reaffirm law and justice. As the remainder of this examination of the play shows, however, Gila's demise ultimately carries more weight than the monarch's intervention.

The aforementioned ambiguity in early modern conceptions of the *mujer varonil* could resolve in a woman committed to social order (e.g., Isabel) or in the *bandolera*, the most violent manifestation of a woman who rebels against authority (McKendrick,

Woman 109). Off stage, a dishonored peasant woman would have likely sought legal redress with her father's aid; onstage, however, Gila opts for banditry, a category of criminality symptomatic of the ongoing social conflict of the period (Kamen 242).³⁶ Gila's violent oath separates her from *serranas* of the medieval ballad tradition who are spurred by sensual appetite (Menéndez Pidal 144). Unlike the *chata* of *Libro de buen amor* who feeds the lost traveler in anticipation of an amorous encounter, Gila springs to action out of an ethical concern. Gila's chosen path, however, does not represent adherence to a sense of collective justice but instead presages a turn to personal vendetta and lawlessness (Delpech 34). The protagonist's vow to kill every man she encounters until she avenges Lucas's seduction constitutes an incursion of the private into the public and highlights the importance of the marital exchange in preserving order. Giraldo's mishandling of the betrothal does not solidify alliances or ensure peace, nor does the violation of Gila's honor lead to litigation that can circumvent the need for vendetta.³⁷

“mi audiencia / a nadie se negó jamás, / porque han de tener abiertas / siempre para los vasallos, / las voluntades y puertas / los Reyes.”³⁸

In his study of lawsuits in early modern Castile, Richard Kagan identifies litigation with strong government and affirms that legal action diminishes in the face of divided power and inconsistent law enforcement, giving way to other form of settlement

³⁶ McKendrick points out that the *bandolera* character achieves its greatest popularity before 1613, when banditry reached its peak throughout Spain (Woman 313). Lope's *Las dos bandoleras* sets the norm for the theatrical *bandolera*, and many a subsequent comedia, including Vélez's *Serrana*, echo the events depicted in his play, such as the taking of a vow of vengeance following a seduction, the *bandolera*'s unexpected act of compassion, and a father forced to track down his criminal daughter (113-14).

³⁷ Although Giraldo's initial response to Gila's dishonor, “las quejas dejemos...y acudamos al remedio” (vv. 2114-15), may not amount to open approval of the bloody vengeance she demands, it nevertheless does little to dissuade her toward a pacific course of action.

³⁸ *Luna de la Sierra* (vv. 2918-23).

resolution, such as feuding (150-51). Vélez's chosen historical context suggests that the judiciary of Philip III and his *valido* could not have dispensed the kind of justice necessary to defuse the social threat of a woman whose desire "sólo por tomar venganza" (v. 3237) takes the lives of two thousand men. The dramatist situates his play at the end of the fifteenth century, a period of political ascendancy when Fernando and Isabel strove to establish a reputation of personal monarchical involvement (Blue 299). *Serrana* transports its spectators to an age in which the Catholic Monarchs made it a point to dispense justice in person throughout the kingdom in the hopes of supplanting private justice with royal law (Kamen 17, 31; Taylor 67). The itinerant monarchs, who did not remain in a fixed capital but instead went wherever they were needed, left an indelible imprint on future generations (Kamen 16), as evidenced by the *maestre*'s declaration that "Las reales presencias...al fin / acaban cualquier impresa / con más prisa y brevedad" (vv. 1992-95). In the legal arena, Fernando and Isabel's adherence to a policy of direct administration of justice and of channeling social discord into royal courts fomented the perception of the monarch as "lawgiver, lawmaker, and the fountain of justice" (Kagan xxii, 123). The monarchs' efforts resulted in the creation of legal avenues, such as the "seduction" law, for publicly redressing affronts to honor and keeping justice out of private, vengeful hands (Kagan 211; A. Dyer 454-55).

Looking into the past to comment on the present became a key *modus operandi* of the *comedia* (Blue 296). A shared conviction of history's intrinsic relevance to politics moved Golden Age playwrights to depict historical kings in their works as a form of metonymy that at once defused and allowed sociopolitical criticism (McKendrick, *Playing* 30, 108). In terms of the Catholic Monarchs' legal reforms, sixteenth-century

historian Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's reference to Isabel and Fernando's reign as "a golden time and a time of justice" helped solidify a messianic reputation that held sway for decades to come (qtd. in Kamen 31, 63). By the seventeenth century, playwrights such as Lope and Vélez commonly incorporated the Catholic Monarchs into their plays as agents of justice to create latent critiques of the administration of law in early modern Spain (Blue 313; Kagan 234). These efforts at veiled commentary responded to a historical moment in which the king-*valido* relationship dominated discourse on kingship. Vélez's inclusion of the Catholic Monarchs in general, and of Fernando in particular, constitutes an instance of criticism by contrast, and the king's exemplary behavior casts a critical light on the state of the monarchy under Philip III.

Unlike Philip II, who was wary of dispensing royal favors, Philip III showed little interest in the minutiae of politics and regularly delegated responsibility, leaving extensive power in the hands of the Duke of Lerma (Sieber 92). While the Catholic Monarchs left behind a legacy of upholding merit over lineage with respect to political advancement (Maura Gaazo 127), Lerma developed a system of court patronage based on favoritism and selling favors for profit (Kamen 197). In the legal arena, men who owed more allegiance to the *valido* than to the king filled judicial posts, and the crown allowed the authority of royal tribunals to pass into the hands of local elites, further distancing legal justice from the hands of the king and cementing what Kagan calls the devolution of Castilian justice (Kamen 197-98; Kagan 168; 211).

Indeed, the fictional king's preoccupation with the *Santa Hermandad* in Vélez's play supports the notion of "devolution" of justice under Philip III. During the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, the *Hermandad* constituted a legal body that had jurisdiction over

a league of police forces (local *hermandades*) and formed the basis of a royal army under direct monarchical rule (Fernando refers to it as “mi hermandad” [v. 2574] in *Serrana*) (Kamen 19). By the seventeenth century, the *Hermandad* no longer represented the personal law enforcement arm of the crown in cities such as Seville but instead existed as one of multiple tribunals that competed for control of local judicial markets, contributing to generalized feelings of frustration regarding judicial expediency (Kamen 35). In *Serrana*, Fernando’s conviction that justice be served “por que el valor de la Hermandad se muestre” (v. 3157) harkens to a time when the crown streamlined justice and used the *Hermandad* as an instrument and emblem of royal authority. The Fernando in Vélez’s play thus serves as a counterpoint to Philip III: the former’s legacy as a sovereign who travelled wherever justice was needed contrasts with the latter’s reputation as a king who spent time away from the capital to escape the routine of administration. Following Gila’s seduction and the violent disorder that ensues, Fernando becomes an allegorical representation of centralized royal justice: if the king is not on stage, Lucas and Gila reign destructively free; when he is present, justice and order are invariably restored.

“una memoria / que de ejemplo sirva a España” (vv. 3296-97)

Vélez’s parallel treatment of public and private spheres demands that Giraldo and Fernando share the burden of reestablishing order. The peasant becomes involved with the administration of justice when he unwillingly receives “la vara de alcalde” (v. 2380) and command over the *hermandad* of La Vera. Unlike the favor he envisions when he grants Lucas free reign over his home, the staff of justice entrusted to Giraldo “casi por fuerza” (v. 2379) until he captures Gila becomes an emotional burden (“pesa a lágrimas,”

v. 2378) because of the mission it entails: bringing his daughter to justice. Giraldo's integration into the *Hermandad* represents an ironic rechanneling of social pretensions. The peasant's desire for ascension into the nobility leads to his own social demise because it ultimately robs him of his one child and only possibility of social propagation. Giraldo neglects his familial honor and fails to execute an acceptable marital exchange in which he submits his authority to a greater social power; poetic justice dictates that the state force him to restore the order his paternal role called him to uphold.

However, Giraldo continues to act out of selfish motives. He attempts to disown Gila to distance himself from her crimes, giving way to a mordant irony: the man who claimed to have the equivalent of two sons rejects his only daughter and finds himself with no progeny. Gila, who from the very night of her seduction recognized Giraldo's role in her tragic fate ("mi desdicha y vuestra culpa, / mi engaño y vuestros consejos," vv. 2078-79; emphasis added), refuses to surrender her arms to anyone but her father. Her capitulation restores her masculinity to its very source, and her final act of violence, biting off Giraldo's ear, underscores the father's responsibility as the person whose "descuido" (v. 3259) of his daughter's "inclinación gallarda" (v. 3255) prove fundamental to the play's tragic outcome.³⁹ She subsequently offers up the demise of the filial relationship as a reminder of paternal social responsibility: "escarmienten en tus canas / y en mí los que tienen hijos" (vv. 3257-58). Gila could not be absolved for her

³⁹ The biting of a parent's face is a folkloric *topos* typically deployed in the context of a criminal who bites his father's nose when facing punishment (Menéndez Pidal 160). An alternative to this folkloric convention, a thief's biting his mother's ear, became popular in Spain as a result of the widespread dissemination of the *Ysopet* through the end of the fifteenth century. Vives recounts such a tale as a warning against improper parenting: "Everyone knows the story of the young man, who, when he was being led to torture, asked to speak to his mother. Moving his mouth to her ear as if he were going to whisper something to her in secret, he bit it off. When the bystanders reproached him for this act... he replied that this was the reward for his upbringing. He said, 'If she had punished me when as a boy I stole my companion's book, which was my first theft, I would not have reached this criminal state. But she was lenient and welcomed the thief with a kiss'" (275).

killing spree, but her violent turn could have been avoided had it not been for Giraldo's inadequate parenting and misguided attempts to marry her off for personal gain.

We end where we started: the revelation of Gila's corpse. Our protagonist has indeed become famous, but not as the heroic wonder she and her father had envisioned when Giraldo wished that his daughter could live "edades / sin fin...para ejemplo / de mujeres españolas" (vv. 255-57). Instead, Rodrigo, *maestre* of the Order of Calatrava and thus representative of the "justo castigo" that Fernando hopes "de ejemplo sirva a España" (v. 3297), pronounces Gila's self-proclaimed sobriquet, *la serrana de la Vera*, for the last time in the play. If contemplating Gila's "varonil bazarria" earlier in the play had made Giraldo feel immortal ("Cada vez que te contemplo, / vida pienso que me añades," vv. 253-54), the sight of her dead body now signifies an abrupt and tragic end to his family line. The Catholic Monarchs appropriate the *admiratio* the *serrana* inspires throughout the play and publicly display her as a second "Cava de Rodrigo" (v. 2705), a symbol of Spain's demise. The message seems clear enough: gender and class limits are to be respected, and justice is to be founded on public law, not private vengeance.

But is the message *really* that clear? To answer this question, we turn to the plastic arts. Near the end of his life, the late-Renaissance painter Domenikos Theotokopolous (1541-1614), better known as El Greco, painted a portrait depicting St. Sebastian's martyrdom (Fig. 5).⁴⁰ The painting shows a young Sebastian tied to a tree, his body pierced by multiple arrows. El Greco's penchant for elongated figures accentuates the contours of the semi-nude subject's lean and muscular body, creating a sensual physicality that may compete with the scene's theological context. The painting's

⁴⁰ El Greco painted a similar portrait shortly after his arrival in Toledo (circa 1577-8) depicting the same episode in the saint's life (Guidol 47).

rendition of martyrdom seems to fulfill the Tridentine imperative that art should serve theological ends and be didactic (Hatzfeld and Hitchcock 112, 114). At the same time, however, the emphasis on the subject's physicality creates a typical baroque interplay of illusion and reality in which it is unclear if the spiritual is rendered material or vice versa. Sebastian fixes his eyes upon the heavens, a common visual trope in baroque painting that suggests a movement away from the worldly (111). El Greco's depiction of the saint's body, however, complicates the viewer's own ascent. As Anne Hollander asserts, nudity in Western painting has traditionally evoked an ambiguous mixture of reverence and shame: "Behind Adam and Eve, that pair so pure in the beauty and virtue of their unfallen coupling, stand the figures of Venus and Adonis, in the even more ancient beauty of an erotic sexuality impure by nature" (86). Despite his upward gaze, the saint's semi-nude body remains literally and figuratively earthbound, as does the viewer's gaze. The typical Baroque juxtaposition of sensuality and theology suggests a distinction between what one *ought* to see (the sensual seduction of Christianity) and what one may in fact see (purely carnal sensuality).



Figure 5
El Greco, *San Sebastián* (ca. 1610-1614)

A similar dynamic takes center stage at Gila's execution. Pascuala, a minor character identified simply as a "niña" (181), is among those present in the play's final scene. The girl's initial encounter with Gila earlier in the third act informs the audience for the first time that the *serrana*'s reputation has deteriorated concurrent with her violent crimes. Pascuala reports that the town has begun referring to Gila, not as the heroic *serrana de la Vera*, but as "Lucifer" and "machorra" (vv. 2697-98).⁴¹ The unflattering epithets would seem to support the king's desire that Gila's death prevent women from following in the *serrana*'s footsteps. The next time Pascuala appears on stage, however, her heart weighs heavy with sorrow as she contemplates Gila, whose arrow-riddled corpse, the girl affirms, "a San Sebastián parece" (v. 3278). The significant point is not the allusion to St. Sebastian per se but the equating of Gila with a Christian martyr. As

⁴¹ *Machorra*, which literally referred to a sterile sheep but could also allude to "la mujer u otro cualquier animal del sexo femenino que no pare" (*Autoridades*), represents a particularly strong indication that the myth Gila desires to create will not be perpetuated (Boyle 169).

mentioned earlier, the education of young peasant girls commonly included learning about the lives of virgin martyrs. While these hagiographical tales could be edifying, they could also be misinterpreted as encouraging disobedience of male authority for personal rather than public or theological ends. McKendrick correctly identifies Pascuala's presence at Gila's death as a sign that the *serrana*'s execution represents a warning call to the girl and to woman in general (*Woman* 118). Yet how will this warning be interpreted? Will Pascuala and the generation of young girls she represents remember Gila as a model of behavior to reject or to imitate? Will the *serrana* be a martyr to phallogentric justice, or a role model for female autonomy and nonconformity to gender norms?

Outside the fiction, the play's audience faces a similar choice. As Margaret Boyle posits, sensuality and didacticism would have come into tension at play's end when the audience saw the body of Jusepa Vaca, the actress for whom Vélez wrote the character of Gila. Vaca was as famous for thespian ability as for reputed extramarital affairs with some of Spain's most powerful men. Yet despite moralist censure of her allegedly sinful lifestyle, Vacas's popularity on stage generated revenue for the charitable institutions that performances in Madrid's *corrales* helped to fund (160). Vélez thus prominently showcases a body that became a locus of both scorn and admiration, and the ambiguity inherent in the public's conception of Vaca would have complicated the overall message of the play's final scene. Gila the fictional character is punished for rejecting class boundaries and for failing to fulfill the roles and duties expected of her gender. Jusepa the actress, on the other hand, occupies center stage despite her own purported moral failings and social transgressions. If we are unsure how the young Pascuala will interpret the

serrana's story, we are just as dubious about the audience's interpretation of the interplay between lesson and licentiousness operant in the conflation of Gila and Jusepa.

Finally, the mercurial tension between real and ideal also functions in terms of the play's relation to its sociopolitical context. In the play, unanswered questions of succession mar the illusion of a happy resolution. Fernando has lost his only male heir, and Giraldo his only daughter. The play ends with Gila's death, but Juan's demise also lingers, casting a shadow of future dynastic crisis. The play's contemporary audience would have been well aware that the supposedly glorious past that the Catholic Monarchs represented did not necessarily portend a glorious future, especially in the face of a Spain rapidly losing money, population, military dominance, and effective leadership under Philip III. *Ser v. parecer*: the quintessential Baroque construct is at work throughout *Serrana*. At the heart of the play's weaving of story and history lies a father-daughter relationship, a microcosm of the individual's relation to society and thus an effective locus to bring together diverse social tensions. The Gila-Giraldo dynamic resonates to the highest rungs of the social ladder, and the resultant parallels between private and public spheres renders the (in)stability of the filial relationship a predictor of (in)stability on a much greater scale. The peasant family's tragedy also extends across time to reveal that behind the illusion of an ostentatious court lies the reality of an empire in duress. Much like El Greco, Vélez leaves it up to his audience. Will they focus on the patent message of imperial power or on the latent tensions belying the institutions the moral of the story ought to uphold? What will their take away message be? What will be ours?

1.2 “la justicia más rara / del mundo:” Violated Daughter, Inviolable Law in Calderón’s *El alcalde de Zalamea*

Public revenges are for the most part fortunate: as that for the death of Caesar...and many more; but in private revenges it is not so; nay, rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

Francis Bacon, “Of Revenge” (1625)

Derecho es muchas veces lo que tienes concebido y pensado, pues tira al blanco del bien público, pero no es lo que pronuncias por la boca, pues tuerce y divierte del camino real para tu casa propia, o porque quieres vengarte de tu enemigo, o porque quieres hacer las cosas públicas privadas y tuyas”

Jerónimo de Merola, *República original sacada del cuerpo* (1587)

“Aparece dado garrote, en una silla, el capitán” (p. 374).⁴² Much like the final scene in Vélez’s *Serrana*, the revelation of a punished corpse before a king and a peasant father in Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s *El alcalde de Zalamea* (ca. 1640) marks the culmination of a joint effort between father and monarch to restore a peasant woman’s violated honor. Questions of law and vengeance are at stake as much in this scene as at the end of Vélez’s play, and in both cases the king’s pardon of the father links the spheres (public and private, respectively) the two men represent. However, significant differences separate the two works—starting with the fact that the punished corpse in Calderón’s denouement is not that of the dishonored daughter. On the contrary, the dramatist characterizes the peasant woman, Isabel, as a model of virtue. Unlike Gila, Isabel has not taken the restoration of personal honor into her own hands. Moreover, the king in *Alcalde*, Philip II, does not order the captain’s punishment. Instead, the sovereign enters the plot only to express his approval of the way in which the father, Pedro Crespo, has handled his pursuit of justice. Crespo, who is also the mayor of Zalamea, orders the

⁴² Textual citations are from Pedro Escudero Baztán’s edition of *El alcalde de Zalamea*.

execution of the man who raped his daughter, a juridical act of dubious legality that merits the label of “la justicia más rara / del mundo” (vv. 2469-70) on a number of levels.

Justicia, a term that identifies both the person authorized to enforce the law (e.g., a mayor) and the act of publicly executing a legal sentence, is qualified as *rara*, an equally multivalent term that refers to both the uncommon as well as to the “insigne, sobresaliente, o excelente” (*Autoridades*). Crespo has the distinction of being both the town mayor and the father of a victimized girl; the complexities inherent in his compromised position as both seeker of vengeance and guardian of law ultimately make him a *justicia rara*. Furthermore, while his execution of a military captain violates his jurisdiction, that same act wins him the title of “alcalde perpetuo” (v. 2732). The *justicia* imposed is thus *poco común* and *sobresaliente*, rare and praiseworthy. Crespo’s complex position as public authority and private citizen underscores the tension between the individual and society inherent to the father-daughter relationship. The following analysis argues that Calderón uses the peasant family’s struggles to project a critical vision of a historical milieu in which swift and equitable justice was nothing short of *rara*.

“Quejas acumula / siempre el vulgo sin consejo; / que, como es aborrecido / un soldado, siempre ha sido / o con envidia mirado, / o sin razón murmurado.”⁴³

Alcalde was published in 1651 but was likely written between 1640 and 1644, dates that would have coincided with significant events for dramatist and empire alike. Economic and political turmoil mounted throughout Spain during the 1630s, contributing to widespread criticism and resentment of Philip IV and his *valido*, the Count-Duke of Olivares (Kamen 213). Evidence of dissension can be gleaned from the failures of the

⁴³ Lope de Vega (attributed), *El alcalde de Zalamea* (vv. 303-08).

Union of Arms, an initiative that aimed to garner military and financial aid from the crown's various territories. Fundamental to the project was inducing Catalonia and Portugal, believed to be the two wealthiest kingdoms in the peninsula, to increase their contribution to Castile's multiple military enterprises (Elliott, *Spain* 337). By 1640, a still optimistic Olivares believed that the consolidation of the Union remained an achievable goal (330, 341). Rather than acquiescing to the Crown's demands, however, both territories entered into open rebellion, creating an insurmountable demand on the imperial economy and military (Kamen 203). Revolts on either side of the peninsula and declining trade between America and Seville quickly soured Olivares's optimism. In a memorandum to the king, the *valido* described the year 1640 as 'undoubtedly...the most unfortunate that this Monarchy has ever experienced' (qtd. in Elliott, *Spain* 347). The minister's downfall was now in sight as well, as noble factions began plotting against Olivares, culminating in his exile from Madrid in 1643 (Kamen 203).

Calderón's career as dramatist peaked precisely as the empire declined. The 1630s was the playwright's most fecund decade, a period in which he became a favorite among court dramatists and enjoyed special favor from the kingdom's most powerful figures, including the monarch himself (Valbuena Briones, Introduction 15; Cruickshank 132; Díez Borque, Introduction 13-14, 21).⁴⁴ Calderón's exalted status at court suggests firsthand knowledge of the political turmoil surrounding Olivares and the rebellions in Portugal and Catalonia. There is even evidence that the playwright served in the Spanish army during the Catalanian revolt (Cruickshank 77). The dramatist's alleged years of military service, 1640-1642, likely coincide with his composition of *Alcalde*, suggesting

⁴⁴ Notable works produced at this time include *La vida es sueño* and *El gran teatro del mundo* in 1635, *La devoción de la cruz* in 1636, and *El mágico prodigioso* and *El médico de su honra* in 1637. Calderón was named director of palace plays in 1635 and gained induction into the Order of Santiago the following year.

that Calderón may have personally experienced the tumultuous interactions between infantry and peasantry, as well as the dissonance between civil and military jurisdictions, that set his play in motion (Díez Borque, Introduction 66).

The sociopolitical reality off stage contrasts with the perceptions a contemporary audience would have had of *Alcalde*'s historical setting. While in 1644 Spain dealt with the loss of Portugal, on the *comedia* stage Calderón transports his audience to 1580, the year that Philip II annexed Portugal and thus a time of imperial triumph (Escudero Baztán 18). In the decade following the annexation of Portugal, trade between Seville and America reached new heights, and the Spanish king became a prominent player in European politics (Elliott, *Spain* 269; Kamen 194-95). *El rey prudente*, as Philip was known, was reluctant to grant excessive authority to his ministers or to institutions over which he did not have direct supervision (Kamen 122, 144; Owens 175). Unlike Philip III and Philip IV, who granted virtually all control to their favorite ministers, Philip II tried to limit the amount of power he delegated and insisted on making all executive decisions himself (Owens 184; Kamen 145). In the legal arena, Philip cultivated the image of a *rey justiciero* committed to rule of law together with an efficient, highly professional judiciary free of favoritism (Kagan 155). *Alcalde*'s historical setting thus underscored the extent to which delegation of power and inefficient royal leadership after the reign of Philip II had set Spain on a course for political and economic turmoil.

Calderón focuses his play on the clash between a peasant and a military captain to a greater extent than an earlier version of *Alcalde*, written by another dramatist sometime between 1610 and 1615, which served as our playwright's source text.⁴⁵ The principal social confrontation depicted in both versions of *Alcalde* speaks to a larger conflict

⁴⁵ Originally attributed to Lope, the earlier *Alcalde*'s authorship remains unknown (Escudero Baztán 79).

between peasantry and nobility ongoing throughout the seventeenth century, as Borch's genre paintings detail in their depictions of soldiers in private residences. In the early decades of the century, the peasantry had been integral to Spain's recovery from the poor harvests of the previous century, and the peasant's new sense of utility fomented claims to personal rights and increased litigation against social superiors (Salomon 154, 677, 758-59). The clash between lords and vassals informed much of the peasant drama of the period, inspiring depictions of arrogant nobles who violate the moral demands of their class and become catalysts of social disorder (Casa and Primorac 22-23). Álvaro, the captain in Calderón's *Alcalde*, incarnates such a noble. His desire for the peasant Isabel, whose reputed beauty he initially dismisses because of her low social standing,⁴⁶ does not represent a manifestation of courtly love but a projection of "ira...rabia...furor" (vv. 935-37), that is, an inability to regulate emotion, a weakness incompatible with *his* class. His lack of self-control damages a family's ability to carry out a marital exchange and threatens the very order his position in the military should force him to protect.

Whether or not Calderón experienced the realities of war firsthand, violent confrontations between soldiers and peasants were frequent enough during the first half of the seventeenth century to render the conflict between Crespo and the captain plausible to the dramatist and his audience (Escudero Baztán 18). More than a repackaging of the *miles gloriosus* of classical theater, the frequent presence of the soldier character on the Golden Age stage in fact reflected upon quotidian reality (Diez Borque, *Sociología* 218). Fictional soldiers who enter the homes of villagers and treat them with disdain, such as Álvaro in *Alcalde* and Lucas in Vélez's *Serrana*, allude to a concrete historical reality,

⁴⁶ "El que una belleza adora, / dijo, viendo a la que amó: / 'Aquella es mi dama', y no: / 'Aquella es mi labradora'" (vv. 205-08).

namely, billeting laws and the discrepancies between civil and military jurisdictions in handling soldiers' misbehavior.⁴⁷ Noël Salomon affirms that billeting laws worsened economic tensions in Castilian villages during the sixteenth century because peasants often had to resort to loans, mortgages, and the sale of personal property to afford the housing and feeding of soldiers (747-48). Exacerbating the financial burden that came with forced billeting was a documented lack of discipline among soldiers, who frequently engaged in pillaging, murder, and rape in the towns in which they were stationed, forcing many peasants to leave their trades when military companies arrived in order to stay home and protect their wives, daughters, and property (Thompson 113).⁴⁸ Peasants may have been wont to file lawsuits against social superiors as a means of defending their personal interests, but legal adjudication generally proved ineffective in confronting the military due to judicial immunities and municipal authorities' lack of jurisdiction (Kagan 11; Elliott, *Spain* 11; Thompson 114). Members of specific communities and social groups remained exempt from *jurisdicción ordinaria* thanks to *fueros*, or special jurisdictions and legal privileges (Kagan 28).⁴⁹ In the case of the military, the *fuero militar* protected soldiers from ordinary jurisdiction and made them answerable exclusively to the War Council, a consultative body that oversaw all matters related to the

⁴⁷ A number of Lope's plays also fit this list, including *Fuenteovejuna*, *Peribáñez*, and *Las dos bandoleras*. Depictions of censurable military behavior also appeared off stage, as evidenced in Teresa's letter to Sancho in *Don Quijote*: "Por aquí pasó una compañía de soldados: lleváronse de camino tres mozas de este pueblo...quizá volverán y no faltará quien las tome por mujeres, con sus tachas buenas o malas" (952).

⁴⁸ A soldier's lament in the original *Alcalde* speaks to the ubiquity of the soldier-peasant confrontation: "Quejas acumula / siempre el vulgo sin consejo; / que, como es aborrecido / un soldado, siempre ha sido / o con envidia mirado, / o sin razón murmurado" (vv. 303-08).

⁴⁹ Spanish law defended and upheld *fueros* for centuries: "el fuero es como conviene, y de buen uso y de buena costumbre ha tan gran fuerza que se torna como en ley porque mantiene los hombres, y viven unos con otros en paz y justicia" (*Partidas* I.III.vii).

peninsula's defense, including military justice (Kagan 29; Thompson 38).⁵⁰ The conflict of jurisdiction is fundamental to Calderón's play and raises questions about the way in which law ought to be interpreted.

The partitioning of legal authority caused by military *fueros* was also a concern during Philip II's reign, but *El Prudente* deftly controlled judicial and military matters by placing the entire military establishment under direct control of the Crown and instituting centralist policies that held legal bodies in check (Thompson 4). The situation was very different in the 1630s. Philip IV moved away from a system of unified law and left the war machine in private hands, diminishing the overall efficiency of the kingdom's judicial system and creating what Kagan calls "a web of jurisdictional refuges which many used to escape prosecution" (Thompson 7; Kagan 30). The War Council itself represented proof of the system's ineptitude, as intractable backlogs of accumulated business came to characterize the largely inefficient body (Thompson 38). As early as 1602, the council had reported that it spent most of its time addressing grievances between soldiers and civilian justices; however, conflicts of jurisdiction and the complexity of military law, mired by multiple *fueros* within the army itself, rendered nearly all judicial proceedings interminable (38, 45-46, 144). Philip IV proved too weak to successfully enforce wholesale reform of the judiciary, and the crown often tried to win support for new political programs rather than push for change (Kagan 32, 226).

The early modern Spanish stage represents the military-peasantry opposition in a subgenre of the peasant honor play, comedias such as *Peribáñez* and *Fuenteovejuna*, in which a peasant whom a noble dishonors takes matters into his own hands and brings

⁵⁰ The captain in Calderón's play references the War Council when he rejects Crespo's right to try him in a criminal case. After snidely asking "¿Qué tiene que ver conmigo / justicia ordinaria?" (vv. 2157-58), Álvaro asserts, "la justicia es forzoso / remitirme en esta tierra / a mi consejo de guerra" (vv. 2164-66).

about the offender's death, ultimately requiring monarchical intervention on the avenger's behalf (Escudero Baztán 21). Calderón's *Alcalde* fits within this generic mold and addresses the question of divided jurisdiction and judicial inexpediency prevalent in the social consciousness. Crespo alludes to the issue of *fueros* and partitioned authority when he asserts that "Toda la justicia...es solo un cuerpo, no más" (vv. 2704-05).

Lacking jurisdiction against the captain, the mayor nonetheless acts under his own authority before the king's arrival. His actions allude to the dilatory nature of the judicial system in the decades following Philip II's reign. When the king finally arrives on scene, he pardons the mayor and builds on the latter's metaphor of justice as a unified body, revealing at least tacit disapproval of the existing legal system in favor of a more streamlined justice: "si éste [cuerpo] tiene muchas manos, / decid, ¿qué más...da / matar con aquésta un hombre / que esotra había de matar?" (vv. 2704-09).⁵¹

"Este es el alcalde, y es / su padre" (vv. 2662-63)

The prospect of a threatened marital exchange is central to peasant honor dramas such as Vélez's *Serrana* and Calderón's *Alcalde*. However, whereas the degree of transgression imputed to Gila rests upon the absence of her father's intervention with regard to honor and justice, both versions of *Alcalde* focus on Crespo's ultimately *appropriate* response to his daughter's dishonor. Calderón's source play in particular

⁵¹ The state-body metaphor had roots in ancient Greece and resonated throughout the medieval and early modern periods: "el Rey es puesto en la tierra en lugar de Dios, para cumplir la justicia, y dar a cada uno su derecho. Y por ende lo llamaron corazón, y alma del pueblo [...] Y naturalmente dijeron los sabios que el Rey es cabeza del reino, que así como de la cabeza nacen los sentidos, porque se mandas todos los miembros de cuerpo, bien así por el mandamiento que nace del Rey...se deben mandar y guiar" (*Partidas* II.I.v). The physician Jerónimo de Merola treated the metaphor extensively in his 1587 treatise *República general sacada del cuerpo humano*: "el cuerpo humano...viene a ser regido y gobernado por naturaleza, como por su Rey, y tan justo, que a ninguna parte hace agravio, ni le quita lo que es suyo, antes le da siempre" (99). Francisco de Quevedo also weighed in on the subject: "El rey es cabeza; y cabeza inclinada, mal enderezará los demás miembros" (*Política* 556).

underscores the just actions of a village mayor whose response to dishonor consistently remains within the bounds of the law (Salomon 758). The earlier work depicts Crespo as more mayor than father, a civil servant characterized as less concerned with personal honor than with acting as an impartial judge (Escudero Baztán 101; Sloman, *Dramatic* 225, 227). Indeed, the playwright identifies the character's lines with the social descriptor *Alcalde*, while Calderón labels the protagonist's dialogue with the more personal *Crespo*. The Crespo of the source play is appointed mayor in the first scene, and multiple cases are subsequently brought before him. The mayor resolves each *pleito* with the same dutiful administration of justice, even when the case involves punishing himself or those close to him (Escudero Baztán 91).⁵² It should therefore not surprise us that when his own daughters come to him hidden under shawls to plead for justice, Crespo respects their feigned anonymity and treats them “*como si fueran...hijas*” (v. 1788; emphasis added). The mayor knows the women's real identities but downplays his role as father and treats them as “*señoras*” (v. 1695). He scolds them, not because they betrayed their father, but because they did not take advantage of their access to a legal authority: “*teniendo el alcalde en casa, / aun no le llaman siquiera / para que asista al contrato, / por ver si engañadas quedan?*” (vv. 1740-43).

Calderón characterizes Crespo as more than *el alcalde de Zalamea*. He writes the story of a peasant whose role as father matters as much as his mayoral obligations. Our dramatist makes it a point to portray Crespo as a loving and socially responsible father, eschewing scenes of villagers pleading their cases before the mayor (Calderón's protagonist is not even appointed mayor until the play's final act) in favor of moments

⁵² In his first act as mayor, the source play's Crespo tells his friend to remove his lover from his home or face exile. The mayor proves equally resolute when accused of failing to pay a debt: “*podia / la paga dilatar como vecino, / y es justo que la pague como alcalde*” (vv. 1562-64).

that showcase family unity. Calderón also creates a new character, Crespo's son, Juan. The presence of a son and a daughter rather than two daughters imbues the later version of *Alcalde* with a more complex family dynamic and a greater range of paternal concerns. Calderón's Crespo not only has to safeguard his daughter's chastity, he also has to worry about his son's brashness and extreme conception of honor, as the young man proves willing to "perder / la vida por la opinión" (vv. 765-66). The dramatist depicts the father giving his "Juanico" (v. 415) advice on an array of topics, such as respecting women and being humble and generous.

What does the emphasis on Crespo's role as father add to Calderón's version of the play? For one, it humanizes and dignifies the protagonist to a surprising degree given the literary tradition of the *alcalde* character. "Pedro Crespo the mayor" had been a mainstay in Spanish folklore since the end of the sixteenth century and tended to represent a comic, obstinate, and illiterate figure (Escudero Baztán 18, 38, 100; Salomon 91).⁵³ The prototypical literary *alcalde* lacked personality and constituted more an administrative function (i.e., a mayor) than an individual (Salomon 102, 117). The source play's protagonist, appropriately identified as "Pedro Crespo, alcalde" in the *dramatis personae*, does not stray from the stereotype. Given his intellectual limitations, the Crespo of the source play feels surprised to have been elected mayor ("alcalde es bien que lo sea / un hombre de entendimiento," vv. 83-84). The new mayor is clearly illiterate, unable to read a note concerning his daughter: "¿qué entendimiento tendrá / un hombre que leer no sabe?" (vv. 397-98). Calderón's Crespo, on the other hand, is more psychologically complex, precisely because the dramatist developed him as a

⁵³ *Crespo* was a patronymic in Toledo at the start of the sixteenth century (Salomon 128). We find evidence of the name's diffusion in its inclusion in the *Tesoro*: "es apellido, y quedó en proverbio aldeano" (246).

paterfamilias first and foremost. While his characterization does not lack folkloric elements,⁵⁴ the latter Crespo's interactions with his children reveal a character with a greater range of social and moral concerns (Escudero Baztán 37; Salomon 759).

Furthermore, the centrality of Crespo's role as father gives Calderón's adaptation of *Alcalde* a unique take on the conflict between public and personal spheres. The private-public dynamic appears to some degree in both versions of the play, which we would expect given the protagonist's dual role as mayor (public identity) and father (private identity). However, each dramatist takes a different approach to the tensions between the protagonist's dual duties, and Calderón especially develops several key details that turn his play into a more definitive exploration of the individual's place in society. The source play occasionally underscores Crespo's two principal social identities and at times juxtaposes the protagonist's dual functions as mayor and father.⁵⁵ As mentioned earlier, however, it places greater emphasis on the character as mayor, and while Crespo may demonstrate concern for the restoration of his daughters' honor, his vow to speak to the king on their behalf, "como si mi causa fuera" (v. 1769), reveals an effort to distance himself from his paternal identity. Crespo lays the blame for his family's dishonor on his daughters as if he had not been responsible for the safe-keeping of their chastity: "¿Ves cómo no está en mi mano / guardallas, si Dios no cría / vergüenza y recogimiento / en ellas?" (vv. 1051-54). As the women's father, Crespo, of course, is in fact expected to *guardallas* and instill *vergüenza y recogimiento*. Furthermore, despite his

⁵⁴ The friendly exchanges between Figueroa and Crespo reveal the mayor's stereotypical stubbornness. The peasant's first amicable feelings towards the noble are founded on recognition of shared personality traits: "Caprichudo es el don Lope; / ya haremos migas los dos" (vv. 1393-94).

⁵⁵ While judging a case, Crespo receives a note detailing his daughters' intentions to flee with the captains. The mayor deals with his dual roles by first resolving the case and then obstructing his daughters' plans.

efforts to distance himself from his daughters' misdeeds, prevailing notions of honor considered a daughter's honor an extension of her father's, and an affront against the former demanded just retribution (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 88). Crespo, however, continues to focus almost exclusively on his public persona, and actually tries to conceal his familial dishonor (i.e., his private identity): "no deis a nadie noticia / del caso, porque la infamia / crece cuando se publica" (vv. 1094-96).⁵⁶ The man who brings to light his personal debt refuses to allow his daughters' misdeeds go public. He acknowledges his public duties but draws a strict line of demarcation when it comes to his family.

Calderón's Crespo takes a markedly different approach to his multiple social responsibilities. Notably, the peasant's nomination to public service coincides with his learning of Isabel's dishonor, a juxtaposition of public and private identities unique to Calderón and central to his plot. Unlike the Crespo of the source play, Calderón's mayor does not shy away from making his private dishonor public: "Este [deshonor], ya veis si es bien grande; / pues aunque encubrirle quiero, no puedo" (vv. 2251-52). The source play's Crespo takes advantage of his public position to break into the captains' quarters and force them into marriage. Calderón's protagonist, on the other hand, sets aside his mayor's staff and approaches the captain "como un hombre no más" (v. 2196). He initially attempts to address Isabel's dishonor as a father, not as a mayor. Rather than use his administrative authority to his advantage, Crespo humbles himself before his enemy. Unlike Giraldo in Vélez's *Serrana*, who hands over his estate with hopes of social ascension via his daughter's marriage, Crespo offers all his material goods to convince the noble to marry his daughter: "os toméis toda mi hacienda, / sin que para mi sustento /

⁵⁶ The urgency to keep family dishonor a secret is a convention of early modern Spanish literature, as the father of the raped Leocadia affirms in Cervantes's "La fuerza de la sangre:" "más lastima una onza de deshonra pública que una arroba de infamia secreta" (156).

ni el de mi hijo...reserve un maravedí” (vv. 2266-69). Calderón characterizes Crespo early on as the richest man in Zalamea only to later underscore how far he will go for his family, agreeing even to be sold into slavery (Morón Arroyo 35).

The dramatist may have created this scene to elicit sympathy and condition the audience to accept the captain’s death at the mayor’s hands without protest (Leavitt 430-31). Beyond seeking a favorable reaction, however, the scene of Crespo’s humbling supplication reaffirms the playwright’s commitment to characterizing his protagonist as a father faced with the challenge of balancing private and public duties. Unlike his counterpart in the source play who deflects blame onto his daughters and insists that he does not have to *guardallas*, Calderón’s Crespo tries to protect his daughter’s honor throughout the play and proves willing to be humiliated for her sake.⁵⁷ The captain ultimately rejects the peasant’s offers, leaving the latter no choice but to retake his staff and proceed more as mayor than father. The captain insists on Crespo’s lack of jurisdiction, but the mayor nonetheless has the noble arrested and orders Isabel to initiate a “querella” (v. 2487), or formal accusation, against her attacker.

“de ti se diga / que por dar vida a tu honor, / diste la muerte a tu hija” (vv. 2065-67)

The daughter acquiesces, as she does throughout the play. Calderón’s characterization of Isabel further distances the dramatist’s text from the source play with regard to family dynamics. The sisters in the original *Alcalde* voluntarily elope with the captains, making them culpable of their own dishonor (Escudero Baztán 86; Sloman,

⁵⁷ In the first act, Crespo tries to keep Isabel hidden from the soldiers coming to Zalamea. His plan fails to deter the captain’s interest in his daughter (“sólo porque el viejo la ha guardado, / deseo...de entrar...donde está,” vv. 591-93); nonetheless, his actions fall in line with literature on parenting. Vives, for instance, advises parents to prohibit their daughters from being in the company of men as much as possible (55).

Dramatic 222). Isabel, on the other hand, remains a paragon of modesty, virtue, and obedience, a model daughter whose innocence makes the captain's actions toward her all the more condemnable (Sloman, *Dramatic* 229-30). When the daughters in the source play find their father tied to a tree, they decide against freeing him to avoid punishment: "si rompo la prisión / me han de condenar a muerte" (vv. 1441-42). Isabel initially feels the same trepidation when she finds her father in a similar position: "si una vez te miras / con manos y sin honor, / me darán muerte tus iras" (vv. 1885-87). Nonetheless, she informs Crespo of her dishonor and proceeds to untie and kneel before him, paralleling the mayor's earlier prostration before the captain. While Crespo previously showed commitment to family honor when he humbled himself before the captain and accepted his own social demise (i.e., slavery) for the sake of family honor, Isabel takes her father's selflessness one step further: "Tu hija soy, sin honra estoy, / y tú, libre; solicita / con mi muerte tu alabanza, / para que de ti se diga / que por dar vida a tu honor, / diste la muerte a tu hija" (vv. 2062-67).⁵⁸ Unlike Gila in Vélez's *Serrana*, who tries to be her own agent of justice, Isabel leaves everything, including her own life, in her father's hands.

Critical literature analyzing depictions of rape in English Renaissance drama identifies an implied idealization of a violated woman's suicide as a sign of virtue and consent to patriarchal authority (Baines 89, 158). A similar glorification of women who place honor above all else appeared in Spanish moralist and literary works throughout the

⁵⁸ The *Partidas* permitted a father to murder a dishonored daughter under certain circumstances: "A su hija que fuese casada hallándola el padre con algún hombre en su casa misma, o en la del yerno, puede matar a su hija, y al hombre" (VII.XVII.xiv). References to filicide in moralist literature of the medieval and early modern periods suggest that the act was not foreign to quotidian reality: "mata...por justicia...el padre a la hija...según de cada día ejemplo muestra" (Martínez de Toledo 69). Vives, recounting historical instances of filicide, justifies the father "forced" into such extreme ends: "It is not to be marveled at that such things are done...since these young women...casting away all filial piety from their hearts, have shown hatred for their parents" (83-84). On stage, the comedia's dramatic stylization of honor made the threat of filicide a common convention: "Quien tan mala cuenta ha dado / de sí, padre no me llame; / porque hija tan infame... solamente a un padre obliga / a que su sangre derrame" (*El mejor alcalde* vv. 1811-16).

medieval and early modern periods and reverberates throughout Calderón's play in the character of Isabel.⁵⁹ While Crespo's daughter does not raise the prospect of committing suicide, an act incompatible with the Catholic underpinnings of Spanish society, her gesture of self-sacrifice serves as sign of virtue that places the restoration of honor in her father's hands. As in *Serrana*, Calderón's play depicts the father-daughter relationship as a locus of tension between the individual and society; unlike Gila and Giraldo, however, Crespo and Isabel are both willing to sacrifice themselves to higher authorities. The reiterated *tu hija* in Isabel's plea highlights the centrality of Crespo's role as father and renders the play's major crime a violent penetration into the private sphere (i.e., breaking into Crespo's attic, kidnapping Isabel) rather than a symptom of a conflicted filial relationship that spills into the public arena.

The portrayal of Isabel as innocent victim forms the basis of Calderón's treatment of the captain's crime. The peasant woman states that she was kidnapped ("aquellos embozados / traidores...me robaron," vv. 1902-05), taken to a remote location ("Aquese, intrincado, u oculto / monte," 1920-21), and forced against her will ("Qué ruegos [...] Pero en vano," 1968-70), details that point to the crime in question as one of rape and not seduction.⁶⁰ The distinction explains the *pathos* of Isabel's narration: she must overcome prevailing stereotypes about feminine complicity in cases of sexual victimization and prove her innocence to her father, as well as to the audience (Welles 113, 188).

⁵⁹ Vives alludes to St. Jerome's catalogue of pagan women who chose death and torture over losing their chastity as admirable examples of staunch defense of personal honor: "[they] readily and willingly allowed themselves to have their throats cut, be slain, dismembered, suffocated, drowned, cut to pieces, burned alive, as long as they could preserve their chastity" (123). In the literary sphere, the medieval *Cárcel de amor* sets the tone for future *comedia* heroines who, like the protagonist Laureola, value their reputation more than their own lives: "las mujeres deben ser más obligadas a su fama que a su vida" (San Pedro 21).

⁶⁰ Legal records from Vizcaya indicate that abducting and transporting women to "yermo y despoblado," was not uncommon in cases of rape (Barahona 70, 73). The source play specifically defines the captains' crime as one of seduction: "No hacemos de fuerza quejas, / señor, sino del engaño (vv. 1723-24).

Literary and legal approaches to rape during the early modern period were grounded in classical and medieval gender constructs that assumed both woman's propensity to lust and man's adherence to reason,⁶¹ both of which complicated questions of consent and culpability (Baines 69).⁶² Accordingly, trials for sexual coercion frequently began with attempts to establish the victim's virtue as a means of magnifying the defendant's guilt and emphasizing the nonconsensual nature of the sexual act committed (Barahona 124, 126).⁶³ The scene in question thus represents a type of mock trial that foregrounds the public-private dimension of the father-daughter relationship. Isabel, daughter and victim, defends her innocence before Pedro, who must respond to the accusations as father and mayor. Whereas the daughters' demand for justice in the source play represents one of multiple cases their father presides over, in Calderón's adaptation the daughter's rape becomes the mayor's first and most important *pleito*. The timing of Crespo's appointment in Calderón's play recalls Giraldo's reception of the mayor's staff in the final act of Vélez's *Serrana*, as in both cases the fathers receive public duties after their daughters have been dishonored. However, whereas Giraldo is forced to bring Gila to justice as a symbolic indictment of his improper parenting and

⁶¹ "Even if she doesn't kiss back,
Still force on regardless!
She may struggle, cry 'Naught!'
Yet she wants to be overcome..."
It's all right to use force—force of *that* sort goes down well [...]
Rough seduction
Delights them, the audacity of near-rape
Is a compliment." (Ovid, *The Art of Love* I, qtd. in Blamires 19-20)

⁶² Vives defends a man's ability to control desire: "very often abducted women were released by arrogant soldiers, solely out of respect for the name virgin [...], for there is no lover so desperate who if he reflects that the woman who is the object of his passion is a virgin, does not...think of changing his mind" (83).

⁶³ Practical concerns with regard to proving complicity also had to be taken into account, as women sometimes sued for rape as a strategy to force men to go through with marriage promises made prior to having sex (Barahona 59; Taylor 212).

mishandling of his daughter's betrothal, Crespo's civic appointment grants him an opportunity to further show himself a loving and responsible father by pardoning his daughter and trying to restore her honor. His primary concern is not his public duty as mayor but putting his children "en salvo" (v. 2083).

Crespo accepts Isabel's claims to innocence, and from that point forward the plot focuses on the father, relegating the daughter to the background. Isabel practically disappears from the play and has no say in the captain's punishment. Female noninvolvement, common in literary depictions of sexual victimization, has roots in both legal definitions of rape and longstanding gender constructs. The association between a man's children and his property established in ancient times remained a part of the Spanish judicial and moralist consciousness throughout the medieval period. To this point, we find Aristotle's proposition that "a man's chattel, and his child until it reaches a certain age...are as it were part of himself" echoed in the medieval *Corbacho*: "harto toma lo ajeno el que...hija...de otro deshonor [...] según derecho, antes propiamente será dicho hurto" (Aristotle 123; Martínez de Toledo 136). Similarly, the *Siete partidas* includes the verbs *hurtar*, *robar* and *forzar* almost interchangeably when referring to female sexual violence, suggesting a continued conceptualization of rape as a crime against property.⁶⁴ Lévi-Strauss's conception of exogamic marriage as a transaction between men helps explain the perception of rape as theft. Specifically, the economic nature of this social exchange (i.e., dowries, joining of estates) gives daughters, or their virginity to be more precise, a tangible value. Thus Marcia Welles speaks of a daughter's "intact hymen" as a measure of "exchange value" and Luce Irigaray declares that women in patriarchal societies constitute "products" that men exchange as merchandise or

⁶⁴ "Forzar o robar mujer virgen...es yerro y maldad muy grande" (VII.XX.i).

commodities (Welles 78; Irigaray 84).⁶⁵ If a woman is a commodity, then she, like any piece of merchandise whose value is determined by external forces that “brand” and circulate it, is “necessarily aphasic” and has no right to speak or assert her will (Irigaray 84-85). A daughter may have control over her chastity, but her virginity’s social value belongs to her father. Her sexual victimization means *he* loses a commodity of significant use-value. Cases of rape in a patriarchal society such as early modern Spain thus focus more on the father’s loss than on that of the victim herself.

Taking a cue from the legal arena, medieval and early modern literary depictions of sexual victimization often treated women as passive objects of male desire. They considered sex crimes against women not as fundamentally personal attacks but as affronts against patriarchal order (Casa 204). To wit, Coppélia Kahn notes in her study of Shakespeare’s *Lucrece* that rape in early modern literature represents not so much a violation of female chastity as a blow to a society whose survival depends on legitimate descent and control of male rivalry through ownership of female sexuality (42). Irigaray posits that a woman in a patriarchal society has two “bodies,” “her ‘natural’ body and her socially valued, exchangeable body, which is a...mimetic expression of masculine values” (180). Violation of the physical body’s sexual purity invariably damages the social commodity that belongs to a man (father, husband) and that must be successfully exchanged to help preserve alliances and social stability.

⁶⁵ The original *Alcalde* plays on the notion of virginity as commodity when Crespo scolds his daughters for not allowing him to negotiate their marriage: “dos mujeres / de poca edad y experiencia, / para la venta mayor / que se conoce en la tierra, / teniendo el alcalde en casa, / aun no le llaman siquiera / para que asista al contrato” (vv. 1736-42). Similarly, the dishonored daughters in Lope’s *Las dos bandoleras* demand restitution of their honor in economic terms: “A que nos paguen venimos / unas pagas que nos deben, / de ventajas que perdimos / y no es razón que nos lleven / sueldos que tan bien servimos” (174).

Therefore, literary depictions of rape rarely take women into account as individuals, as it is ultimately not their physical bodies at stake but “exchangeable bodies” that belong to men. Sexual victimization invariably implies tension between men, and the literary focus on the latter’s response stems from their potential to produce violence and destabilize social order. Thus, the fundamental Spanish myth laments the rape of a daughter, Florinda la Cava, but focuses primarily on her father’s response as a precursor to the Muslim invasion of 711, a watershed moment in Spain’s history.⁶⁶ Similarly, the canonic *Cantar de Mío Cid* modifies its source material in depicting the princes of Carrion’s victimization of the epic hero’s daughters. The fictional scene pits father against sons-in-law in a battle between private vengeance and public law (Welles 12, 13). In both cases, as in *Lucrece*, the female victims serve as conduits for exploring the demands of patriarchal society (Casa 208). Men instigate and resolve victimization, while the female victim remains a passive object of desire and exchange (Welles 48).

The same holds true in Calderón’s *Alcalde*, where rape gives way to a conflict of power involving men from all social echelons including the peasantry (Pedro Crespo, Juan Crespo), nobility (Álvaro, Lope de Figueroa), and aristocracy (Philip II). Much like the conflicted father-daughter relationship, the wider social ramifications of female sexual victimization ultimately made the literary depiction of rape an effective metaphorical avenue for exploring men’s place in society. If a daughter must acquiesce to her father with regard to marriage, so, too, must she accept male authority when her marriage prospects are threatened, as both situations demand that the father correctly negotiate his private desires in the public sphere.

⁶⁶ “El rey de España Rodrigo, / de los godos el postrero, / dicen que estupró a Florinda...hija del conde Julián, / y sentido el caballero / de tan deshonesto acción / pasó en África, con celo / de levantar escuadrones...para destruir a España” (Tirso de Molina, *La joya de las montañas*, vv. 295-333).

***“En una venganza / no es bien que se tome el medio / deshonorado”*⁶⁷**

As in *Mío Cid*, female victimization in Calderón’s play forces a father to choose between private vengeance and public law to restore family honor. The parallels between the two works, notable despite their chronological distance, highlight our dramatist’s focus on questions of law and justice. Calderón depicts Isabel as an innocent victim willing to sacrifice herself in the name of family honor; so, too, Elvira and Sol, who implore their attackers to make martyrs of them rather than dishonor them. The daughters’ innocence in the face of abuse pits their respective fathers against social superiors in a battle of paternal virtue versus noble privilege.⁶⁸ Both fathers reject private vengeance in favor of public justice and appeal to monarchical authority as maximum representation of law. Rather than engage in a private duel, El Cid insists on presenting his grievances before the king (“quiero ir a la corte, / a reclamar mi derecho y decir mi acusación,” vv. 3078-79). His subsequent demonstration of legal knowledge wins him a *reto*, or public challenge, a forum in which to prove the guilt of his daughters’ victimizers (Montaner 292). Similarly, Crespo declares before Philip II that he has gone to great lengths to ensure a just handling of his daughter’s *querella*. The multiple legal terms he employs—“hacer / información” (vv. 2476-77), “sustanciado / el proceso” (vv. 2596-97), “causa” (v. 2601), “inducido algún testigo” (v. 2678)—underscore both the legitimacy of his arguments and Calderón’s knowledge of law.⁶⁹ Crespo claims

⁶⁷ Tirso de Molina, *El vergonzoso en palacio* (vv. 47-49).

⁶⁸ The honor-as-lineage vs. honor-as-merit debate resounded throughout the early modern period and repeatedly appeared on stage in the guise of a noble’s brutal act against a social inferior (Rodríguez-Puértolas 354; Casa 204).

⁶⁹ Calderón studied canon law in Alcalá and civil law in Salamanca (Cruikshank 53, 60).

impartiality and feels justified in his actions because he exhausts all possible avenues for restoring Isabel's honor before punishing the captain according to the law.⁷⁰

Despite Crespo's avowed adherence to the law, scholars remain divided regarding Calderón's treatment of justice in *Alcalde*. On one side of the argument, certain critics consider that Crespo abuses his mayoral powers and enacts private vengeance under the mask of public law. J.M. Aguirre, one of the first to argue that the mayor carries out a faulty judicial process against the captain, maintains that Crespo employs the legal system as a personal "sword of vengeance" (124-25). Crespo did not have jurisdiction over the captain and, even if he did, as the offended party he could not judge his own case. Furthermore, the mayor breaks legal protocol when he has suspects arrested *before* filing a formal complaint (121). These are certainly valid points, but they do not take into account the inefficiencies that plagued the Spanish legal system during *Alcalde*'s composition. Crespo should not be accuser and judge of his own case, but the only other viable option would be to put Álvaro through a complex court martial that may or may not yield a just punishment. Lest the captain have the chance to flee and hide indefinitely in the aforementioned web of conflicting jurisdictions, the mayor has no choice but to arrest the criminal before Isabel can sign a formal complaint. We may consider the mayor's actions not an abuse of power but an indictment of the judicial system.

Aguirre also holds that Crespo does not show genuine concern for justice because he prosecutes neither the soldiers who helped kidnap Isabel nor his son for wounding Álvaro (125, 129). The text, however, does not explicitly support these latter arguments. Although Crespo initially has Juan arrested to keep him safe from the captain's retaliation, at the play's end the father insists, "Quiero también...castigar / el desacato

⁷⁰ The *Partidas* declared the crime of "forzar o robar mujer virgen" punishable by death (VII.XX.i-iii).

que tuvo / de herir a su capitán” (vv. 2750-53). The play concludes before showing the audience what happens to Juan, but the fact that Crespo continues talking about punishing his son after putting the captain to death suggests that the mayor has not wavered in his commitment to justice. The same holds true for the soldiers whom Crespo arrests and interrogates. Significantly, Crespo hands the soldiers over to Lope de Figueroa *after* the king rules in the mayor’s favor. Will the captain-general usher in a new era of martial expediency in punishing the soldiers who helped kidnap Isabel? Crespo sets a model of legal efficiency by placing the direct threat of a criminal (Álvaro) above the minutiae of the judicial process, and the king approves. The captain-general’s interpretation of this series of events has no direct bearing on Crespo’s concern for justice.

Dian Fox seconds Aguirre and affirms that Crespo’s actions have the appearance of legality but are really a sham (“Conflict” 263). She describes the mayor as a shrewd and unscrupulous manipulator who fools the king into believing that he has carried out a legally sound judicial process (263-65).⁷¹ Fox considers Philip II’s pardon of Crespo proof that the astute mayor successfully uses dissimulation to pull the wool over the eyes of a king “famous for painstaking care with legalities” (267). I agree with her assertion that *Alcalde* serves as a warning call about the destructive nature of corrupt justice; however, I believe that Calderón targets not the fictional mayor but a corrupt system beyond the fiction that needs amending. The notion of the king as God’s vicar remained

⁷¹ Fox also accuses Crespo of concealing the fact that Juan wounded Álvaro and that the captain attempted to save Isabel from her brother’s angry rage (267). I have already addressed the issue of Crespo’s handling of Juan’s punishment. As for the latter argument, Aguirre makes a similar claim, but the text does not explicitly state that Álvaro tries to protect Isabel. Juan arrives after Isabel has been raped and recognizes only that a sexual act has taken place that threatens his honor (“reconoce el daño / antes que ninguno se lo diga,” vv. 2000-01). Isabel flees because her brother does not yet know if she is guilty of wrongdoing (“no sabía / si tenia culpa o no,” vv. 2015-16). The latter detail suggests that Juan rushes at the captain upon arriving, and the “tardo socorro” (v. 2007) Fox and Aguirre interpret as an indication that Álvaro tried to defend Isabel may actually indicate that the captain draws his sword to defend *himself* against the enraged brother acting in defense of his family’s honor.

operant during the early modern period and impacted depictions of monarchs on the comedia stage. Especially in peasant honor drama, the king has the final say in matters of law and justice, and his divinely-ordained role on earth assumes that he cannot be fooled into accepting a “sham” legal proceeding or approve of an act of bloody vengeance that threatens the stability of the social hierarchy. It is not coincidental that the monarch in question should be Philip II. Crespo’s alleged trickery does not call into question Philip’s reputation as a king wholly preoccupied with matters of law and justice; on the contrary, the monarch’s famed concerns in fact exonerate the mayor. If a king with Philip II’s legal knowledge can pardon Crespo and appoint him mayor for life, then the audience should question not the mayor’s tactics but the state of a judicial system that could consider Crespo’s actions anything but just.

Robert Archer’s study of *Alcalde* makes valuable contributions to the justice-vengeance debate; however, the scholar ultimately seconds Fox and Aguirre’s arguments. Archer deems the captain’s execution just but questions whether Crespo (mis)uses the powers of his office to exact personal revenge under the mask of justice (61). He draws a distinction between revenge (i.e., malicious, resentful retaliation) and justice (i.e., just retribution) and considers Crespo’s treatment of the captain a vindictive act more in line with private vengeance than with public retribution (61-62). A “well-conducted court” would have sentenced Álvaro to death; moreover, Calderón’s depiction of friendship between Crespo and Lope de Figueroa indicates that justice would have been served had the mayor handed the captain over and “left matters for his friend to sort out” (61, 63). Yet Crespo goes outside his jurisdiction instead of turning over the captain to the army, indicating that his actions represent an egoistic retaliation for a personal offense and not a

true manifestation of justice. Archer rightly suggests that Calderón criticizes the institution of justice as a whole in his play, but, like Fox and Aguirre before him, the scholar centers the “woefully fallible” state of justice on Crespo rather than on the offstage reality (63). The audience could reasonably expect that “any well-conducted court” would justly punish the captain, but where would such a court be found? Archer posits that Lope de Figueroa could guarantee the execution of justice, but despite Figueroa’s friendship with Crespo the captain-general dismisses the mayor’s reasons for arresting Álvaro, insisting on the superiority of his rank and jurisdiction:

Lope:	¿Vos sabéis que [Álvaro] a servir pasa al Rey, y soy yo su juez?
Crespo:	¿Vos sabéis que me robó a mi hija de mi casa?
Lope:	¿Vos sabéis que mi valor dueño de esta causa ha sido?
Crespo:	¿Vos sabéis cómo atrevido robó en monte mi honor?
Lope:	¿Vos sabéis cuánto os prefiere el cargo que he gobernado?
Crespo:	¿Vos sabéis que le he rogado con la paz y no la quiere?
Lope:	Que os entráis, es bien se arguya, en otra jurisdicción. (vv. 2574-87)

The above exchange contains no indication that Figueroa will ensure a just prosecution of the captain. On the contrary, as Peter Dunn has argued, the captain-general defends the corporate honor of the military establishment over and above the rights of the peasantry (95). Figueroa functions as a metonym for the War Council, and the character’s absence during Álvaro’s trial (the legitimacy of which the king ultimately upholds) does not indicate that Crespo is vindictive but that the Council and its *fueros* are “woefully fallible” and an obstacle to justice.

On the opposite end of the justice-vengeance continuum lies the scholarship that considers *Alcalde* from a moral and more comprehensive perspective. Albert Sloman, for instance, posits that Calderón establishes a difference between moral law and the law of the state. Crespo acknowledges that he exceeds his powers as mayor and transgresses the law of the state, but in the final analysis his execution of the captain fully accords with moral law and natural justice (*Dramatic* 222-23). Edwin Honig and Díez Borque make similar arguments. Both see in *Alcalde* a triumph of the spirit of the law over the letter of the law (Honig 154; Díez Borque, Introduction 89-90). Dunn offers a similar claim while emphasizing Crespo's strong sense of morality. The scholar proposes that Calderón rejects the notion of vengeance in the name of worldly honor as incompatible with Christian virtue (82, 92). *Alcalde* presents Crespo as a type of saintly character willing to sacrifice his wealth and reputation for the sake of law and justice, thus providing a Christian solution to the problem of dishonor (90, 99, 103). The mayor's willingness to face public stigma by bringing his grievances into a legal forum reveals that he exacts the correct punishment without appealing to vengeance or spite (93). J. M. Sobré also sees Crespo as embodying positive moral values and reads *Alcalde* as an affirmation on the part of the dramatist that authority must be founded in morality and is null without justice (215, 221). Sobré considers Crespo a character who embodies positive moral values and who acts morally despite breaking the law because he seeks justice, not vengeance (219-20). The scholarship that supports Crespo thus tends to downplay strict interpretation of the law and appeals to natural justice or to a greater theological telos.

What if Crespo carries out justice *and* vengeance without necessarily violating the law on a fundamental level? Taylor affirms that the *Partidas* defined the mechanisms of

criminal law as one man accusing another before a judge in order to obtain vengeance (68). Instead of existing as mutually exclusive categories, honor (private vengeance) and law (public justice) intertwined and formed part of a complex continuum (126). Law functions primordially to protect society by carrying out vengeance while avoiding the perpetuation of violent retaliation that invariably occurs in the face of personal revenge and vendetta (Archer 61). Accordingly, criminal law sought only to eliminate *private* attempts at procuring revenge, not vengeance per se.⁷² Thus Francis Bacon, as quoted in this section's epigraph, refers to "public revenge" as "fortunate" and censures "private revenges," while Jerónimo de Merola warns that justice cannot be achieved when an offended party makes "las cosas públicas privadas." Not by coincidence does Taylor find support for the notion of criminal law as a means of public vengeance in plays, such as *Alcalde*, in which kings recognize the legitimacy of what could be considered private revenge (i.e., the murder of nobles; 68).

Crespo's execution of Álvaro essentially constitutes an act of vengeance, but the king sanctions the mayor's actions because they give precedence to public over private good and thus remain consistent with the primordial functions of law (Lewis Smith 114). The Crespo of the source play tries to keep his dishonor secret and distances himself from his paternal role. Calderón's mayor, on the other hand, actively negotiates his public and private duties in the open and never wavers in his commitment to either. As father of a violated daughter, Crespo achieves vengeance through Álvaro's death; as mayor, he legitimizes his actions when he makes his dishonor public and acts impartially ("¿qué más se me da / hacer por mi hija lo mismo / que hiciera por los demás?," vv. 2667-69).

⁷² Indeed, the very definition of vengeance operant during this period, "satisfacción del agravio o injuria hecha por otro" (*Autoridades*), does not imply going outside the law.

The king upholds Crespo's decision ("bien dada la muerte está," v. 2725), acknowledging that the issue of jurisdiction is secondary to ensuring a peaceful resolution: "errar lo menos no importa / si así acertó lo principal" (vv. 2726-27). Given the conception of justice and vengeance during the early modern period, *acertar lo principal* signals appropriate handling of private and public duties by achieving revenge in a public forum.

We return one final time to the revelation of Álvaro's corpse. Archer posits that the discovery of the captain's body at play's end likely occurs in the same place on stage where Crespo is revealed tied to a tree in the previous act (64). He suggests that this juxtaposition would discourage moral censure on the part of the viewer, who upon seeing Álvaro would recall Isabel's emotional narration of her victimization to Crespo and would thus be moved to approve of the father's subsequent actions (65). More importantly, the transposition of scenes also speaks to the conflation of father and soldier that Helgerson identifies in Borch's *Paternal Admonition*. The man on the stage behind the curtain in Calderón's play is first a mayor forced to defend his family's honor and then a captain guilty of raping the mayor's daughter. Analogously, we recall that the male figure of Borch's painting has been alternately interpreted as a father castigating his daughter and a soldier soliciting a woman (i.e., propositioning another man's daughter). In both cases the woman's body serves as a locus of contention that brings together private and public spheres. The soldier's interest in the woman is strictly limited to sex and thus disrupts the social function of the father-daughter relationship because it negates the possibility of a successful marital exchange. The interloper's elevated social rank makes the incursion of public into private a class conflict as well, rendering the disturbance of the filial relationship a sign of social destabilization. Calderón resolves

these multiple tensions through Crespo, who responds to the noble's invasion of the private sphere by bringing his grievances to a public forum. He might not satisfy the social function of the father-daughter relationship via marriage, but he nonetheless finds a way to carry out the public peace expected of the marital exchange. He does this through an act of vengeance that achieves retribution while possibly tarnishing his public reputation and thus proves worthy of the denomination "la justicia mas rara / del mundo."

The father-daughter relationship, as we have now seen, provides a metaphorical vehicle for analyzing the relationship of public and private spheres, one that gives us insight into the anxieties and priorities of individuals in their sociocultural milieu. *Mío Cid* reconstructs the life of the historical figure according to the demands of a transition period in which a new type of frontier society founded upon largely autonomous rule and juridical equality took shape in Valencia (Montaner 20, 23). Accordingly, the epic contains fictional details regarding the hero's daughters that home in on issues related to the private-public dynamic, such as vengeance and law and the distinction between honor as birthright and honor as compensation for valor.

Calderón engages in his own didactic deployment of history in his adaptation of a play that also incorporates anachronistic details (the Spanish army did not pass through Zalamea on its way to Portugal) to comment on his own sociopolitical reality (Díez Borque, Introduction 64). The early modern Spanish legal system suffered from a complex web of conflicting jurisdictions that made justice and equanimity under the law more an ideal than a reality. Our dramatist immerses his protagonist into this legal labyrinth to demonstrate the extent to which bureaucracy and mismanagement had fractured the "body" of justice and fomented disjunction among its "muchas manos" (v.

2706). Merola's argument regarding the republic extends to the legal system: just as the human body survives because its various organs function together "de manera que nunca desaciertan en lo que han de hacer," so, too, is justice achieved only when *fueros*, jurisdictions, laws, and judicial processes "gobierna[n]... todos juntos, con... unanimidad" (101). Cohen considers drama in which a king pardons a peasant for killing a noble a challenge to the status quo indicative of a yearning for alternatives to the conventional social code (189, 321).⁷³ Calderón asks his audience to reflect on the nature of justice in their society by presenting them with a man whose struggle to straddle the line between public and private duties very well could have resonated in their own lives. As in Vélez's *Serrana*, Calderón presents a familial crisis that reverberates into the public sphere and suggests crises within the larger "home," the empire.

"aunque... su honor / a esto lo pudo obligar, / de otra manera pudiera" (vv. 2754-56)

During his final dialogue with Lope de Figueroa, Crespo insists that his son merits punishment for injuring the captain because "aunque es verdad que su honor/a esto lo pudo obligar,/de otra manera pudiera" (vv. 2754-56). The father's words capture the foregoing chapter's overarching theme. In *Serrana*, the need to restore personal and familial honor justifies Gila's desire for retribution. However, the protagonist's demise and the king's hope that her death become an example for Spain prove that her oath of violent vengeance and drive to self-mythicize signal conceptions of honor, gender, and class that threaten social order and must be eliminated at all costs. Giraldo's selfishness also corrupts the socially-preserving function of the marital exchange, and Gila's death

⁷³ Salomon attributes the *alcalde* character's popularity on the Spanish stage to a generalized spirit of rebellion that found a cathartic release in the character's crossing of social and legal boundaries (95).

ensures that his attempt to violate class division by way of marriage cannot be repeated. The king's restoration of order thus serves as a dual punishment of a father and daughter who should have protected their honor *de otra manera*. A king also intervenes at the end of *Alcalde*, but to reward a father for his admirable pursuit of retribution and his selfless, albeit "raro," approach to correcting dishonor. The punishment Crespo procures for his son at play's end serves as a call to eliminate conventional definitions of honor as a code of extralegal violence. Crespo's promotion to permanent mayor makes him the paragon of what "otra manera" of conceiving justice entails. For her part, Isabel's innocence in the face of the captain's predatory lust is rewarded when she enters a convent, far removed from the public scorn she would have inevitably faced as a dishonored woman.⁷⁴

The familial crises developed throughout both plays also point to tensions on a greater social scale. Gila may have been punished, but it remains unclear how her death will be perceived. Much like the female figure in Borsch's painting who stands with her face hidden from the viewer, the reaction of Pascuala and the young generation of girls she represents remains a source of unresolved tension. Moreover, just as the uncertainty surrounding the woman in the Dutch artist's work reflects a fear of social destabilization between private and public spheres, so, too, does the end of *Serrana* point to breakdowns in gender constructs and class divisions happening off stage that were far from resolved. In similar fashion, the disruption of the filial relationship in *Alcalde* provides the dramatist a medium for commenting on a legal system that gives precedence to *fueros*

⁷⁴ Our modern perspective would perhaps lead us to view Isabel's placement in a convent as a type of forced enclosure and more a punishment than a reward. Indeed, Welles considers Isabel's fate a "social death" that renders her rape akin to murder (115). However, an early modern audience would have likely thought otherwise. As Barahona affirms, the court of public opinion was particularly unkind to dishonored women (30). By being in a convent, however, Isabel would live in a space that allowed women to cultivate a certain degree of autonomy (Arenal 149). Moreover, she would enjoy the kind of life prevailing social convention deemed a "worthy alternative to marriage" (Weinstein and Bell 48).

and an intractable hierarchy of jurisdictions over and above an equitable and efficient administration of justice. Both plays take advantage of the metaphorical possibilities of the father-daughter relationship to make powerful sociocultural observations. The actions of the plays' principal characters are microcosms of the individual's relationship to society, and their eventual rewards and/or punishments provide insight into their creators' view of the historical moment in which they live.

CHAPTER 2

FATHER AND/OR *VALIDO*? FILIAL CONFLICT IN AN ARISTOCRATIC SETTING

Mirrors have been a recurrent motif throughout the history of Western painting (J. Miller 10). Hollander asserts that the reflective glass in quotidian life may be thought to reflect either objective truth (i.e., what we look like to others) or “artistic fictions” (i.e., how we pose before the mirror) (391). The mirror’s ambivalent association with truth and fantasy perhaps explains its frequent appearance in visual art, itself a type of looking glass capable of reflecting nature both in its objective reality and in a more subjective “artistic fiction.” Whether in the glass or on the canvas, the beholder’s creative power brings an image into existence (392). Renaissance and Baroque art highlighted the mirror’s ambiguous nature in paintings of Venus at her toilet contemplating her reflection. Artists typically presented the goddess of love as nude or semi-nude, seated or recumbent, before a small mirror that reflects only her face (396). The combination of small mirror and nude body turns the mirror into a site of tension that questioned, and in some cases ultimately denied, female subjectivity.

Hollander affirms that female nakedness gives works of art an undeniable erotic dimension (87-88). Early modern renditions of Venus before a mirror allow the viewer a glimpse of the goddess in all her sensual splendor while limiting her own gaze to the glass’s reduced surface area, excluding her from participating in the appreciation of her erotic corporality. A latent tension emerges from the distinction between viewer and viewed. The goddess’s contemplation of her face in the mirror underscores the mythological connotation of the reflective glass as conduit to self-awareness (Hollander 396). Without a mirror or some kind of reflective surface we would lack firsthand

knowledge of the appearance of our face (J. Miller 135). When we recognize the reflection of a visage as our own we experience a distinct kind of awareness, a *self-consciousness* that forms the basis of our subjectivity (138). The mirror in the Venus paintings allows the goddess to see her face, thereby allowing her to affirm her subjectivity. At the same time, the fact that the primary viewer (i.e., the painter) of the scene is male implies that the sensuality her nude body evokes also leaves her vulnerable to objectification. Contemporary art criticism tends to interpret the male painter's assumed gaze upon his artistic rendering of a woman as a voyeuristic force that reduces the subject to an object of male pleasure and desire (Snow 30-31). The Venus of early modern painting can see her face in a mirror, but the objectifying view of her body from which she herself is excluded qualifies her subject position.

Peter Paul Rubens further complicates the subject-object dynamic in his *Venus at a Mirror* (Fig. 6). In typical Baroque fashion, the painting depicts the goddess at her toilet seated before a mirror that reflects her face. Unlike other similar scenes, however, the Flemish painter's rendition shows the goddess looking not at her reflection but at the viewer behind her. Jonathan Miller interprets the mirror in scenes in which the goddess contemplates the reflection of the male gaze as an emblem of vanity (13). The critic posits that the "self-intoxicated woman" in works such as *Venus at a Mirror* uses the reflective glass to affirm her body's potential erotic effect on the viewer (162). Miller's point has significant implications for the ways in which works such as Rubens's treat the goddess's subjectivity. The looking glass may be emblematic of vanity, but its longstanding presence in allegorical depictions of Prudence, often shown looking into a mirror, also speaks to its role as conduit to self-knowledge (175). Rubens's Venus looks

away from her reflection, essentially nullifying the mirror's role in the creation of self-consciousness. Rather than revel in the self-awareness that the reflection of her face would allow her, the goddess loses her subject position to the male viewer. Her gaze thus becomes as much a part of her objectification as the rest of her body. Edward Snow notes that the “obsessive foregrounding” in Rubens’s painting produces a strong sense of creator/male involvement and leaves Venus’s body vulnerable to a type of visual possession (34, 38). The goddess loses her agency to the viewer’s gaze, which takes over the reflection in the mirror and reduces the lady’s face to yet another object of his desire.



Figure 6
Peter Paul Rubens, *Venus at a Mirror*



Figure 7
Diego Velázquez, *Rokeby Venus*

Snow posits an alternative reading of the male gaze in his study of Diego Velázquez’s *Rokeby Venus* (Fig. 7). The scholar argues that Velázquez did not depict Venus’s body as an object of sexual desire so as to separate his painting from other scenes of the goddess at her toilet (32). The Spanish painter eschews Rubens’s foregrounding and creates a more “open” view of the goddess, whose physical distance from the mirror allows her to contemplate a side of her body that remains hidden to the

viewer positioned behind her. The painter thus gives Venus the opportunity to participate in the viewing of her body on equal terms with the spectator, rendering the scene a moment of shared kinesthetic identification rather than a further example of the male gaze's objectifying "phallic capture" (36-37, 40).

Snow convincingly asserts that Velázquez does not depict Venus as an object of male sexual desire as blatantly as other artists, such as Rubens. The Spanish painter's Venus may not be a fetishized erotic object; however, this does not necessarily mean that she enjoys any more agency than her counterpart on the Flemish artist's canvas. Venus's distance from the mirror in the Velázquez painting may afford her the opportunity to contemplate both her face and body, but the painter has decided to capture the moment in which the goddess locks eyes with the viewer behind her. As in Rubens's painting, the self-awareness that comes from contemplating the reflection of one's face—what Miller describes as "the appearance of an otherwise invisible self" (12)—is denied the woman in the work and offered up to the viewer. Only the latter sees her countenance, and she in turn only sees his: she remains "invisible" to herself, and her identity remains subject to the interpretation of the man behind her. Snow implicitly alludes to the goddess's loss of subjectivity when he asserts that her gaze engages the viewer "without the knowledge of the woman from whom it apparently derives" (36). He finds in Velázquez's composition an attempt to depict an "un-self-conscious experience" (35) of corporality that may reduce the woman's identity as sexual object but which nonetheless deprives her of the kind of self-awareness that leads to subjectivity. The right to dictate the woman's identity rests, both for Velázquez and Rubens, in the male gaze.

A similar conception of female subjectivity appears in the two plays discussed in this chapter, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's *Casarse por vengarse* and Calderón's *La vida es sueño*. In both works the female protagonists attempt to assert their will but invariably fall victim to objectifying male forces that determine the women's fate and social identity. Blanca, Zorrilla's protagonist, tries to rebel against the manipulative influence of the three men in her life (father, husband, king), but her efforts eventually lead to her demise. Just as Rubens's use of foreshortening renders Venus's body an object of male desire, so, too, does Rojas's use of mercantile terminology throughout the play commodify Blanca and turn her into a "misero objeto" (v. 933) controlled by a male-driven marriage market. For his part, Calderón allows his heroine, Rosaura, a degree of freedom that seems to affirm will and agency in the same way that Velázquez's use of distance and openness in *Rokeby Venus* appears to give the goddess a level of access to her own body on par with the male viewer. Ultimately, however, Rosaura shares the same fate as Blanca: she is an object of male desire and must accommodate her will, as well as her social identity, to the interests of her father, her beloved, and her prince. Snow's allusion to the male gaze in paintings of women as "patriarchal, ideological, and phallogentric" applies to both Calderón and Zorrilla's plays (30). Just as the male viewer captures the reflection of Venus's face, and by extension her self-consciousness, so, too, do agents of patriarchy (fathers, husbands, rulers) appropriate Blanca and Rosaura's subjectivity and force them to acquiesce to prevailing gender and social norms.

An additional element in Velázquez and Rubens's Venus paintings has interesting analogues in the plays studied in this chapter. Both artists depict Cupid holding up the goddess' mirror, rendering the winged god a mediator of self-consciousness. Without the

mirror, Venus could not see her reflection and would be denied the opportunity to affirm her existence as a subject via a view of her face. Even with the mirror present, however, the goddess fixes her gaze upon the male viewer behind her. Cupid thus serves the male gaze: he uses the instrument of self-assertion (the mirror) to complement the viewer's objectification and possession of the woman's agency. Roberto and Clotaldo, the fathers in *Casarse* and *Vida*, respectively, echo the god's complex role in the Venus paintings. Like Cupid, the two fathers occupy a complicated place between their female kin and authoritative male forces. Roberto and Clotaldo serve as *privados*, or royal favorites, who must appropriately balance their obligations to daughter and king, but who ultimately fail. Their respective failures endanger their daughters' lives and leave their lords in compromised positions. As counterparts to the Cupid in the Venus drawings, the fathers in *Casarse* and *Vida* have the power to represent their daughters' will; instead, however, they assist in the women's objectification. The resultant conflict underscores the extent to which private and public spheres are interdependent and mutually contribute to the health of the state. As in the peasant honor dramas analyzed in the previous chapter, the father-daughter plot serves as an avenue for exploring men and women's roles in society.

2.1 “este misero objeto:” Commodified Daughter and Economics of Marriage in Rojas Zorrilla’s *Casarse por vengarse*

¿A quién no le maravilla / ver en su gloria, sin tasa, / que es lo más ruin de su casa / Doña Blanca de Castilla? / Pero pues da al bajo silla / y al cobarde hace guerrero, / poderoso caballero es Don Dinero.

—Francisco de Quevedo, “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero” (vv. 25-32)

Una moneda pública es el ministro, en quien está figurado el Príncipe, y si no es de buenos quilates y le representa vivamente, será desestimada como falsa.

—Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano* (211)

In the final scene of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla’s *Casarse por vengarse* (1636), the revelation of a wife’s corpse prompts a chagrined king to exclaim, “¡Oh, lo que cuesta / el casarse por vengarse!” (vv. 3293-94).⁷⁵ The utterance of the play’s title echoes the husband’s earlier vow that his allegedly adulterous spouse “verá cuánto cuesta / el casarse por vengarse” (vv. 3021-22). Rojas employs these verses to highlight the unique nature of his only uxoricide drama. The husband murders his wife; however, *she* acquiesced to the marriage in the first place to exact vengeance on *herself*. Marry to avenge: the ideals that the marital institution should uphold (alliance, peace, social order) fall by the wayside when the protagonist, Blanca, enters into an undesired marriage to achieve private and potentially socially divisive ends. Roberto, who is both Blanca’s father and the king’s *valido*, stands at the heart of the protagonist’s oscillation between marriage and revenge. Guilty of imprudently manipulating both daughter and king, Roberto sets in motion the events leading to the play’s tragic dénouement. Blanca’s decision to marry for vengeance, though rebellious and independent on the surface, ultimately reflects her father’s inability to fulfill his public and private responsibilities. He fails to carry out a successful marital exchange, propelling his daughter to sabotage her marriage from the inside, inevitably leading to her demise.

⁷⁵ Textual citations are from Linda L. Mullin’s edition of *Casarse por vengarse*.

Blanca attempts to assert her will within the oppressing strictures of a forced marriage, but like the Venus figure in the previously cited paintings, imposing male powers reduce her to an object of desire. Zorrilla uses commercial discourse extensively throughout his play to underscore Blanca's role as a powerless commodity in a male-driven system of exchange. We can understand the preposition *por* in the drama's very title in the context of such a discourse. Blanca exchanges marriage *for* vengeance, a transaction that threatens to pervert the function of patriarchal exogamy and usurp the commodifying power of the men in her life. Not by chance do both her husband (the Condestable) and beloved (the king, Enrique) reference the "cost" of Blanca's "transaction" (i.e., *casarse por vengarse*), as both stand at the forefront of the objectification that ultimately leads to the heroine's death. Equally responsible for the tragic dénouement is Roberto, whose failures as the "treasurer" of his daughter's honor set king and nobleman against each other in a struggle that upsets the stability of the state. The social implications of Roberto's imprudence speak to the capacity of the father-daughter dynamic to comment on the relationship between the individual and society. Hence, the conflicted father-daughter plot renders the playwright's use of commercial terminology in a tragic dramatic context a reflection of the empire's ongoing economic decline. Blanca remains the focal point of a struggle between *valido* and king that resonates with Philip IV and Olivares's difficulty controlling Spain's economy.

Rojas penned *Casarse* during a period in which Spain's inadequate financial system precipitated the empire's more pressing crises (Kamen 203). Significant economic decline marked the first half of the seventeenth century, and especially during the 1620s uncontrolled inflation, coinage manipulation, and shortages of silver all beset Castile

(Cohen 260; Kamen 215). Political theorists, mercantile writers, and moralists alike tried to make sense of a growing credit economy blamed for the empire's chronic debt (Vilches 1, 211). The unprecedented fiscal changes brought on by extensive use of credit and currency debasement instigated a generalized loss of confidence in money and confusion regarding the concept of value. The minting of copper coins (*vellones*) whose nominal value exceeded the worth of their base metal contributed to economic inflation and remained an especially contentious issue throughout Philip IV's reign (8, 210, 260). As early as 1609, Juan de Mariana had called the practice of issuing debased money a tyrannous act that compromised the monarch's role as protector of his subjects (236, 259). Olivares sought to improve the imperial tax system and curb coin manipulation in his *Memorial* of 1624. His efforts led to a temporary suspension of *vellón* minting in 1626 and the repudiation of state debts the following year. Despite these temporary relief measures, by the end of the decade the Count-Duke's reform policy was deemed a failure (Kamen 203, 210-13). Efforts at improving the empire's financial situation did not lead to reform of the imperial tax system; on the contrary, Castilians' tax burden doubled between 1621 and 1642 (217). Furthermore, debased coins remained in circulation, and by 1626 the *vellón*'s premium on silver coin had risen to fifty percent, leading to drastic increases in commodity prices and a lower standard of living for most of the Castilian population (Kamen 214-15; Elliott, *Olivares* 267). The crown suspended *vellón* minting once more, but the ongoing need to finance military campaigns abroad resulted in the restamping of debased coins in 1636 at three times face value, a measure Olivares himself acknowledged as "the most harmful and unjust ever adopted" due to subsequent price increases and scarcity of goods (qtd. in Elliott, *Olivares* 514). Such ineffective

economic reforms engendered popular distrust of both the *valido* and the government's fiscal policies throughout the peninsula.⁷⁶

Elvira Vilches's analysis of the anxiety that monetary disorder fostered in early modern Spain affirms that coinage, credit, and other fiscal matters occupied both economic treatises and multiple forms of literary production (5). Writers engaged in a veritable "poetics of money" that treated a variety of topics related to the fiscal concerns of the period (9). Whether Quevedo lamenting the days when "España con legítimos dineros" did not have to beg for foreign credit or Vélez de Guevara mockingly referring to Seville as "estómago de España...que reparte...lo que traga a las Indias en plata y oro," genres as diverse as lyrical poetry, the picaresque, and the *novella* commented on the changing relationship between citizen and money in numerous ways (Vilches 212; 314; Quevedo, "Epístola" 448; Vélez, *Diablo* 138). On the early modern stage, dramatists such as Lope, Tirso, and Montalbán explored the changing nature of money and society in depictions of *indiano* characters and allusions to New World wealth and the seductive power of gold (Vilches 301; Bass, "Economics" 776; Wright 38).

England faced similar economic tensions during the early modern period, including governmental debasement of currency, inflation, and uncertainty regarding accepted standards of value (Fischer 14, 23). As in the case of their Spanish counterparts, fiscal crises also spurred English playwrights to engage in a poetics of money in their works. Monetary terms such as *billon* and *copper*, for instance, carried negative

⁷⁶ Antonio Rodríguez Villa's collection of letters from 1636 and 1637 reveals that no proposition was rejected in dealing with the empire's monetary crisis. Many a missive narrates the failures of people who claimed to to have the power to turn copper into silver: "A don Vicente Lupati tienen todavía preso en el Alcazar de Segovia, habiéndole señalado término limitado para que haga la plata que decía saber hacer, y no lo sabiendo le ahorcarán por haber puesto a S. M. en grandes gastos" (156-57). The letters also reveal general concern regarding the monarchy's practice of coin manipulation: "Corre voz que el Rey se echa sobre la plata de los particulares que últimamente ha venido de las Indias pagándose en moneda resellada de vellón a razón de 20 por 100" (231).

connotations and signaled both baseness of character and degraded value (Fisher 50, 60). Moreover, concerns about social order and material wealth led to the use of commercial terminology in depictions of interpersonal relationships, particularly in Jacobean city comedy (Bruster 38; Fischer 16-17). Marital unions especially were treated in terms of exchange transaction, and the efforts of male characters (husbands, fathers) to lock women away from undesired suitors like treasure that needed safekeeping spoke to preoccupations regarding ownership in new, mercurial urban markets (Horwich 256; S. Miller 74; Hannaford 94-95). The conception of women as commodities in need of male protection rendered wives and daughters who fled from their families analogous to the uncontrolled exportation of gold depleting England's money supply and thus a serious threat to home and empire alike (S. Miller 85, 91). While England and Spain did not face identical socioeconomic conditions, studies of Spanish drama have also identified "economies of exchange" that project real world financial concerns onto female characters (Greer and Junguito 32, 37).⁷⁷ Rojas engages in a poetics of money in *Casarse* to explore vengeance, the commodification of women, and the economics of marriage.

Zorrilla's inclusion of monetary terms and other forms of commercial discourse throughout his corpus reflects upon the empire's tenuous economic state. In *Cada cual lo que le toca*, the dramatist alludes to the kingdom's coinage crisis in the remarks of the servant, Beltrán, who accepts a bribe and allows a man to enter his master's house: "Dinero, hágote vellón, / y pesarás más que todo" (v. 1944). The double meaning of *pesar* would likely not go unnoticed in an audience with firsthand experience of the empire's fiscal struggles. *Vellón* minting produced coins of a lower weight than their

⁷⁷ In Mira's *El animal profeta*, for instance, Federico schemes to seduce Julián's wife, whom he refers to as "una joya / que más que este reino vale" (vv. 1960-61). The husband goes to great lengths to protect his "joya" (v. 1496) and kills Federico: "Ansí llevaréis la joya / que habéis venido a robarme" (vv. 1970-71).

silver counterparts and provided only a short term solution that inevitably gave way to greater economic turmoil. In *Cada cual*, the servant's actions earn him some money but *weigh heavy* when his master confronts him. Beltrán couches his lament regarding the decision to accept the bribe in monetary terms as well: "Trocarle intento / mis ciento en esta ocasión; / pero a pagarme en vellón, / tomo a cincuenta por ciento" (vv. 2484-87). Though the play's date of composition remains unknown, the fifty percent devaluation perhaps alludes to the silver-to-copper ratio that led the Crown to stop minting *vellón* coins in 1626. In typical *comedia* fashion, the *gracioso* acts as both a source of comic relief and a conduit for the dramatist's social commentary (Greer and Junguito 37).

Rojas's use of commercial discourse may also have biographical roots. In 1643, Philip IV nominated Rojas for membership in the Order of Santiago, but two problematic aspects of the dramatist's background delayed the vetting process. An investigation into Rojas's ancestry uncovered Moorish and Jewish blood on both sides of the family and revealed that the playwright's father had at one time worked as a notary (*escribano*) (MacCurdy, *Rojas* 22-23). The concern with *limpieza de sangre* that permeated early modern Spain explains why the discovery of Moorish and Jewish ancestry would have complicated the dramatist's entry into the Order. The second obstacle to membership, his father's employment, reflects prevailing attitudes toward mercantile and bourgeois labor. The *Regla y establecimiento de la Caballería de Santiago del Espada* stated that a man who had engaged in a so-called "oficio vil," such as a notary, could not be admitted, nor could the man's son.⁷⁸ The apparent seriousness of this social "blemish" was enough to require papal dispensation to allow Rojas to enter the Order (MacCurdy, *Rojas* 23).

⁷⁸ "no se pued[e] dar el hábito a ninguno que haya...tenido oficio vil o mecánico o sea hijo de los que han tenido lo uno o lo otro [...] Y oficios viles y mecánicos se entienden: plateros, caneros, mesoneros,

Although the issues regarding Rojas's background were not revealed until after the publication of *Casarse*, evidence exists that the playwright's father occupied the aforementioned notarial post between 1633 and 1636. This period roughly coincides with the writing of such plays as *Casarse*, *Primero es la honra que el gusto*, and *Entre bobos anda el juego*, all of which make consistent use of economic terminology. It is perhaps not coincidental that Quatrín, the *gracioso* in *Casarse* whose name could refer to a coin of little value or to money in general, mockingly refers to himself as the Condestable's "Secretario lego" (v. 828), an allusion to the kind of employment the playwright's father held at the time of the play's composition. Quatrín also calls himself a "cansado" (v. 1862), a word that describes the servant's bothersome and impertinent nature but which playwrights also used as a term of hostility toward Jewish and *cristiano nuevo* communities (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 234-35; 237). The *gracioso*'s remark could thus allude to Rojas's personal life and provides further evidence of a biographical foundation for the dramatist's use of commercial discourse.

María Profeti suggests that the combined pressures of being a favored court artist and of having to draw the interest of a theater-going public that had been exposed to a myriad of dramatic plots since the turn of the century contributed to Rojas's unique treatment of preexisting themes and dramatic conventions (Introduction, *Bobos* 13-14).⁷⁹ In particular, Rojas distances himself from contemporary playwrights in his use of mercantile themes to depict interpersonal relationships (29). He often employs commercial terminology in plots in which female protagonists struggle against their

taberneros, escribanos—que no sean secretarios del rey o de cualquier persona real" (qtd. in Florit Durán 238-39).

⁷⁹ Seven of Rojas's plays were performed at the Royal Palace in 1635, and *Los bandos de Verona* inaugurated the new Coliseo at the Buen Retiro in 1640 (MaCurdy, *Rojas* 18, 21).

fathers' attempts to "sell" them in marriage to the wealthiest suitor (MacCurdy, "Women" 255).⁸⁰ In *Primero es la honra*, Leonor feels that her father pawns her off to a rich suitor: "no es casarme, / sino antes venderme, darme / marido por conveniencia" (vv. 1030-32). She tries to resist the proposed marriage within the bounds of daughterly obedience ("las mujeres...nunca se han de oponer al sentimiento / de su padre," vv. 202-05) and argues that the prospect of future wealth matters less than her happiness: "no has de consentir severo, / por hacerme rica, hacerme / desdichada" (vv. 106-08). Undeterred, her father continues to pressure Leonor under the guiding principle that "quien puede más, vale más" (v. 119). Similarly, Isabel's father in *Entre bobos* pressures her into a marriage of economic interest: "Cásoos con un caballero / que tiene seis mil ducados / de renta, ¿y hacéis pucheros?" (vv. 368-70). The protagonist criticizes the commercial terms her father's preferred suitor uses to woo her: "dice 'crédito', 'fineza', / 'recato', 'halago', 'atención'; / y desto hace mezcla tal, / que aun con amor no pudiera / digerirlo" (vv. 127-31). Like Leonor, Isabel tries to argue that personal happiness has greater value than material wealth. Both women eventually unite with their beloveds and avoid unwanted marriages, but not before being submitted to a male-driven game of exchange that threatens to tear away their free will. Rojas similarly depicts the father-daughter relationship in *Casarse*; Blanca's commodification, however, ultimately proves tragic.

"tesorero que guardas el rocío" (v. 33)

⁸⁰ I am not suggesting that other plays of the period do not depict the marital exchange as a financial transaction. On the contrary, plays that include an *indiano* character, such as Tirso's *Marta la piadosa*, also tend to include a conflicted filial relationship in which the father wishes to marry his daughter to a rich man. The larger point is that other dramatists of the period do not depict the father-daughter relationship in explicit commercial terminology to the extent that Rojas does in the plays discussed here.

The play's opening scenes lay the foundation for Blanca's complex characterization as both a strong-willed woman and a helpless commodity. During the apostrophe to nature that opens the play, Blanca declares her feelings of love for the prince of Sicily, Enrique, and underscores what she perceives as equality between herself and the *infante*: "desde nuestras niñeces...siendo iguales en todo" (vv. 77-81). The protagonist's insistence on parity became a trademark of the Rojas heroine, who asserted her equality with men in spiritual and intellectual matters (MacCurdy, "Women" 256). Blanca defends her belief in "almas tan conformes, / tan iguales" (v. 2263) throughout the play as a justification for actions that social convention would deem unseemly in a woman, such as proposing marriage to her beloved. She argues for parity ("que no me excedes colijo," v. 112) and then displays "masculine" self-assertion when she tries to manipulate Enrique into marriage while her father is away: "quiero [pues] que mi padre / está en Palermo...que te desposes conmigo" (Mullin 123; vv. 107-10). She turns the tables on conventional gender constructs and insists that Enrique will prove "remiso" (v. 121) and "inconstante" (v. 122), that is, notably *unmanly*, if he does not agree to the union. This early association of the future king with traditionally "feminine" traits proves important as the plot unwinds and becomes an integral part of the play's economic discourse. Lest Blanca's forwardness be considered immoral, she declares that Enrique's ability to secretly visit her every night through a false partition in her bedroom has in no way clouded her honor.⁸¹ Her rush to marry Enrique in her father's absence may indicate imprudence, but in terms of honor—and, subsequently, exchange value—Blanca remains as pure as her chromatic name would imply.

⁸¹ A wall also allows lovers to communicate in Rojas's *La traición busca el castigo*. Leonor's father locks her in her room to keep her away from García, but the two speak through a hole in the wall that separates their houses: "por la frágil quebradura / de una pared, permitióme...su voz a mi oído" (vv. 305-07).

The prince echoes Blanca's declarations of love in his own apostrophe to nature.

Unlike his beloved in her monologue, Enrique incorporates multiple commercial terms:

bosque alegre y sombrío,
tesorero que guardas el rocío,
que en perlas te entregó la blanca Aurora,
y al dar cuenta la *paga* se mejora:
pues si en *letras* de aljófar lo ha librado,
en plata se lo *pagas* a este prado;
sabed (si os entenece cuanto lloro)
que a Blanca, fénix de Sicilia, adoro. (vv. 32-39; emphasis added)

The prince refers to the forest as the dawn's treasurer who holds the dew and increases its value by paying off in silver a draft (*letra*) that called for payment in pearl (*aljófar*).

Linda Mullin underscores the multiple levels of signification in this passage: the whiteness of the dew and the reference to payment in *aljófar* posits Blanca as a "treasure" and Roberto, her father, as the "treasurer" charged with guarding her. Moreover, as Enrique's future *valido*, Roberto will pay off the future king's "draft" with a currency other than pearl; in other words, he uses the *letras* entrusted to him to marry Enrique to Rosaura rather than to Blanca (11). We may add to Mullin's interpretation Roberto's desire to increase Blanca's (social) value or *paga* by offering his daughter to the Condestable on account of the noble's high rank.⁸² The father and future *valido* attempts to *mejorar la paga* by keeping Enrique and Blanca apart and involving them in separate marital unions that he believes will prove advantageous to both.

It is noteworthy that Enrique informs the audience of the female protagonist's name, as he is also the person who first treats her as a commodity. Blanca's role in the play changes on a literal and symbolic level following the prince's apostrophe to nature. Not only is she *Blanca* the self-assertive woman who claims equality with Enrique and

⁸² The *Autoridades* identified a *condestable* as "género de dignidad militar y política, tenida por muy superior y excelente."

blanca in the sense of purity and intact honor, she is also a *blanca*, a “moneda de vellón” (*Autoridades*), an object of exchange. Quevedo personifies the *vellón* coin as Doña Blanca de Castilla in his poem, “Poderoso caballero es don Dinero,” and marvels at how a “ruin” woman (debased coin) could live “en su gloria” (continue to be restamped and circulated) (vv. 25-28). Similarly, Rojas’s treatment of the father-daughter relationship in mercantile terms speaks to the commercial underpinnings of marriage and the social ramifications of Spain’s fiscal crises. The depiction of a *valido* who tries to replace pearl with silver takes on greater significance when we realize that the pearl is really a *blanca* or *vellón* coin. The association of *vellón* and silver channels Spain’s monetary problems and links Roberto to another *valido*, Olivares, and the latter’s attempts to stabilize the imperial treasury via currency manipulation.

Enrique rejects Blanca’s proposal to get married before her father’s return as an irresponsible act that would cause “delitos / que en el achaque de honor / pueden parecer peligros” (vv. 144-46). The prince’s argument adds to the commercial connotations of his relationship with Blanca. *Achaque* in this context could refer to a vice or moral defect, suggesting that it would be immoral to marry without her father’s consent. From a legal perspective, the term could also be understood as the denunciation of a crime carried out covertly “para...sacarle algún dinero” (*Autoridades*). Marrying Blanca outside the accepted confines of a male-driven marital exchange would be akin to theft and would endanger the daughter’s value as a social commodity. The infante employs similar terms when he assures Blanca that Roberto knows nothing about their love, “ni en créditos, ni en indicios” (v. 262). The use of *crédito*, a term that can refer to a payment that an “hombre de comercio” makes in exchange for money (*Autoridades*), once again defines

Blanca and Enrique's relationship in commercial terms. Roberto does not know of their love, so neither father nor prince owes the other anything because there has been no intimation of exchange. The various references to credit and profit sublimate the economic tensions of the period into a complicated romantic relationship that forces the woman into a passive role of exchange (Mullin 13). As Luce Irigaray suggests, patriarchal society insists on commerce *of* women, not commerce *with* them (172). Women cannot participate in the marital union as an exchanger, nor treat men as commodities. Thus Enrique rejects Blanca's marriage proposal for straying from an exclusively male-dominated economics of marriage. Despite her claims to equality and her attempts at self-assertion, in the final analysis she is a commodity, a token of exchange negotiated by king, *valido*, and *condestable*.

“este Reino es de los dos” (v. 311)

The arrival of Blanca's father sheds light on the future king's imprudence. Roberto brings news of the monarch's death and pays homage to his successor, Enrique. As the new king, Enrique's first degree aims to honor Roberto, who has raised him as a son, by appointing him *valido* and granting him unmatched authority:

deudas de mi albedrío
quiero pagar con mis brazos;
mas quiero que vos reinéis,
Príncipe en mi voluntad,
que la Imperial Majestad
del Reino que me ofrecéis,
este Reino, es de los dos,
y hoy en tal alto lugar
he de dejar de reinar,
porque reinéis solo vos. (vv. 305-14)

The king's decision proves ominous. Enrique and Blanca's earlier dialogue intimated that the new *valido* has not precisely acted as a paragon of fatherhood. Moralists such as Vives cautioned against allowing women to remain alone in the company of men, "even if they are brother and sister," lest they place their honor at risk (131). Roberto, however, has left Blanca and Enrique alone for an unspecified period of time, and his ignorance of the false partition in his daughter's room speaks to a lack of control over his home. If the father fails to exert authority over his family, he likely will not fare better when the "home" he must watch over constitutes an entire kingdom. Enrique nonetheless confers immense power upon Roberto solely out of a sense of personal gratitude. His first act as king thus represents a nepotistic delegation of power that political thinkers of the period who insisted that a royal minister "nazca de su virtud [y] conozca que le engendró el mérito, no el padre" would have undoubtedly censured (Quevedo, *Política* 558).⁸³

The king then signs a blank sheet of paper and hands it to Blanca as a written marriage promise, compounding his imprudence. The signature makes literal what Enrique's opening monologue had suggested: the "siete letras" (v. 321) of the king's name become a letter of credit the the possessor must redeem, reifying Blanca and Enrique's relationship as one of merchant and merchandise (Mullin 13, 20).⁸⁴ Enrique does not foresee that anyone could use a blank sheet with the royal signature to achieve practically any end and could thus prove harmful to himself and the kingdom. Blanca

⁸³ Quevedo also warned against the kind of royal displays of affection put on by Enrique here and elsewhere in the play: "en público...no digo con validos, ni con hermanos, ni padre ni madre ha de haber sombra de amistad, porque el cargo y la dignidad no son capaces de igualdad con alguno" (*Política* 548).

⁸⁴ Rojas similarly conflates marriage promise and written commercial transaction in *Entre bobos*. Lucas sends Antonio a letter described as a "carta de pago" for the "purchase" of the latter's daughter: "Recibí de don Antonio de Salazar una mujer, para que lo sea mía...y la entregaré tal y tan entera, siempre que me fuere pedida por nulidad o divorcio" (86). The father questions Lucas's intent ("¿piensa que le doy mujer, / o piensa que se la vendo?," vv. 517-18), but the suitor confirms the document's nature as a sales receipt when he tries to "return" the daughter: "Dadme mi carta de pago / y llevaos a vuestra hija" (vv. 1928-29).

gives the document to Roberto, her “treasurer,” in a gesture of filial obedience, but in the process she effectively nullifies any say she might have in the marital exchange. Her father promptly turns over the document to another woman and tries to force Blanca to marry the Condestable, betraying king and daughter alike. In keeping with the economic connotations of the protagonist’s name, the tragic fallout that ensues from the separation of a *Blanca* from a letter of credit calls to mind the distrust that Vilches suggests new financial instruments (bills of exchange, IOUs, etc.) of the period engendered due to their detachment from concrete monetary value (20). On a larger social scale, the king and the *valido*’s improper handling of the marital exchange channels the inability of Philip IV and Olivares to resolve the kingdom’s monetary dilemmas.

For his part, the Condestable becomes another participant in the play’s commercial discourse when he recounts seeing Blanca bathing in a stream. Mullin considers the bathing scene in *Casarse* one of the least sensual in Rojas’s *corpus* and attributes this to the play’s tragic plot (26). The scene in question takes place early in the play, however, well before any of the plot’s tragic outcomes are readily in sight. I believe the scene’s lack of eroticism derives from the materialistic nature of the Condestable’s narration, which diminishes Blanca’s physical beauty and underscores her role as an exchangeable object. The nobleman colors his description of the stream in which he sees Blanca with images of the same rich materials (pearl and silver) Enrique mentions when he commodifies his beloved in the first scene. The description veers toward the purely material when the Condestable notices, not Blanca’s body, but the splendor of her adornments, first her glove and then her bracelets and rings. Even when the Condestable describes Blanca’s body he highlights the “cendal” (v. 594), or fine silk, of her sleeve.

More than a sensual description of the female figure, the voyeuristic episode takes on an air of window-shopping. Although the description of the beloved as a treasure is a trope inherited from Petrarchan love poetry, the use of commercial terminology in this context lends the metaphor additional meaning. Like Enrique, the Condestable yearns to “acquire” the “treasure” he sees in the stream, and he takes his place in the play’s economics of marriage when he rushes off to negotiate with the “treasurer.”

Roberto agrees to the Condestable’s offer, capping off a series of ill-advised decisions that reveal improper handling of his dual roles as father and *valido*. He initially accepts the document with Enrique’s signature as an opportunity to affirm his loyalty, only to go behind the king’s back and give the contract to Rosaura, Enrique’s cousin. Roberto acknowledges that Enrique wanted Blanca to receive the document but appeals to the deceased king’s mandate that the crown would pass to someone else if Enrique did not marry Rosaura as justification for his actions. While Roberto may act in the king’s benefit, that does not excuse his going against the monarch’s wishes and then silencing him when he expresses disapproval (“dareisme / bien merecido silencio,” vv. 651-52). *Privanza* plays, such as Vélez’s *A lo que obliga el ser rey*, maintained that favorite ministers were expected to be persons “con quien los reyes / descansan, con quien repartan / el grave peso que tienen / en los hombros” (vv. 724-27). Enrique’s lament, “si aquí [Rosaura] dejo, / gano a Blanca a quien adoro, / y si a Blanca, el Reino pierdo” (vv. 734-36), highlights the extent to which Roberto places the king in a compromised position and violates the demands of his public role. Similarly, Roberto treats his daughter as he treats his king by negotiating a marriage without permission and demanding silence when Blanca questions his actions: “No hay por qué tu labio se abra, /

en dando yo mi palabra” (vv. 926-27).⁸⁵ If Roberto’s furtive use of Enrique’s signature proves him an untrustworthy *valido*, his tyrannical parenting signals imprudence as a father.⁸⁶ His parallel treatment of king and daughter underscores the interrelatedness of both spheres and the degree to which mishandling of one gives way to crisis in the other.

The ensuing comic scene, which features an exchange between the Condestable’s servant, Quatrín, and the king, alludes to Roberto’s missteps in commercial terms and highlights the play’s commodification of marriage in general and of Blanca in particular. Shortly after Enrique learns that Roberto has given the document to Rosaura, Quatrín petitions the king to have the royal treasurer issue him a “recaudo” (v. 836), or payment. The king promises a gift of one hundred *escudos*, but Quatrín, (correctly) suspecting that he will not see any of the money, insists that the monarch raise the payment to one hundred thousand to keep with the “ley de Rey generoso” (v. 847). Multiple ironies and levels of signification tinge the servant’s exchange with the king. The reference to a *rey generoso* comes immediately after Enrique gives the Condestable a position at court instead of granting the nobleman the favor he had actually petitioned for, Blanca’s hand in marriage. Díez Borque interprets the recurring appearance on the comedia stage of sovereigns who grant public posts, royal favors, and even large sums of money to their subjects as an effort on the part of dramatists to ingratiate the crown with the audience (*Sociología* 183). In Rojas’s play, however, the allusion to a *rey generoso* underscores the difficult situation in which Roberto has placed his king. Not wanting to lose Blanca,

⁸⁵ Fathers negotiate marriage without their daughters’ consent in a number of Rojas’s plays, including *Bandos de Verona*, *Entre bobos*, *La traición*, *Primero es la honra*, and *Cada cual*.

⁸⁶ While moralists argued that “it does not befit a young woman to speak when her mother and father are discussing marriage,” they nonetheless censured parents who failed to consider their daughters’ wishes: “In making this decision, parents should...assume the feelings of their daughter. Then they will make a choice that they would make if they themselves were to marry” (Vives 156-57).

Enrique refuses to give the Condestable what he asks for and instead grants him an unsolicited royal post, thus corrupting the “ley de rey generoso.” He adds to his résumé of false benevolence when he offers Quatrín a monetary gift that will in fact never be paid. The king’s treatment of the Condestable and his servant remind us of another vow that goes unfulfilled due to sneaky behavior, Enrique’s promise to marry Blanca. Just as Quatrín will not receive money from the royal treasurer, neither will Blanca receive the document with the king’s signature due to the actions of her own “treasurer,” who forces her to marry the Condestable, paving the way for the tragedy that ensues.

“este misero objeto”

Vilches posits that Spain’s burgeoning credit economy created multiple sociocultural anxieties, leading many early modern mercantile writers to depict value in their works as a masculine construct in need of safeguarding. Economic treatises of the period “defined various types of noneconomic value, such as the father, the monarch, or the phallus [...] as an active agent that places all other objects, subjects, and signs in a passive position” (231). The mercantile approach to value that Vilches describes is in play throughout *Casarse* in Rojas’s treatment of Blanca. By the end of the first act, the female protagonist becomes a “misero objeto” whose value is dictated by father (Roberto), monarch (Enrique), and “phallus” (Condestable).⁸⁷ The three male characters take part in the commodification that forces Blanca into a passive position and suppresses the self-assertion she exhibits during her opening monologue. Unlike the men vying to

⁸⁷ We can consider the Condestable a “phallus” due to his active involvement in the marriage market. In Lacanian theory, the “phallus” does not refer simply to an organ but to a wider set of meanings conferred upon men: “as long as men have rights in women which women do not have in themselves, the phallus...carried the meaning of the difference between ‘exchanger’ and ‘exchanged’” (G. Rubin 191).

take possession of her, Blanca engages in minimal commercial discourse, and her use of such terminology connotes only resignation and powerlessness. For instance, her concern that Enrique's accession to the throne will cause him break his marriage promise leads her to value death over a life of sadness: "si he de feriar a precio / de un olvido dolor tanto...más constante precio...una apresurada muerte, / que una dilatada vida" (vv. 429-38). Similarly, when she learns that Enrique has married another woman, she reproaches the king's "trading" (*trocar*) away her "gift" (*fineza*) of love: "¿Por seis años de finezas / un breve Imperio trocaste?" (vv. 959-60). Her venture into the play's poetics of money serves primarily as an emotional outlet and does nothing to bring her closer to Enrique.

Catherine Belsey has asserted that early modern theater granted women a voice only to acquiesce to male authority and prohibited them from speaking in protest or asserting personal will (180-81). The critic's affirmations regarding speech and gender relations on stage echo Monique Wittig's views on language and subjectivity. Just as Jonathan Miller considers the encounter of one's own face in the mirror an act that generates an "otherwise invisible self" and leads to self-consciousness, so, too, does Wittig describe the use of language as a "supreme act of subjectivity" that creates an "I" and brings it into awareness (80). The male gaze in the aforementioned Venus paintings takes away the mirror's capacity to create self-awareness; likewise, the male appropriation of language to reify and maintain gender constructs works toward depriving women of a subject position (80-81). Blanca's use of commercial discourse does not have tangible value in the play's economics of marriage because such language in fact objectifies her and thus only effects change when a man engages in it.

Despite Blanca's early attempts at self-assertion, her words ultimately hold no value in the play's economics of marriage. She tries to manipulate Enrique to marry her at the play's outset and similarly begins her final monologue in the first act by cursing the new king and wishing him misfortune. In both instances her speech seeks to affirm her will and generate real change. By the end of the act, however, she agrees to marry the Condestable "a fuerza de...obediencia" (v. 1007) and takes back her curse, invalidating the potential power she wishes to invoke through her speech. Her subsequent reiteration of the personal "I" does not represent an affirmation of subjectivity but one of surrender:

¿Quién...tiene [la culpa]? Yo. Pues basten
celosas intenciones,
y atropelladas lealtades.
¿Qué hare yo para el castigo,
que debo a mi misma sangre?
¿Cómo me daré yo muerte,
pues de tan viles ultrajes
yo solo tengo la culpa?
¿Cómo podré castigarme
yo misma? (vv. 996-1005; emphasis added)

The daughter's acquiescence signals the supersession of Blanca the subject, who tries to impose her will on Enrique, by Blanca the "misero objeto" that becomes a valued commodity in a male power struggle. The protagonist succumbs to a life of unhappiness as punishment for trying to be more than a passive object of male desire: "por mi enojo he de casarme, / para vivir desdichada, / para castigar mis males" (vv. 1015-18).

Blanca's acceptance of marriage as a means of death ("¿qué mayor muerte quiero[?]," v. 1009) highlights the extent to which Roberto's failures as father and *valido* have perverted the marital exchange. As Mullin points out, the first act sets the scene, develops conflict, and ends in marriage: it represents an entire *comedia* in and of itself

(8).⁸⁸ Often concluding with nuptials, early modern Spanish drama tends to portray marriage as a quintessentially happy ending and rarely delves into the inner workings of married life (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 85). Wife-murder plays diverge from the exposition-conflict-marriage structure and present a much darker vision of matrimony, suggesting that the marital exchange does not restore order to the degree that light comedias often imply (Mullin 8). In the case of *Casarse*, Blanca's wedding does not diffuse conflict or promote social alliance. Instead, Roberto's machinations create distrust and jealousy, and the resultant conflict between king and nobleman indicates a wider rift between public and private spheres that threatens social stability.

The ensuing act demonstrates the extent to which marriage has stopped promoting peace and has become a conduit of disorder. The act opens during Blanca and the Condestable's wedding night, the moment that theoretically seals the transfer of "ownership" from father to husband. The consummation of the marital union has not yet taken place, however. Instead, Enrique has secretly ventured into the newlywed's room, effectively putting Blanca, Roberto, and the Condestable's honor at risk. The king is not to blame for interloping, as Blanca's marriage has taken place "sin pedir al Rey licencia" (v. 1067).⁸⁹ If ignorance of Blanca's wedding excuses Enrique's trespassing, returning to his beloved's room *after* finding out she has married the Condestable is not as easily justified. The monarch goes back to Roberto's house on the grounds that he has to punish

⁸⁸ Metatheatrical references to marriage in the comedia spoke to the frequency with which matrimony punctuated many an early modern Spanish plot:

Abril: Aquí acabó esta comedia.
¿Qué hemos de hacer, doña Laura?

Laura: Casarnos, como acostumbran
en todas las que se acaban. (*A lo que obliga el ser rey*, vv. 2435-38)

⁸⁹ Custom dictated that a proposed marriage be communicated to a high-ranking noble who could affirm that the betrothed had the same social rank and could thus marry (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 287).

the family for carrying out a wedding without his permission. The king's excuse represents not a desire to uphold the law but an abuse of power and a refusal to desist in his pursuit of Blanca. Dramatists commonly depicted kings falling in love and feeling jealousy; however, fictional sovereigns rarely used their royal prerogatives for amorous ends and almost always conquered their romantic inclinations (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 75, 154-55). By contrast, Enrique's repeated nocturnal forays into Blanca's room give evidence of an imprudent monarch acting in a manner unworthy of a king. Blanca begs Enrique to control himself lest their love become public and leave the Condestable in a difficult position. The king persists, proving that he will not adhere to the institutions his crown should force him to uphold (Mullin 86).

The king's behavior has important ramifications for the play's commercial overtones. The propensity of early modern mercantile writers to gender value as masculine also involved associating value with material money (i.e., coinage). Writers turned to society's preoccupation with honor in defining *valor* as a term that referred to both material value (worth) and (masculine) "ánimo, y aliento" (*Autoridades*; Vilches 217, 236). Concurrent with a masculine conception of tangible value, credit or "feigned money" gained a connotation as effeminate and indulgent (Vilches 232, 249). Coins, theoretically backed by gold and ratified by the king's seal, were privileged over credit money, whose relation to value remained indirect, confusing, and suspect (7). Moralists and mercantile commentaries on the kingdom's financial situation depicted the use of credit as catering to ostentation and sumptuary excess; that is, as effeminate (248-49).⁹⁰

⁹⁰ In the early modern period, the term "effeminate" referred to self-indulgence and voluptuousness and thus to 'womanish' behavior (Garber 27).

Credit became an enemy of virtue, a “social disease” that rendered the citizen incapable of sustaining the republic with *valor*, both literal and metaphorical (232, 249).

Rojas’s characterization of Enrique in *Casarse* makes use of the binary gendering of value and credit to paint a picture of an effeminate ruler. The king participates in a type of credit transaction with Blanca when he hands her the paper with his signature, and the eventual misuse of the document becomes both an indictment of the monarch’s imprudence and a dramatization of the tensions that the seemingly uncontrollable nature of credit have provoked. The king’s subsequent actions affirm the effeminate character that his association with credit suggests. Enrique’s failure to confront Roberto about the unauthorized use of the document essentially forces the king into a tenuous situation and grants undue power to his *privado*; as Quevedo affirms regarding the limits of the *valido*’s authority, “ha de usar de su privanza de manera que muestre que no tiene fuerza más de para inclinar al rey y no para forzarle” (*Discurso* 1411). Moreover, Enrique recognizes that he acts in a manner unbecoming of a king (“No quisiera faltar a mi grandeza,” v. 2569) when he hides in Roberto’s house, first from Rosaura and later from the Condestable.⁹¹ Enrique’s fear, weakness, and uncontrolled amorous desire all point to an effeminate ruler who lacks *valor*, or masculine zeal. Furthermore, the king’s inability to secure possession of the play’s most highly valued “commodity,” Blanca, also suggests that the monarch, like the credit economy with which he is associated via the signed document, lacks *valor* in the sense of material worth. Given the monetary connotations of Blanca’s name, the depiction of a king unable to assert masculinity and contain a *Blanca* resonates with the policies of Philip IV, a monarch who proved similarly beholden to the decisions of his *privado* and equally incapable of controlling the value of *blancas*.

⁹¹ “De los vasallos / nunca se esconden los reyes” (*A lo que obliga el ser rey*, vv. 674-75).

“no te hablo como padre, como amigo” (v. 2439)

The final act refocuses our attention on the tensions that the conflicted father-daughter relationship has created. The tragic outcome of Roberto’s mismanagement of the marital exchange becomes a tangible reality for the audience when Blanca appears “con la daga desnuda, destrenzados los cabellos, sueltas las basquiñas” (p. 290). Her entrance on stage parallels Roberto and the Condestable’s appearance at the start of the previous act, “medio desnudos...con las espadas desnudas” (p. 247). Yet unlike her father and husband, who rush on stage with swords drawn to defend their personal honor, Blanca enters as a victim holding the dagger that has nearly taken her life. Her conversation with Roberto reveals that she and her husband have finally consummated their marriage and that her experience of conjugal intimacy was far from romantic: “admito el lecho, / y entre esperanzas de favor divinas, / me fue él de holanda, tálamo de espinas” (vv. 2346-48). The resistance, suffering, and resignation depicted in Blanca’s words would seem more appropriate in a narration of rape than a recounting of conjugal sex.⁹² The juxtaposition of thorns and *holanda*, a fine cloth used to make shirts “para le gente principal y rica” (*Autoridades*), reincorporates the use of mercantile terminology to depict marriage and reminds the audience of Blanca’s mistreatment as a (social) commodity. The violence enacted on the nuptial bed also underscores how Roberto’s imprudence has compromised the social correlates of the exogamous exchange. The marital union degrades to such a degree that the Condestable tries to kill Blanca after they

⁹² Blanca’s description of the nuptial bed is echoed by Isabel in *Cada cual* (“como amante resisto, / el lecho en que descansáis / es la palestra en que lidio,” vv. 332-34) and Leonor in *Traición* (“Fatigada al fin al ruego / di a mis resistencias fin [...] fue para mí de espinas / el tálamo de jazmín,” vv. 1327-38). Like Blanca, Leonor also speaks of the violent nature of the wedding night: “por esta flor de mi honor / rompió el cerrado jardín” (vv. 1353-54).

have sex. Conjugal union does not lead to procreation but to attempted murder, further nullifying the capacity of marriage to secure peaceful alliance and social propagation.

Following the violent encounter with her husband, Blanca flees to Roberto's room hoping that her father will protect her, but to no avail. The dramatist latently brings Roberto's role as *valido* into the audience's consciousness in Blanca's repeated use of the words *consejo*, *aconsejar*, and *consulta*.⁹³ Like his earlier indiscretion in dealing with Enrique's marriage and accession to the throne, Roberto once again proves his inability to be a wise, unbiased counselor.⁹⁴ He refuses to hide Blanca in his room and orders her to accept her fate, even if it means dying for a transgression (being unfaithful to her husband) she has not committed: "puesto que en tu honor no estás culpada, / busca el suplicio de su espada [...] La que es noble...la vida ha de temer, y no la muerte" (vv. 2449-64). He tries to reassure Blanca by stating that he speaks "no...como padre" but "como amigo" (v. 2439), yet his attempts at consolation prove hollow and detrimental. The daughter does not need a friend but a father, a man responsible for protecting her life and honor. Roberto, however, wishes he were not involved with his daughter's conflict ("pluguiera, / que tanto de tus males no entendiera," vv. 2223-24) and looks more to *el qué dirán* ("¿Y el vulgo no dirá...que tuviste delito, pues huiste?," vv. 2466-67) than to Blanca's well-being. Moralistic treatises of the period that enjoin wives to meekly suffer spousal abuse and "keep domestic problems within the walls and threshold of the house so that they will not be spread about" would seemingly support the father's actions

⁹³ "vengo a tomar consejo" (v. 2213); "a tu consejo en mi desdicha apelo" (v. 2222); "mi honor has de curar con tu consejo" (v. 1254); "Veamos qué me aconseja tu cuidado" (v. 2430); "Ahora tu consulta" (v. 2409).

⁹⁴ Quevedo speaks of the importance of the *privado*'s impartiality: "quien del propio interés / se desnuda, a nada atiende / de gusto; sólo pretende / a la virtud" (*Privado* vv. 161-64).

(Vives 204).⁹⁵ Nonetheless, it is ultimately Roberto's irresponsible handling of Enrique and Blanca's respective betrothals yields "tres cuidados, tres sospechas" (vv. 2647-48) in the contentious romantic triangle between Blanca, Enrique, and the Condestable.

Roberto's dual role as Blanca's "treasurer" and Enrique's *valido* make him a bridge between private and public spheres. His failure to secure stability in his own home resonates onto a larger social plane in the Condestable's rivalry with Enrique and subsequent oscillation between justice and vengeance. The husband knows he must tread lightly: unjustly blaming the king for threatening a vassal's conjugal honor could border on treachery, while punishing his wife renders a private matter fodder for public consumption and threatens his reputation. Prudence calls for patient deliberation, but social status demands immediate retribution. The complexity of the situation leaves the Condestable mired in indecision:

cuando a un tiempo me cercan
desengaños al indicio,
y a mis dudas evidencias,
disimularlas es yerro,
reprimirlas imprudencia,
no castigarlas, delito,
atropellarlas, vileza,
contenerlas, es oprobio,
no buscarlas, negligencia,
recatarlas es rigor,
apresurarlas violencia. (vv. 1786-96)

At the heart of the Condestable's predicament lies the fact that his rival is the king. If the person suspected of transgressing the law is responsible for upholding justice, to whom can a suspicious husband appeal?

⁹⁵ Vives advises wives to heed the afterlife, echoing Roberto's warning that Blanca ought to fear life more than death: "if through his proclivity to vice or lack of control he beats you, consider that you are being corrected by God, and that this is happening to you because of some of your sins, which are expiated in this way. Blessed are you if by a minor hardship in this life you can redeem great torment in the next" (204).

The Condestable responds by taking justice into his own hands. His subsequent investigation into what he considers an adulterous relationship between his wife and his king yields two “witnesses,” the false partition in Roberto’s house, and Blanca’s letter to Enrique (“papel, fiero testigo / en la causa de mi honor,” vv. 2937-38).⁹⁶ The husband’s distressed response, “¡Oh, mal donde ley no cabe!” (v. 2895), and his repeated use of the word *vengeance*, uttered seven times in a span of less than thirty lines, emphasize the impossibility of appealing to public justice.⁹⁷ Even Quatrín’s complaint that he needs to “proveer al Consejo / de la Cámara, en razón / de un miedo, una petición” (vv. 2927-29) after the Condestable tears Blanca’s letter from his hands does not constitute merely an example of the *gracioso*’s stereotypical cowardice. The scatological context in which the servant deploys these multiple forensic terms further degrades the image of public justice in the play and foreshadows the extent to which law will be discarded like refuse and give way to vengeance.⁹⁸ The *Partidas* stipulated that a man who caught his wife in an adulterous act could not harm the woman but *could* kill her lover, unless the latter was the husband’s lord, in which case the matter had to be brought before a competent judge (VII.XVII.xiii).⁹⁹ What happens when the alleged lover represents the kingdom’s maximum legal authority? Unable to appeal to public law, the Condestable opts to kill his

⁹⁶ Juan, the beleaguered husband in *La traición*, takes a similar approach to suspicions of infidelity: “no he de dejar / nada a la duda, y es necio / quien castiga ofensas / sin averiguar los yerros” (vv. 2325-28). He also becomes a judge of his own cause, and, like the Condestable, he discovers a definitive “witness” in a wall that has allowed his wife and her alleged lover to maintain communication. Unlike the Condestable, however, Juan believes in his wife’s innocence and actually asks her to help him restore their shared honor. The husband’s decision would have likely contradicted audience expectations, not only because of the tragic outcome of a similar situation in *Casarse* but also because of the rather equitable treatment of a wife in a plot that seemed headed in the direction of a conventional wife-murder play.

⁹⁷ “venganza” (vv. 2994, 3003, 3011); “vengara” (v. 3000); “vengarse” (vv. 3015, 3019, 3022).

⁹⁸ The *Autoridades* defines *cámara* as both a legal tribunal and a term for excrement.

⁹⁹ The *Partidas* prescribed public punishment for the adulterous women: “la mujer que hiciese el adulterio, aunque le fuese probado en juicio, debe ser castigada y herida públicamente con azotes” (VII.XVII.xv).

wife even though he has not witnessed an adulterous act. The Condestable's decision to exact revenge against Enrique casts aside public law and its commitment to protect society from violent cycles of personal vendetta. As with the perversion of the marital exchange, a *valido*'s irresponsible handling of duties contributes to devolution of justice.

“Quien se casa por vengarse, / ¡qué de veces se arrepiente!” (vv. 3049-50)

Blanca's letter to Enrique not only spurs the Condestable to vengeance, it also reincorporates commercial discourse into the play and seals the protagonist's demise. After ascertaining that the intercepted letter proves the existence of amorous feelings between Blanca and Enrique, the Condestable orders Quatrín to take the note to the king, promising the servant a suit if he delivers the missive quickly. The nobleman's offer at once channels and perverts the literary commonplace of a man bribing a servant to take letters or gifts to his beloved and bring back the lady's response and/or a token of her affection.¹⁰⁰ While the practice of “buying” access to the beloved caters to the servant's stereotypical avarice, it also reinforces the notion of the martial exchange as a commercial transaction and the concomitant status of women as commodities. Rather than secure a woman's affection, however, the Condestable's offer to Quatrín attempts to expedite his wife's demise. Blanca tries to subvert the terms of the marital exchange when she uses marriage as a way to make Enrique jealous, but in the end her plan fails after she becomes the Condestable's personal weapon against the king. Given that he cannot physically harm Enrique, the nobleman exacts revenge by “buying” the monarch's

¹⁰⁰ Rojas explores this literary convention in several works. In *Primero es la honra*, Juan gives his beloved's maid a jewel to coax her into bringing her mistress a note. In *Cada cual*, the *gracioso*, Beltrán considers himself an “alcahuete” (v. 1937) after accepting money to facilitate entry into his master's house for a man wishing to woo one of the women living there: “quiero poner a este lado / la obligación de criado: / pesada es la obligación, / pero es más pesado el oro” (vv. 1926-29).

presence at Roberto's home to witness Blanca's death. The "recado de escribir" (330) found alongside Blanca's corpse at play's end references both the document with the king's signature, which sets the female protagonist in circulation as a commodity, as well as the letter that ensures Enrique's presence when the Condestable kills his wife, definitively nullifying her social value.

Mullin describes Blanca as a "seat of consciousness" in the play and thus a departure from the prototypical comedia female character (120). Further scholarship has found evidence of protofeminist attitudes in Rojas's corpus and reads Blanca a strong, active heroine unique among female protagonists of Spanish honor plays. Américo Castro, one of the first to consider Rojas's treatment of his female characters radical, posited that the theme of freedom to choose (*libertad de amar*) appealed to the dramatist and led him to grant more weight to female will than to the strictures of a rigorous honor code (185, 195, 197). Similarly, Virtudes Serrano García posits that Rojas did not follow in the footsteps of his fellow playwrights who glossed over the characterization of female characters (496). She cites Blanca as a prime example of Rojas's tendency to make his heroines strong, active women and maintains that all of the action in *Casarse* revolves around Blanca, whose refusal to bear the cross of guilt to protect her husband's honor renders her "el primer grito de rebeldía por la mujer" (507, 509). Raymond MacCurdy echoes Castro's assertion that Rojas continually returned to the theme of freedom to choose with regard to romantic relationships, and both MacCurdy and Serrano García explicitly use the term "feminism" in describing Rojas's dramaturgy (MacCurdy, Introduction xxvi; Serrano García 507). More tempered in her analysis, McKendrick states that Rojas was not a feminist in the modern sense of the term but instead believed,

along with his fellow dramatists, that a woman naturally belonged at a man's side (*Theatre* 171). Nonetheless, McKendrick acknowledges that Rojas's treatment of female characters varied and that the sense of gender equality put forth in plays such as *Cada cual* has left a lasting impression of Rojas as a dramatist "unusually receptive to the female point of view" (171-72). More recently, Odile Cisneros has returned to the topic of Rojas's characterization of female characters and finds evidence of feminist tendencies in her analysis of several plays. She concludes that although Rojas did not transgress the limits of dramatic conventions of his day, his heroines are nonetheless feminists to the extent that they defend their freedom to choose, reject forced marriages, and defend their own honor in place of their husbands or fathers.

While the foregoing scholars have made significant contributions to the study of Rojas's corpus, I submit that Blanca's commodification and progressive silencing throughout *Casarse* calls for a different approach to the dramatist's treatment of his female characters. I agree with critics, such as Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas and María Teresa Julio, who reject notions of feminism in Rojas's plays and approach his corpus from a more pragmatic perspective. Rodríguez-Puértolas suggests that Rojas's often unorthodox treatment of conventional dramatic situations catered to popular taste without violating predominant social norms because his heroines ultimately submitted to what essentially amounted to an orthodox conception of honor (347, 355). Julio acknowledges that Rojas's heroines claim to be men's equals, take the initiative in matters of love, and rebel against unwanted marriages; nonetheless, she refuses to consider this evidence of protofeminist attitudes (316). Calling Rojas a feminist amounts to a "flagrant anachronism" that implies the kind of modern worldview that simply did not exist in

seventeenth-century Spain (322). Like Rodríguez-Puértolas, Julio underscores the fact that Rojas's heroines invariably reintegrate themselves into or are definitively eliminated from the society against which they rebel (324). The playwright created female characters who tried to appropriate values normally associated with men because such unconventional women drew audiences to the theater, not because he necessarily supported gender equality. Female characters claiming equality may have appealed to women in the *cazuela*, but ultimately only the characters, not Rojas, defend such values, and to think otherwise misinterprets the sociocultural reality of early modern Spain.

Blanca's marriage proposal to Enrique and her insistence on the couple's equality gives intimations of an assertive woman unconstrained by gender expectations. Furthermore, her decision to marry for vengeance under the guise of filial obedience seems a bold act of rebellion against the male power structure that tries to force her will. In the end, however, Blanca is rendered silent and powerless. She parallels many of Shakespeare's disobedient daughters, who, as Tallen Lenker has identified, often have their wishes granted only to then engage in action that from a strictly feminist perspective results in "regressive" and conventional enclosure (Tallent Lenker 71). Blanca speaks directly to Enrique in the first act, but by the end of the play she must use intermediaries to get a note to the king. The Condestable, in turn, literally and figuratively takes ownership of his wife's words when he intercepts the letter and uses it as his personal instrument of revenge against king and wife.

Fischer's work on early modern English drama suggests that language itself became a type of exchange commodity to the extent that words uttered on stage took on value in the profit or esteem they elicited (17, 21). Analogously, Laura Bass's study of

Lope's *La dama boba* notes that the female protagonist's manipulation of linguistic exchange proves profitable because it allows her to wrest control from the men trying to force her into an unwanted marriage ("Economics" 783-84). Unlike Lope's heroine, Blanca cannot profit from her language. As mentioned, the reasons for her silencing lie in her objectification. Wittig identifies language as the definitive, permanent social contract that in a sense assures human beings of their very humanity because it allows them to engage in social interaction (34). Her analysis of Lévi-Strauss's kinship theory posits that the structuralist description of the exchange of women essentially alludes to the social contract as an exclusively male domain (43). Women's status as commodities in a male-driven system of exchange denies them active participation in the social contract. Women are essentially denied not only the opportunity to benefit from language but also the very subjectivity that goes along with the capacity to engage in linguistic exchange. Indeed, the denigration of women's right to write that comes through in early modern moralist and literary texts perhaps indicates an underlying male fear of women's attempts to break into the social contract via language and thus become active participants in marital exchange.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, Blanca's words bring her no personal profit and are ultimately appropriated by her husband, who commodifies and removes her from the social contract. Her verbal exchanges with father, king, and husband invariably prove unfruitful.

Blanca's second letter to Enrique signals the definitive smothering of her voice and will. The second missive does not contain her own words, for the Condestable orders her to copy what he has already written. She can theoretically write whatever she wants,

¹⁰¹ Vives declares that a wife "should neither send nor receive letters without the knowledge of her husband" (231). On stage, fathers warn against the dangers of female writing: "No es prudente padre aquel / que su hija enseña a que escriba [...] Bien puede tener un padre... cerrada la puerta / y las ventanas clavar. / Pero cuando escribir sabe, / en vano guarda a su hija, / por más que eche reja o llave, / que en fin, ¿por qué redendija / un papel sutil no cabe?" (*Quien no cae*, vv. 610-24).

yet she decides that “es fuerza obedecerle” (v. 3132) and succumbs to her husband’s wishes. The Condestable’s request for a second letter aims to situate Blanca near the false partition, which henceforth becomes “su propia sepultura” (v. 3168). The husband’s discovery of the secret wall gives him command of a space that had represented a source of vexation (“me ha de volver loco / esta quinta,” vv. 2988-89) while under Blanca’s manipulation. The false partition becomes synonymous with Blanca’s ability to speak from a place of willful self-assertion. When she has exclusive access to it, she can communicate personally with Enrique and withhold information from her father: “tengo una salida / con que no podrá obrar mi esposo [...] No te importa saber cómo, o por dónde” (vv. 2324-26). Her loss of control over that space stifles her voice and reduces her communication to the words that the Condestable provides her. As symbolic of her attempts to have an active role in the economics of marriage, the wall becomes the instrument of her own demise. Blanca is not the seat of consciousness some critics have made her out to be. Her speech ultimately indicates only passive acquiescence (“voy a obedecerte,” v. 3152) and remorse for an action that never realizes its subversive potential: “Quien se casa por vengarse, / ¡qué de veces se arrepiente!” (vv. 3049-50).

If the Condestable’s bloody vengeance signals rupture in the private sphere, Enrique’s reaction to Blanca’s death points to instability on a grander scale. The king suspects that the Condestable has committed murder, but his own complicity in Blanca’s demise forces him to dissimulate and not take immediate action. The monarch’s compromised position prohibits him from being the prototypical *deus ex machina* that appears at play’s end to restore order through a public display of royal justice. The king’s function in early modern Spanish theater as maximum representation of justice did not

accommodate characterizations of vengeful monarchs (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 166). Enrique, however, bypasses public justice and opts for vengeance (“el tiempo dará la ocasión / de vengarla y de vengarme,” vv. 3289-90), a decision as incompatible with comedia conventions as with prevailing political thought: “los que tienen autoridad en la república, y son vengativos: que hipócritas, de la justicia de Dios hacen venganza y afrenta y arma ofensiva” (Quevedo, *Política* 539). The regression of justice to vengeance operates at both the private (Condestable) and public (Enrique) arenas, signaling a rift between the two spheres that the play’s end leaves unresolved.

Enrique’s final lines, “¡Oh, lo que cuesta / el casarse por vengarse!” (vv. 3293-94), recalls Blanca’s final lament and reminds us that behind the play’s tragic ending stands a father whose mishandling of his private and public duties brings about his daughter’s death and compromises his king’s ability to uphold the law. Like Clotaldo in *La vida es sueño*, whose own social and paternal failures are outlined in the second half of this chapter, Roberto’s missteps in his private life intertwine with his imprudent decisions as favored minister and place both family and empire at risk. Roberto’s punishment, like his transgression, is twofold: he loses his daughter, and the kingdom he serves as *privado* loses its sense of justice at the very highest level. The consequences of Roberto’s behavior span private and public spheres and reiterate the potential of the father-daughter relationship to link the personal with the social. Roberto proves irresponsible in the treatment of his daughter, and the unresolved tensions that remain at play’s end serve as a metaphor for the similarly unanswered questions surrounding the empire’s economy and the inability of Olivares to appropriately handle Spain’s *blancas*.

2.2 “una dama / que padre no ha conocido:” Unstable Identity, Unstable State in Calderón’s *La vida es sueño*

[H]e venido a sospechar que vos no sois varón, como vuestro traje lo muestra, sino mujer, y tan bien nacida como vuestra hermosura publica, y quizá tan desdichada como lo da a entender la mudanza del traje, pues jamás tales mudanzas son por bien de quien las hace.

—Miguel de Cervantes, “Las dos doncellas” (457)

Quien se enfrena es valeroso. / Solo es sabio quien se vence. / No es ser rey ser dueño de hombres. / Saber ser rey es ponerse ... entre aquellos que han sabido / heroicamente vencerse, / porque es más saber templar / el poder que no tenelle.

—Luis Vélez de Guevara, *A lo que obliga el ser rey* (vv. 429-38)

Liviandad had multiple definitions in the early modern period. The term could describe a poorly considered action (“hecho inconsiderado”) or more generally refer to imprudence, poor judgment, or unrestrained appetite (*incontinencia*) (Covarrubias 526; *Autoridades*). In a similar vein, the adjective *liviano* signified inconstancy, mutability (“inconstante, y que fácilmente se muda,” *Autoridades*), and dishonesty. Given this diversity of signification, when a character in a Spanish comedia declares that the woman whose honor he will help restore should stop dressing like a man “por que no parezca / liviandad” (vv. 1187-88), one should take into account all possible connotations.¹⁰² The woman, Rosaura, must demonstrate more prudence, as her transvestism could lead others to believe her labile, unchaste, and unable to control her desire. Furthermore, her male clothing would seem indicative of a mutable identity and thus a threat to a society still beholden to a belief in a one-to-one correspondence between the internal and the external. For his part, the man cautioning against *liviandad*, Clotaldo, has demonstrated poor judgment of his own and has been dishonest in his treatment of Rosaura. If she has manipulated gender via her transvestism, so, too, does his refusal to admit that he is Rosaura’s father render him culpable of dissimulating social identity. Furthermore,

¹⁰² Textual citations are from José María Ruano de la Haza’s edition of *La vida es sueño*.

Clotaldo's role as the king's *privado* identifies him as a bridge between private and public spheres and exacerbates the impact of his inconstancy: if a father endangers his family's honor in his refusal to acknowledge his paternity, what can we say of the stability of a kingdom whose monarch places his utmost trust in such a man?

Mutable identities, imprudence, dishonesty, unrestrained appetite: the father-daughter relationship in Calderón's *La vida es sueño* functions as the locus of a conflict whose resolution touches upon gender roles, the individual's responsibility to society, and kingship. Critical scholarship has long argued that the dramatist inextricably interweaves his play's primary and secondary plots in Rosaura's interactions with the play's protagonist, the Polish prince, Segismundo. The present analysis proposes that Calderón's depiction of a conflicted father-daughter relationship binds the play's principal storylines and creates parallel identity crises in the play's male and female protagonists. As in *Casarse*, the link between private and public spheres implicit in the filial plot is personified in a character who struggles to fulfill his duties as father and *valido*. Clotaldo's wavering between protecting his daughter and remaining loyal to his social superiors symbolizes the individual's grappling with social norms during times of political and social unrest. In the end, social order depends on Clotaldo's ability to ensure that Rosaura and Segismundo can solidify an identity "que no parezca / liviandad."

The opening scene establishes the play's focus on unstable identity when a woman appears on stage dressed in men's clothing. The unidentified character describes herself in both feminine ("ciega y desesperada," v. 13) and masculine ("quejoso," v. 263) terms, presenting the audience a male-female amalgam consonant with the notion of a *mujer liviana*, a woman of mutable identity. She laments the loss of her horse, which has

run away and left her to wander in the wilderness. The reference to an uncontrolled steed lends additional connotations to the scene's treatment of *liviandad*. The literary tradition of the horse as symbol of carnal appetite suggests that the woman's inability to rein in her passion has led her astray. The gender trouble builds as the woman arrives at a tower, a phallic symbol from the medieval literary tradition and the space where gallant knights rescued captive maidens to prove their might. Rather than assert male potency, however, the tower conceals the prince in a forced enclosure prevailing social conventions would deem more appropriate for a daughter than for a son. A locus of male power thus transforms into the site where contained masculinity and female *liviandad* converge.

Critical scholarship has identified Rosaura and Segismundo's encounter in the first scene as fundamental to the play's dramatic structure and thematic development. Albert Sloman, Bruce Wardropper, and William Whitby were among the first to emphasize the importance of the play's secondary plot by highlighting Rosaura's arrival at Segismundo's tower as the first step in the prince's journey from "natural" to moral man. The two characters' fortunes converge in the opening scene and intertwine throughout; by play's end, the heroine becomes both means and proof of the hero's conversion as Segismundo learns to restrain his animalistic desire and fights to restore Rosaura's honor (Sloman, "Structure" 297; Whitby 17; Wardropper 240). Ann Wiltrout, though not focusing on the opening scene, also considers Rosaura the principal catalyst in Segismundo's self-realization and underscores the secondary plot's significance in ensuring that both characters reclaim their rightful social positions (103, 112). Taken together, the foregoing analyses of the Rosaura-Segismundo relationship echo Ángel

Valbuena Briones's argument that the opposition between reason and instinct constitutes the central conflict of the Calderonian corpus ("Simbolismo" 61, 66).

While I agree with critics who argue for Rosaura's centrality in *Vida*, I approach the topic from an additional perspective. Wardropper described Segismundo's tower as an emblem of death, a reading consonant with the scholar's proposal that Calderón creates parallels between principal and secondary plots as part of an overarching exploration of the nature of life (240-41). According to this view, Rosaura becomes invaluable to the plot because Segismundo recognizes the difference between a finite, carnal life view and a more "heroic" ethos based on obedience to eternal moral laws, principally via his interactions with her (242). Whitby also interprets the tower according to his particular reading of Rosaura's role in the play's dénouement. Since the heroine's continual presence in Segismundo's life "awakens" in the prince a consciousness of the fleeting nature of worldly pleasure and the need to act virtuously, the tower serves as a metaphor for the darkness in which the prince lives until his relationship with Rosaura leads him toward enlightenment (17, 20). Both are compelling arguments, but they approach Segismundo and Rosaura's initial encounter from the perspective of the dénouement, that is, they view the tower as a space from which the prince emerges as a "new" man. In the opening scene, however, the tower represents nothing more than the site where a cross-dressed woman finds a man "en el traje de fiera" (v. 96). Much as the woman's male attire has the potential to symbolize unchasteness, so too does the man's bestial semblance suggest a lack of "masculine" temperance and virtue. The tower thus constitutes a locus of *liviandad*. The site may take on additional meaning as the plot

unfolds, but in the initial scene it retains strong phallic overtones and underscores the role of gender constructs in the confluence of the play's two plots.

Calderón's first clue regarding the unknown woman's identity (we do not know her as Rosaura until the second act) further complicates the identification of her gender and situates Clotaldo as a pivotal character in the juxtaposition of primary and secondary plots. When Segismundo inquires about the person outside his prison, Rosaura's servant, Clarín, urges his mistress to identify as Clotaldo:

Segismundo: ¿Quién mis voces ha escuchado?
¿Es Clotaldo?

Clarín: Di que sí. (vv. 175-76)

Soon thereafter Clotaldo inadvertently stops Rosaura before she reveals her identity to Segismundo. The second interruption further conflates the two through verbal contiguity:

Rosaura: Yo soy...

Clotaldo: Guardas desta torre (v. 277)

The dramatist thereby tacitly links the woman's mysterious identity to Clotaldo. Notably, the nobleman dons a mask the first time he appears on stage, creating a curious juxtaposition of identifying features. The audience has seen the woman's face but does not know her name; conversely, Clotaldo's name has been spoken but his face remains hidden when the two meet (neither stage directions nor dialogue indicate that Clotaldo unmask while talking to Rosaura). While the ensuing dialogue confirms that the two are in fact related, at this juncture the complementarity of the two figures merely suggests that the woman's transvestism identifies her with, or even *as* the masked man.

The appearance of yet another phallic symbol reveals a filial relationship and brings the tacit association of Clotaldo and Rosaura to a head. In the medieval chivalric

romance (*novela de caballería*) tradition that remained a part of the cultural consciousness during the seventeenth-century, a sword often identified a knight and served as an emblem of his valorous deeds.¹⁰³ In the tale of Amadís de Gaula, the Spanish knight *par excellence*, a sword that had belonged to Amadís's father, King Perión, reveals the hero's identity.¹⁰⁴ A sword also reveals paternal identity in *Sueño*, though the circumstances differ in notable ways. Perión forgets his blade when he takes leave of his beloved Helisena, who uses the weapon as proof of her future son's paternity. In Calderón's play, a nobleman also leaves a sword as a means of identification:

Esta espada es la que yo
dejé a la hermosa Violante,
por señas que, el que ceñida
la trajera, había de hallarme
amoroso como hijo,
y piadoso como padre. (vv. 399-404)

Yet unlike Perión, who vows to return and marry Helisena, Clotaldo has seduced and abandoned Violante:

mi madre, persuadida
a finezas amorosas,
fue, como ninguna, bella,
y fue infeliz como todas.
Aquella necia disculpa
de fe y palabra de esposa
la alcanza tanto que, aún hoy,
el pensamiento la cobra,
habiendo sido un tirano
tan Eneas de su honra
que la dejó hasta la espada. (vv. 2752-62)

¹⁰³ In Calderón's *La dama duende* (1629), the male protagonist, Manuel, refers to himself as the "Caballero de la Dama Duende" and leaves his beloved a missive written in the archaic style of the book of chivalry (94). The playwright's parodic treatment of chivalric language assumes basic knowledge of the genre on the part of his audience.

¹⁰⁴ *Amadís de Gaula*, Ch. 1 (Rodríguez de Montalvo 237-48).

Clotaldo's sword, we see, lies more in line with Aeneas's betrayal of Dido than with Perión's hopeful leave of Helisena. The swords' differing contexts account for the ways in which each work deploys traits traditionally associated with the weapon. *Amadís* upholds the blade's longstanding association with male strength and virility because the valiant protagonist wields it. In *Vida*, on the other hand, a woman holds the weapon as evidence of her father's markedly *unmanly* behavior (seduction and abandonment). Clotaldo's sword does not clarify the possessor's identity; instead, it makes the father think that he has come face to face with his *son*, further propagating gender ambiguity. The blade reifies the previous identification between the anonymous Rosaura and the faceless Clotaldo, ostensibly rendering the daughter the very face of male dishonor. Clotaldo thus stands between Rosaura and Segismundo, and an analysis of the play's treatment of the protagonists' identity must take the nobleman into account.

“es este exterior vestido / enigma” (vv. 967-68)

Rosaura literally and figuratively bears proof of Clotaldo's dishonor, and the mysterious nature of her relationship to the nobleman renders her transvestism a visual representation of the social threat the latter's imprudence creates. So long as Rosaura does not know that Clotaldo is her father she lacks a male guardian who can pay a dowry that would allow her to marry or enter a convent. An illegitimate daughter unable to marry or become a nun would have few, if any, chances of filling anything but a marginal role, like that of a prostitute, in Spanish society. Rosaura's male attire, which sets her outside the confines of the traditional male/female binary, reflects her inability to fit within the bounds of a legitimized social role and identifies her as a threat to patriarchal

order. Pierre Bourdieu interprets a society's propensity to adhere to specific modes of dress as a visible manifestation of acquiescence to social order (95). Accordingly, violations of sartorial practices imply a challenge to normative sociocultural standards. In the case of the female cross-dresser, her nonconformity disrupts society because it threatens the male-driven commerce of women. Female drag blurs the distinction between exchanger and exchanged, disrupting the social commodification of women and, by extension, the very system upon which social order presumably rests (Donnell 31).¹⁰⁵ If society cannot identify a woman as either exchanged or exchanger, she remains in a sense socially illegible; thus Rosaura describes her "exterior vestido" as an "enigma" (vv. 967-68). The illegibility of her male garb reveals the extent to which Clotaldo's abandonment has deprived her of a concrete social identity.

The social implications of the play's father-daughter relationship come to the forefront as Clotaldo grapples with the conflict between his paternal duties and his obligations to the king. The nobleman appears equally inclined to avenge the honor of his "son" and remain loyal to the king, which suggests an appropriate concern for public and private responsibilities. Clotaldo declares that loyalty to his monarch comes before "la vida y...el honor" (v. 437), a decision that on the surface seems consistent with prevailing political views that royal power was on par with divine authority and thus above the personal concerns of the individual. The *valido* proves irresponsible in his handling of private and public duties, however, because he blindly acquiesces to a king, Basilio, whose unjust and immoral actions were unbecoming of a monarch.

¹⁰⁵ In light of these social ramifications, moralists such as Vives condemned transvestism as a practice that created "many perils in human society" (109).

Spanish humanists emphasized morality in kingship throughout the early modern period. Political theorists such as Juan de Mariana and Tovar Valderrama argued that monarchical power was not unlimited and had to be tempered according to divine law and reason (Fox, *Kings* 11; Muñoz Palomares 35-36). Jurists, moralists, and political theorists concurred that the basis of moral kingship lay in honesty and that a king therefore ought not lie or deceive his subjects (Muñoz Palomares 131).¹⁰⁶ Saavedra Fajardo argued that kings may dissimulate to avoid falling prey to betrayal or treason but should never lie to deceive their subjects: “No puede haber engaño que no se componga de la malicia y de la mentira, y ambas son opuestas a la magnanimidad real [...] Solamente puede ser licita la disimulación y astucia cuando ni engañan, ni dejan manchado el crédito del Príncipe” (267-68). According to these criteria, Basilio has violated his role as divine vicar because he has deceived his subjects into believing that their prince died at birth: “Mentir es acción vil de esclavos e indigna del magnánimo corazón de un príncipe que más que todos debe procurar parecerse a Dios, que es la misma verdad” (73). The king’s treatment of Segismundo violates the prince’s natural right to the throne, “el derecho que le dieron / humano fuero y divino” (vv. 770-71).¹⁰⁷

Basilio uses astrology to justify his son’s imprisonment, an action that further violates the precepts of moral kingship. The king’s belief in his power to read the heavens contradicts Augustinian teachings on the limits of astral “signs.” According to St.

¹⁰⁶ The *Partidas* also demanded monarchical honesty: “Menguadas no deben ser las palabras del Rey, y serían tales...cuando se partiese de la verdad, y dijese mentira a sabiendas” (II.IV.iii).

¹⁰⁷ As Ruano de la Haza proposes, the king also proves himself duplicitous and unfair in his treatment of Segismundo when he puts his son through a “test” in the palace that the latter could have never passed (Introduction 58-61). In other words, it would be unfair to expect a man who has been raised outside of society to instinctively know how to conform to social etiquette. Segismundo himself acknowledges that his upbringing did not prepare him for life as a prince: “Mi padre... me hizo / un bruto, una fiera humana [...] sólo bastara / tal género de vivir, tal linaje de crianza, / a hacer fieras mis costumbres” (vv. 3172-84).

Augustine, to whom Calderón often closely adhered, the stars could predict future events but could in no way cause them to occur or otherwise force individual free will (Ruano de la Haza 131n787-91). The prince is therefore justified in accusing his father of being a “Tirano de mi albedrío” (v. 1504). Clotaldo also scolds the king later in the play for violating Segismundo’s free will (“no es Cristiana / determinación decir /que no hay reparo a [la] saña [del hado],” vv. 3115-17), but by that point the *valido* has been so complicit in his lord’s machinations that his reprimand proves more self-condemning than virtuous. Clotaldo’s role as mediator between ruler and subjects demands that he counsel the king against immoral actions for the public good.¹⁰⁸ Instead, he blindly succumbs to “la ley del homenaje” (v. 432) and overlooks Basilio’s unjust treatment of Segismundo in his unwavering desire to remain loyal (Merrick 258). The nobleman’s imprudent balancing of public and private duties leads him to conceal his paternity and accept the possibility of his son’s death in order to uphold unjust decrees.

The complexity of Clotaldo’s divided loyalty grows when he realizes that the stranger at Segismundo’s tower is actually a woman, but his blind sense of loyalty remains unaltered. Rosaura’s insistence that Clotaldo help her prevent Astolfo from marrying Estrella posits the prisoner as the *privado*’s daughter and the dishonor she wishes to avenge as his own (“Mi honor es el agraviado,” v. 978). As when he believed the stranger was his son, however, Clotaldo places loyalty to the hierarchy above his family’s honor despite clear evidence of immoral behavior on the part of a social superior. Rather than address the conflict between his daughter and the Duke of Muscovy with courage and active, masculine resolve, Clotaldo refuses to identify himself as

¹⁰⁸ In his *Discurso*, Quevedo speaks of the *valido*’s responsibility to the kingdom and of the relationship between ruler and ruled: “Ha de temer mucho el privado dar o consentir que se dé mal consejo a su señor, porque quien tal hace, no se diferencia del que echa veneno en la fuente donde todos beben” (1402).

Rosaura's father. He persists in his loyalty to a corrupt public sphere in which a king unjustly imprisons the heir to the throne and a duke dishonors a woman and then attempts to marry another. Significantly, the transgressions of Clotaldo's social superiors echo his own because he has also committed seduction and refuses to publicly admit Rosaura as his daughter. The parallels between *valido* and king reveal dysfunction in both the public and private arenas. As the bridge between the two spheres, Clotaldo's imprudence renders him at once cause and symptom of social disorder.

Rosaura attempts to elicit a confession from Clotaldo in a dialogue rife with double meaning (vv. 889-973). She thanks the nobleman for obtaining a royal pardon that forgives her interaction with Segismundo at the tower and thus spares her life.¹⁰⁹ Her remark, "La vida, señor, me has dado" (v. 898), abounds in irony. On the one hand, the *valido* remained committed to sacrificing the prisoners for the sake of his loyalty to the king, meaning that Basilio's initiative to overlook his own royal decree, not Clotaldo's intercession, ultimately saves Rosaura from death. On the other hand, as Rosaura's father Clotaldo *did* give her biological life, but his refusal to acknowledge his paternity has prevented her from enjoying a legitimate social existence. Rosaura underscores the notion of "giving life" in the specific context of social identity when she declares that she must restore her honor alone: "Confieso que no la tengo, / aunque de ti la recibo; / pero yo, con la venganza / dejaré mi honor tan limpio / que pueda mi vida luego...parecer dádiva tuya" (vv. 912-18). Without a legitimate social identity, she must regain the life that Clotaldo gave her biologically but refuses to defend socially. In a society that had no

¹⁰⁹ When Clotaldo first finds Rosaura, he references the king's decree prohibiting contact with the prince: "el decreto del Rey...manda que no ose nadie / examinar el prodigio / que entre estos peñascos yace" (vv. 299-302). The *valido*'s later lament when he intuits that the stranger is his son reveals that the encounter with Segismundo would cost him his life: "llevarle / al Rey es llevarle...a morir" (vv. 428-30).

legitimate place for a woman unattached to man (as daughter, wife) or God (as nun), Rosaura represents the same “vivo cadáver” (v. 94) that Segismundo identifies himself as in the tower. Much like Gila in Vélez’s *Serrana*, Rosaura must therefore take on the burden of paternal duty and act in her father’s stead. She takes Clotaldo’s sword for a second time and with it the masculine valor and zeal the nobleman proves unwilling to demonstrate. As the first act ends father and daughter symbolically converge once more when Clotaldo complains of being trapped inside a “confuso laberinto” (v. 976), echoing Rosaura’s identical statement in the opening scene (v. 6).

“Es bien que, de una vez, / tome su honor por mi cuenta” (vv. 1194-95)

If Rosaura’s *liviandad* previously propelled her to dress in male attire and seek out her father, Clotaldo’s dishonesty and imprudence (i.e., his own *liviandad*) now pushes his daughter to shed identities a second time. Notable in the play’s second act is the extent to which ebbs and flows in the *valido*’s acceptance of paternal responsibility hasten or further inhibit his daughter’s acquisition of a stable identity. Only after Clotaldo recognizes the dangers of the stranger’s transvestism and agrees to have a hand in restoring her honor does the audience hear Rosaura’s name and see her in feminine dress for the first time. Clotaldo’s initial promise to aid Rosaura proves insufficient, as he remains unwilling to reveal his paternity and does little to deter Astolfo from marrying Estrella. Nonetheless, the father’s gesture of support represents a significant step in the daughter’s journey toward social reintegration because it allows her to pass as Astrea, the nobleman’s niece. Rosaura’s newly affirmed association with a male relative and her use of gender-appropriate dress grant her enough of a socially acceptable identity (“tanto

honor se acrecienta,” v. 1191) to remain in the royal court, where she can obstruct the relationship between her seducer and his cousin.¹¹⁰ Yet the recovery of a feminine identity does not solve her problems: Astolfo seduced her and is therefore legally bound to her, but as long as Clotaldo hides his paternity, the duke will marry Estrella. Should the marriage take place, Rosaura remains dishonored and her father will have once again sacrificed her to blind loyalty: “Clotaldo, / persuadido a que le importa / que se casen y que reinen / Astolfo y Estrella hermosa, / contra mi honor me aconseja” (vv. 2870-76).

Clotaldo’s wavering between paternal and political loyalties inevitably pushes him closer to Astolfo and further from his daughter. Rosaura’s admission into the royal court as Astrea coincides with Basilio’s “experiment,” which also brings Segismundo to the palace and gives the former prisoner a second identity of his own, as prince. As in the opening scene, Clotaldo comes between Segismundo and Rosaura, only this time he risks his life to prevent the prince from attacking his daughter. The nobleman’s apparently selfless act is tinged with selfish motives, for he understands that as “Astrea’s” only male relative in the palace an affront against her constitutes a stain upon his personal honor as well: “mi honor segunda vez a riesgo veo” (v. 1649). Furthermore, Clotaldo’s reaction to Astolfo’s intervention on the *privado*’s behalf against Segismundo’s violent fury nullifies any intimations of Clotaldo’s willingness to actively protect Rosaura. The next time father and daughter meet, Rosaura insists that Clotaldo kill Astolfo in the palace garden.

¹¹⁰ The heroine’s new identity draws on the dramatic trope of the woman who dresses as a page and enters the service of her beloved to prevent him from falling in love with another woman. In this case, the woman enters the service of her own rival as a lady in waiting. Michèle Massaloux proposes that Calderón opts against presenting Rosaura as a man (page) for a second time because an additional masculine identity would further erode the character’s “legibility” (1043-44). The critic’s argument supports my claim that Clotaldo’s initial attempt to help his daughter represents a step toward establishing her identity and making her socially “legible,” as the outward transformation of male to female is a key part of that process.

The *valido* vacillates between private and public duties once again in a dialogue that recalls the characters' earlier discussion of life and death:

Pues, ¿cómo yo ahora, advierte,
teniendo alma agradecida,
a quien me ha dado la vida
le tengo de dar muerte? [...]
viendo que a ti te la he dado,
y que de él la he recibido,
no sé a qué parte acudir,
no sé a qué parte ayudar;
si a ti me obligué con dar,
dél lo estoy con recibir. (vv. 2544-55)

Rosaura reaffirms that her father's refusal to defend her honor or reveal his paternity continues to entrap her in an inescapable state of (social) living death:

De ti recibí la vida,
y tú mismo me dijiste,
cuando la vida me diste,
que la que estaba ofendida
no era vida; luego yo
nada de ti he recibido,
pues muerte, no vida, ha sido
la que tu mano me dio. (vv. 2592-99)

Clotaldo acknowledges the seriousness of Rosaura's situation but nonetheless refuses to kill Astolfo. Instead, he tries to grant his daughter another chance at a social "life" by proposing to provide the means for her to take on yet another identity, that of a nun. The father hails the proposal as a panacea that successfully satisfies his private and public responsibilities: "Con el remedio elegido, / soy con el reino leal, / soy contigo liberal, / con Astolfo agradecido" (vv. 2620-23). As with Clotaldo's earlier proposal that Rosaura pretend to be his niece, however, the solution only provides a means to avoid admitting his paternity. Hence the nobleman's ironic assertion: "quedándose [el asunto] entre los dos, / que no hiciera...más cuando fuera tu padre" (vv. 2625-27). Rosaura

recognizes that her father's newest offer will not restore her honor, and she therefore takes matters into her own hands once more and sets out to kill Astolfo.

While Rosaura criticizes her father for his failings in the private sphere, Segismundo berates Clotaldo for mishandling his public responsibilities as the king's *privado*. The prince may show excessive force and unrestraint in the palace, but contemporary views on kingship would have justified his indignation toward Clotaldo. Early modern political theorists held that subjects were not obliged to obey unjust or immoral royal decrees (Fox, *Kings* 108). Clotaldo, however, has continually accepted Basilio's multiple abuses of power, such as denying the heir his right to the throne and condemning to death anyone who came into contact with the prince. Not by chance does Segismundo, the primary victim of Basilio's deceitful machinations, remind Clotaldo that he was under no obligation to succumb to the king's commands: "En lo que no es justa ley, / no ha de obedecer al Rey" (vv. 1321-22). Political theorists spanning the medieval and early modern periods upheld the merits of the wise and virtuous royal minister who helped maintain moral kingship through his counsel. They also deplored the sycophant and flatterer as a dangerous threat: "Éstos son los aduladores y lisonjeros, no menos peligrosos sus halagos que las armas de los enemigos. A más príncipes ha destruido la lisonja que la fuerza" (Saavedra Fajardo 299). Rather than advise Basilio to act justly and morally, Clotaldo has acted as a "Traidor ... con la ley, / lisonjero con el Rey" (vv. 1305-06). The reiteration of the *ley-Rey* rhyme implicates Clotaldo in the unjust decree that turned the heir to the throne into an anonymous prisoner. Similarly, the reiteration of the terms *traidor* and *traición* in the dialogue between the prince and the *valido* suggests that the ramifications of Clotaldo's stubborn bootlicking extend beyond Segismundo's

imprisonment. As Lope indicates in his *Serrana de la Vera*, “Traición...es engaño / contra el bien público” (41). Clotaldo’s obeisance constitutes disloyalty to both the prince and the body politic: “¿Cómo a tu patria le has hecho / tal traición [?]” (vv. 1300-01).

Covarrubias’s *Tesoro* identifies a traitor as a person who leads another into enemy hands: “el traidor pone al que engaña en manos de sus enemigos” (51). This particular connotation of the term renders Clotaldo guilty of betraying not only his prince and the body politic but his daughter as well. The nobleman’s abandonment of Violante and refusal to publicly acknowledge his paternity leaves Rosaura vulnerable to enemy hands, both in Muscovy where Astolfo seduces her and later in the Polish palace where Segismundo attacks her (Merrick 266). Indeed, Rosaura (unknowingly) calls her father a traitor when she tells Segismundo about her mother: “En ésta puso los ojos / un traidor, que no le nombra / mi voz por no conocerle” (vv. 2736-38).

The multiple levels of Clotaldo’s betrayal bring us back to the father-daughter relationship and its dramatic function as a metaphor for the tension between the individual and society. As explained in this study’s introduction, Lévi-Strauss’s line of structuralist anthropology proposes that patriarchal societies flourish to the extent that individuals sacrifice some of their personal power and private desires to higher social authorities. In the case of the filial relationship, fathers must surrender control and allow their daughters to enter the marriage market and subsequently leave the home to become wives. The presumption is that as daughters marry and enter different kinship groups, alliances form and culture can grow. Clotaldo does not fulfill his paternal duties because he proves willing to sacrifice his offspring to comply with an unjust decree, leaving the propagation of his family line in jeopardy. His failures in the public sphere as *valido* also

threaten the continuation of the dynastic line by keeping the natural heir to the throne imprisoned. The king's unjust treatment of his son eventually gives way to civil war, the very antithesis of the peaceful alliance that Clotaldo's mediation between public and private arenas ought to preserve. The family functions as a mirror of the state, and the father's actions in the final act predict the outcome of the concurrent father-son conflict.

“monstruo de una especie y otra” (v. 2725)

Just as civil war represents a division of the body politic, the emergence of a “monstruo de una especie y otra” (v. 2725) symbolizes a fracturing of the individual and of coherent social definitions of gender. Rosaura's self-identification as a woman (“yo...ciega y desesperada,” vv. 10-13) and outward passing as a man (“un triste,” v.177) in the opening scene resurfaces in her later presentation as a fusion of gender constructs:

Mujer, vengo a persuadirte
al remedio de mi honra;
y varón, vengo a alentarte
a que cobres tu corona.
Mujer, vengo a enternecerte
cuando a tus plantas me ponga;
y varón, vengo a servirte
cuando a tus gentes socorra.
Mujer, vengo a que me valgas
en mi agravio y mi congoja;
y varón, vengo a valerte
con mi acero y mi persona. (vv. 2902-13)

Rosaura's androgynous identity marks the culmination of her *liviandad* (mutability) and resists traditional binary categorizations of gender, permitting only one possible early modern label, monster.¹¹¹ The protagonist's manipulation of feminine and masculine

¹¹¹ In the medical literature of the period anything blurring the boundaries separating male and female (e.g., hermaphrodites) belonged to the category of “monster” (Maclean 39). On stage, the presence of the monstrous fulfilled the Baroque aesthetic of astonishment and amazement (Merrim, *Writing* 23).

traits echoes Judith Butler's conceptualization of gender as a performative construct, a socially-determined configuration of acts and gestures that creates "the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core...discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality" (136). Gender is not an ontological reality, and one is not born "male" or "female" (111); rather, Butler maintains, "gender is always a doing" and represents a learned practice acquired and sustained through the combined effects of class, ethnic, and racial influences (3, 25). The multiple configurations of gender identities Rosaura uses to identify herself speak to Butler's definition of *woman* as "a term in process, a becoming, a constructing ...open to intervention and resignification" (33). If society, not biology, defines gender, then Rosaura's identity as androgynous "monster" underscores the effects of Clotaldo's paternal failings. As long as she remains ignorant of her origins, patriarchal society denies Rosaura a legitimized place. Her lack of a stable identity leaves her very gender "open to intervention and resignification." She thus dons male garb, takes on the role of Astrea, and becomes a "monster."

Early modern views on kingship and tyranny suggest that the intervention and resignification of gender in the play's third act is not exclusive to Rosaura. Aristotle defined temperance as a person's capacity to rule over desire (carnal and otherwise) and considered incontinence a sign of effeminacy: "the man who is defective in respect of resistance to the things which most men...resist successfully is soft and effeminate" (72, 177).¹¹² The early church fathers seconded Aristotle in identifying excessive passion as a predominantly female propensity, and the combined influence of patristic theology and

¹¹² Many influential thinkers echoed Aristotle's views on intemperance. For example, Isidore of Seville, the seventh-century encyclopedist whose *Etymologiae* remained an influential text throughout the medieval period, also defined lustfulness as an emasculating trait: "females are more lustful than males [...] Hence the word 'effeminate' was applied to an excess of love in antiquity" (qtd. in Blamires 43).

classical philosophy weighed heavily during the early modern period (Sommerville 2-3; Gascón 15). In the political realm, a prevailing belief in the relationship between masculine authority and social order similarly implied a connection between tyranny and effeminacy (McLaren 103, 110). As opposed to the “masculine” ruler who conquered his passions for reasons of state, the tyrant was thought incapable of self-mastery and overly given to passion, that is, effeminate.¹¹³ Political theorists, who held that ruler and ruled reflected each other’s behavior, warned of the consequences that would befall a state under an incontinent man’s control (McLaren 98, 107). Desiderius Erasmus, for instance, argued that tyrants set examples of intemperate behavior and encouraged subjects to become “effeminate through pleasure” (165). Saavedra Fajardo similarly identified self-indulgence as a catalyst for the state’s demise: “si se consideran bien las caídas de los Imperios [y] las mudanzas de los Estados..., casi todas han nacido de la inobediencia de los afectos y pasiones a la razón” (Saavedra Fajardo 41). An intemperate king could not properly rule and threatened the order he was meant to protect.

The association between moral incontinence and effeminacy operant during the early modern period comes through in *Vida*. It is appropriate that Rosaura should take on the role of hybrid “monster” when she joins forces with Segismundo, as the prince also refers to himself as “un compuesto de hombre y fiera” (v. 1547) and transgresses gender expectations during his journey to establish a social identity of his own. Upon awaking in the palace and being informed of his status as heir to the throne, Segismundo proves

¹¹³ The link between tyranny and intemperance was not new to the early modern period. Plato’s *Republic* describes “the tyrannical man” as living “in a fury of passions and desires” (Plato). Similarly, the medieval poet John Gower speaks of the dangers that can befall an incontinent king in his *Confessio Amantis*: “a prince ought to stop and think before lapsing into debauchery, and beware especially of such infatuation as would transform the quality of his manhood into effeminacy” (qtd. in Blamires 248-49).

himself a lustful prince.¹¹⁴ His reiteration of the phrase “sé quién soy” while in the throes of violence and intemperance underscores the need for the prince to establish his identity by conquering his passions.¹¹⁵ Rather than demonstrate the virtue expected of a prince, Segismundo shows wrath (he throws a servant out a window), pride (“¡Soberbio desvanecido!,” v. 1523), and sexual misconduct (he tries to force himself on Rosaura). Overrun by inordinate passion and self-indulgence (“Nada me parece justo / en siendo contra mi gusto,” vv. 1417-18), his markedly un-masculine behavior prompts Rosaura to call him a tyrant. Segismundo acknowledges that his actions violate the expectations of his gender and social rank, and he thus also calls himself a tyrant: “Soy tirano” (v. 1666). Basilio consequently determines that his reading of the heavens has been proven right and feels justified in imprisoning his son once more. It will take Rosaura’s intervention to prove Segismundo’s ability to conquer his unlucky stars.

In his discussion of intemperance Aristotle draws a distinction between incontinence and self-indulgence that has significant analogues in Calderón’s play. The philosopher defines the incontinent man as one who succumbs to pleasure but is wont to feel regret for allowing passion to rule over him. The self-indulgent man, on the other hand, stands firm in his intemperate actions and proves “incurable” because he feels no remorse and seeks pleasure without reserve (178-79). Aristotle ostensibly diminishes the incontinent person’s culpability when he states that s/he “must be said to be in a similar condition to be asleep, mad or drunk” (165); in other words, incontinence appears to operate outside the level of consciousness. Plato, too, speaks of the “lawless wild-beast

¹¹⁴ Lust did not refer exclusively to sexual desire but could also connote “apetito desordenado, o exceso en cualquier especie” (*Autoridades*).

¹¹⁵ “después de saber quién soy” (v. 1297); “sé quién soy” (v. 1538); “informado estoy / de quién soy” (v. 1545-46).

nature” that exists, “even in good men,” and which “peers out in sleep” (Plato). The association between sleep and incontinence resonates in *Vida*, as Segismundo is arguably at his most intemperate precisely while supposedly “dreaming” (i.e., when he fails the test in the palace). The dream-life motif carried out in the second act suggests that the violent and lustful prince of the palace does not represent the real Segismundo but rather a manifestation of his “lawless wild-beast nature” that the “tirano poder” (v. 994) of hallucinogenic (*beleño* or henbane) and somniferous (opium) drugs has loosened from his subconscious. The “real” Segismundo remains out of sight until he fully “awakens.”

When the prince finds himself back in the tower, however, he still doubts his surroundings and utters perhaps the most famous lines in the play: “¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión, / una sombra, una ficción... toda la vida es sueño” (vv. 2483-86). Only his recollection of Rosaura proves that his experience in the palace was not a dream: “Sólo a una mujer amaba; / que fue verdad, creo yo” (vv. 2134-35). Their next meeting solidifies the heroine’s importance to the primary plot: “¿cómo... esta mujer me refiere / unas señas tan notoria? / Luego fue verdad, no sueño” (vv. 2391-34). She alone convinces Segismundo that his experience has been real. As Sloman affirms, this knowledge lies at the heart of the prince’s existential and moral awakening (“Structure” 296).

Specifically, Rosaura’s manipulation of gender opens the door for the hero’s transformation from tyrant prince to prudent king. The heroine’s appropriation of traditionally masculine traits in her declaration that she will kill in defense of personal honor reminds Segismundo that his earlier attempt to force himself on her did not correspond to his gender and made him seem like an effeminate tyrant. By the same token, Rosaura’s self-portrayal as a hapless woman in need of a man’s help, “una mujer

infelice, / que hoy a tus plantas se arroja, / ampara por ser mujer / y desdichada” (vv. 2704-07), gives the prince the opportunity to (re)affirm his masculinity by placing her needs before his own. Segismundo proceeds to conquer the lustful desire he showed in their previous encounter and vows to restore her honor: “de su honra / he de ser conquistador / antes que de mi corona” (vv. 2989-91). Political theorists would have found in such a selfless act proof of the prince’s ability to become a successful, moral leader. Saavedra Fajardo’s affirmation that “El buen príncipe domina a sí mismo y sirve al pueblo” (42) finds its match in Segismundo’s declared dominance over his *hado*: “quien vencer aguarda / a su fortuna, ha de ser / con prudencia y con templanza” (vv. 3214-19).¹¹⁶ In a play of refashioned identities, Segismundo’s conversion from savage to prudent king hinges on Rosaura’s transformation from object of desire to citizen in need of protection: “no mire tu hermosura / quien ha de mirar tu honra” (vv. 3014-15).

Rosaura and Segismundo’s alliance unites public and private spheres, suggesting that the health of the state hinges on the health of the family, and vice versa. Rosaura confirms that the prince has much to gain from impeding Astolfo’s marriage to Estrella:

A los dos juntos importa
 impedir y deshacer
 estas concertadas bodas:
 a mí porque no se case
 el que mi esposo se nombra;
 y a ti porque, estando juntos
 sus dos estados, no pongan
 con más poder y más fuerza
 en duda nuestra vitoria. (vv. 2893-2901).

¹¹⁶ Erasmus also advised that a Christian prince put others before himself: “Only those who govern the state not for themselves but for the good of the state itself deserve the title ‘prince.’ His titles mean nothing in the case of one who rules to suit himself and measures everything to his own convenience: he is no prince, but a tyrant” (160-61). Analogously, comedias often depict kings who prove their moral superiority by conquering amorous desire (Díez Borque, *Sociología* 75). Thus Fernando, the king in Quevedo’s *Cómo ha de ser el privado*, acknowledges that he could freely court Serafina while still a prince but not after he inherited the throne: “príncipe, la festejé; / rey, he de vencerme a mí” (vv. 483-84).

She insists on a shared victory, “nuestra victoria,” the possessive adjective underscoring the interdependent nature of the protagonists’ respective goals and of the spheres they represent. The heroine is central to the establishment of Segismundo’s identity as a prudent king; social order cannot be reinstated, however, until the new monarch returns the favor. Northrop Frye maintains that the social reintegration of a protagonist into a new or renewed social order represents one of the principal themes of dramatic comedy (*Anatomy* 43). In the case of the comic heroine, her return to society includes both marriage and the recovery of her identity (*Secular* 80). In *Vida*, Segismundo (re)establishes order precisely by giving Rosaura a legitimate place in society. He cannot achieve order until he fully consolidates monarchical power, and this cannot be done until he vanquishes Astolfo’s claim to the throne. He also cannot ensure Rosaura’s social reintegration because she lacks a public affiliation to a man, either as daughter or wife. Segismundo thus faces challenges within the public (Astolfo) and private (Rosaura) domains, and his first official act as king, ordering the duke to marry Rosaura, underscores the interdependent nature of the two spheres.

Astolfo’s reluctance to marry Rosaura on account of her unknown origins (“ella no sabe quién es: / y es bajeza y es infamia / casarme,” vv. 3264-66) indicates that the prince’s decree cannot be carried out before the resolution of the play’s filial conflict. Clotaldo finally acknowledges his paternity in a public forum, but the reasons he gives for his prolonged silence highlight his culpability in Rosaura’s struggle to secure a stable social identity. The nobleman’s affirmation that he did not want to reveal himself as Rosaura’s father until he saw her “casada, noble y honrada” (vv. 3273) proves ironic, for Clotaldo’s imprudent behavior created the daughter’s precarious status as a woman who

was not *casada, noble y honrada* in the first place. Clotaldo helps Rosaura in secret until she receives Segismundo's protection, at which point the father finally takes charge:

"Rosaura es...noble...y mi espada / lo defenderá en el campo" (vv. 3268-70).

The end of the nobleman's vacillation once he sees Rosaura in the king's graces proves that he has given more weight to conserving his good name at court than to his daughter's honor (Merrick 267). His boast that he will defend his daughter's nobility with his sword is laughable, not only because she already has secured the king's protection but also because up to this point the weapon has aided Rosaura only while in *her* hands. Had Clotaldo fulfilled his paternal obligations earlier, Rosaura would have married sooner and would have been spared the dangers she faced in the palace while passing as Astrea. The nobleman intimates awareness of his culpability when he glosses over the details of Rosaura's struggles as if they were superfluous: "La historia desto es muy larga; / pero en fin, es mi hija" (vv. 3275-76). Ultimately, it requires Segismundo's intervention on Rosaura's behalf to ensure that the duke marries her. The new king proves his status as father of the kingdom by taking on Clotaldo's paternal responsibility and prioritizing the restoration of Rosaura's honor and place in society.¹¹⁷ He ultimately puts to rest the nobleman's equivocation with regard to the concept of giving and taking life and honor: "más a un príncipe le toca / el dar honor que quitarle" (vv. 2987-88).

Her journey from anonymous cross-dresser to wife of a duke finally complete, let us take stock of Rosaura's complex oscillation between object of desire and subject without identity. At the start of this chapter, I compared Calderón's characterization of Rosaura to Velázquez's use of space in *Rokeby Venus*. Unlike Rubens's foreshortening in

¹¹⁷ Erasmus identified the Christian prince as akin to a conscientious father who put his children's well-being before his own (160-61). The *Partidas* also references the king's duties in paternal terms: "ser les ha como padre, que cría sus hijos con amor y los castiga con piedad" (II.X.ii).

Venus at a Mirror, Velázquez positions the goddess at a notable distance from spectator and mirror alike, granting her as much visual access to her own body as he does to the male viewer behind her. At the start of *Vida*, Rosaura similarly stands apart from the “gaze,” so to speak, of Clotaldo and Astolfo, allowing her a degree of freedom she would otherwise not have. The two men are charged with giving Rosaura a legitimate place in society as daughter and wife, respectively, and as long as they neglect their responsibilities our heroine remains free to manipulate her identity. She thus puts on male clothing, brandishes a sword, and sets out for Poland. Whereas the openness of Velázquez’s *Venus* painting diminishes the goddess’s status as object of desire, Rosaura’s distance from her father and beloved permits the affirmation of her agency.¹¹⁸

We must keep in mind, however, that Rosaura sets out for Poland in hopes of finding one of the two men who can restore her honor and social identity; in other words, her principal objective is to reduce the very separation that allows her to be an active, willful subject. She represents what Carmen Bravo-Villasante identifies as a heroine who cross-dresses not due to “an abnormal and nearly...pathological” masculine inclination but out of a “feminine and normal” desire to reunite with her beloved (33-34). Rosaura presents herself as a man in the opening scene but does not intend to keep that identity. Once she starts reducing the literal and figurative distance between herself and Clotaldo (i.e., when the nobleman realizes she is his daughter) she has no qualms about donning female dress once again, even if it means handing over control of her destiny. As Astrea,

¹¹⁸ Rosa Escalonilla López’s study of disguise in the Calderonian *corpus* describes a cross-dressed woman’s departure from her home as emblematic of the character’s escape from a life of restricted mobility (268). Beatriz Cortez, focusing specifically on Rosaura, similarly suggests that the heroine’s cross-dressing permits her to engage in action reserved only for men, such as defending personal honor, and thereby grants her a greater degree of personal agency (371-72). As Bass affirms, a noblewoman who sheds the clothing meant to constrict and enclose her, such as a corset, ruff, or high-platform shoes, and puts on male attire literally allows herself greater movement (*Drama* 52). The woman’s attire thus becomes a tangible representation of the journey toward social mobility described by Escalonilla López.

Rosaura is further denied a chance to assert her subjectivity when Segismundo, considering her an object of sexual desire, forces himself upon her. The prince's aggression highlights the extent to which Rosaura's road to a legitimate social identity signifies not a fight for sustained subjectivity but a gradual loss of agency that ends in objectification and near total silencing.

Rosaura's objectification in the palace represents a pivotal moment for prince and heroine alike. Multiple critics have argued that the combined effect of Rosaura's beauty upon Segismundo at each of their three encounters ultimately makes the prince realize that his experiences in the tower and the palace are not dreams.¹¹⁹ Even when he sees Rosaura dressed as a man, enough of the woman's innate beauty shines through for Segismundo to become inexplicably fixated: "Con cada vez que te veo, / nueva admiración me das; / y cuando te miro más, / aún más mirarte deseo" (vv. 223-26). As Whitby maintains, if Segismundo had known that the beauty before him could be possessed (i.e, if he knew that the stranger at the tower was really a woman), then his admiration would have likely turned into desire, as occurs in the palace when the prince sees Rosaura as a woman for the first time (23). Indeed, Segismundo's vision of Rosaura's beauty in the second act forces him to recall the previous feelings of admiration at the tower: "Yo he visto esta belleza / otra vez" (vv. 1580-81). He need only see the woman one more time and hear her confirm her role as the common factor in his three experiences of beauty to know that he is not dreaming and that he therefore ought to act as a moral, prudent prince and defend her honor. The third encounter clarifies Rosaura's function: her loss of subjectivity lies at the heart of Segismundo's existential and moral awakening. Segismundo's conversion complete, Rosaura loses what little

¹¹⁹ Whitby; Cortez (373); Sloman, "Structure" (295).

agency she still has after being objectified in the palace and falls under the new king's complete control: "Rosaura está en mi poder" (v. 2958).

Calderón's depiction of a third meeting between his two protagonists parallels Rubens and Velázquez's portrayals of Venus gazing not at the reflection of her face but of the male viewer behind her. From that point forward, the identities of both Rosaura and Venus fall under the auspices of the men (Segismundo, Rubens/Velázquez) who essentially take possession of and deprive them of a subject position. Rosaura vows to restore her honor alone, but once Segismundo joins her cause she stops playing an active role in the *dénouement* (Cortez 375). A character with much to say throughout the play, Rosaura intervenes just once in the final scene (a span of over two hundred and fifty lines), and when she does speak she only expresses admiration for Segismundo's conversion: "¡Qué discreto y qué prudente!" (v. 3304). She remains a silent bystander while Clotaldo, Segismundo, and Astolfo negotiate her marriage to the duke. The final scene nullifies whatever agency Rosaura had displayed up to that point and renders her a passive commodity in a male-driven marriage market (Cortez 376). She suffers the same fate as nearly all *comedia* heroines who dare to don male attire and who ultimately submit to an institution (marriage) that places their identities under the watchful eye of male authority (Escalonilla López 94). The dramatist may give intimations of female subjectivity at various points throughout the play, but in the end he leaves the audience with a scene that parallels the moment Velázquez and Rubens capture in their respective Venus paintings. A woman in a patriarchal society cannot simply look to herself (look at her face in the mirror) to know who she is; she must surrender her subjectivity to a man (look at a man's face in the mirror) who will presumably affirm her identity for her.

Calderón's play and the Venus paintings dramatize Sidney Donnell's assertion that a woman's identity is considered complete only "if she is some man's woman" (112). The female vision of self-consciousness remains subjected to an objectifying male gaze.

***"Virtudes en el rey y en el privado parece que promete estabilidad y firmeza"*¹²⁰**

The questions of tyranny and moral kingship Segismundo's existential awakening brings to the stage illustrate Calderón's tendency to both glorify and tactfully critique the Spanish monarchy in his dramatic works (Greer 394). Proponents of theater during the early modern period maintained that drama could be edifying because of its capacity to serve as a mirror for princes (McKendrick, *Playing* 27). The *speculum principum* argument reflected a widespread concern with kingship, an issue that held particular resonance after 1621, when a then sixteen-year old Philip IV ascended to the throne of an empire that many deemed on the brink of collapse (*Woman* 201). As a highly educated courtier, Calderón would have been familiar with the major political theories of his day; as an artist steeped in a milieu of sociopolitical turmoil, moreover, the dramatist would have found in his dramatic art an apt medium for questioning the status quo (Fox, *Kings* 113, 115). In *Vida*, the depiction of a prince incapable of subduing his passion and his later desire that his conversion "Sirva de ejemplo" (v. 3238) would have resonated with an audience familiar with Philip's reputation for nocturnal saunters, mistresses, and illegitimate children (Cruikshank 73; 104).

It is notable that Philip began an affair with the actress Inés Calderón in 1627 and had a child with her two years later, dates that coincide with the writing of *Vida*

¹²⁰ Quevedo, *Discurso* (1398).

(Cruickshank 88, 104).¹²¹ The king sent his illegitimate son, Juan José, from the palace to Ocaña to be raised by a surrogate mother and did not officially recognize him until 1642. Given Calderón's intimate ties with the court, one could plausibly conclude that his depiction of Rosaura and Segismundo—characters that Fox aptly describes as “neglected unknowns” (*Kings* 109)—reflect upon real court concerns and tensions within the royal family.¹²² If Segismundo's conversion can be interpreted as a call to moral kingship, so, too, can we consider Clotaldo's role in Rosaura's unstable identity a commentary on the travails that Juan José would invariably face.¹²³ Calderón may have depicted the Philip-Juan José dynamic as a conflicted father-daughter relationship to ensure there was enough distance between fiction and reality to allow for moralizing commentary that would not be condemned as disloyal to the Crown. The metaphoric potential of the filial relationship to explore the tension between individual desire and public duty may have also served Calderón's interests in a play that, as Fox argues, insists on the dangers that befall a kingdom when a monarch's public and private personas are incompatible (104).

If Segismundo represents a mirror for kingly behavior, Clotaldo may reflect another aspect of Vida's political commentary concerned specifically with the place and function of the *valido*. Early modern moralist and political writings on kingship, as we have seen, emphasized that rulers had to control their passion and desire so as to not

¹²¹ Cruickshank dates the play to 1630, while Ruano de la Haza suggests it was composed between 1627 and 1629 (Cruickshank 114; Ruano de la Haza, Introduction to *Vida* 8).

¹²² Calderón's life among the Spanish elite would have likely made him privy to events concerning the royal family. The dramatist was in the service of the Duke of Frías, nephew by marriage to Olivares, when he composed *Vida* (Cruickshank 64). This was also the period in which the playwright began his life as a courtier and started producing plays destined for court performance (Díez Borque, Introduction 13).

¹²³ Given Clotaldo's role as *privado*, the issues surrounding Rosaura's identity could also be interpreted as an allusion to Julián de Guzmán (later known as Enrique Felípez de Guzmán, Marquis of Mairena), Olivares's illegitimate son. Although Julián was born before the writing of *Vida* (ca. 1612), rumors about the *privado*'s son apparently did not begin to surface until 1640 (Elliott, *Olivares* 618-19).

become effeminate and tyrannical. The idea of monarchical self-mastery coincided with concerns that an intemperate king could fall under the control of a favored minister who could exploit his lord's uncontrolled passion (McLaren 110). Anxieties regarding the relationship between king and *privado* took on particular importance in Spain following the execution of Rodrigo Calderón, the Duke of Lerma's own *valido*, in 1621 (Hernández Araico 29). Philip IV and Olivares had intended Calderón's death to be a symbol of imperial cleansing and regeneration; instead, the nobleman's death nullified much of the goodwill the new monarchical regime had garnered during its first year in power (Elliott, *Olivares* 108). Rumors circulated in the same year that Olivares accompanied his lord on nocturnal amorous expeditions, worsening distrust of the relationship between the new monarch and his favorite minister (112). The Archbishop of Granada's subsequent rebuke of Olivares for encouraging the king's illicit affairs exemplify the anxiety that the prospect of a *valido* feeding into a monarch's intemperance could provoke.

When Calderón penned *Vida* in the late 1620s, concerns regarding Olivares's role in the kingdom's ongoing economic, political, and military failures at home and abroad were coming to a head.¹²⁴ In the literary realm, texts that outwardly praised the king and *valido* often contained hues of dissent, and as Olivares's influence over Philip became more pronounced the *speculum principum* motif began expounding on the proper formation of the *privado* (Hernández Araico 28; Elliott, *Olivares* 177). Indeed, one of the first texts Quevedo composed when the court allowed him to return from exile in 1628 was the politically charged *Cómo ha de ser el valido*, a play that highlights the trials and

¹²⁴ The writing of *Vida* coincides with a number of events that sank Spain further into economic and political decline. In 1628, the Dutch army captured the kingdom's Mexican silver fleet, leaving the Crown without sufficient funds to finance its costly military campaigns in Italy and Flanders. The capture of the fleet also dealt a severe blow to Spain's transatlantic trade and spurred the French to intervene in Italy against Spanish interests (Elliott, *Olivares* 362-65).

tribulations of a *valido* who faces the scorn of jealous ministers. Quevedo wrote the text as a propagandistic response to the wave of libels and satires of the monarchy that began to appear in the late 1620s (Elliot, *Olivares* 364); nonetheless, the comedia underscores the political concerns shaping the milieu that spawned *Vida*. Equally descriptive of the anxieties of the moment is the relatively wide dissemination (two hundred copies) of a strongly-worded manifesto against the count-duke that appeared in 1629. Attributed to an anonymous group of “caballeros de España,” the document extolled the *privado*’s loyalty but also castigated Olivares’s failed political reforms as well as his efforts to silence those who wanted to inform Philip of the kingdom’s true state of affairs (Elliott, *Olivares* 374). Combined with the count-duke’s reputation of excessive deference and obeisance to the king, it is tempting to read Clotaldo’s flattery and poor counsel as evidence of Calderón’s own moralizing contribution to the political concerns of his day. Clotaldo’s inability to balance his private and public duties speaks to the fine line a *privado* must tread to successfully fulfill his role as mediator between the king and his subjects. It is not enough that the prince learn how to conquer his desire and give priority to his subjects’ needs; the *valido*, too, must be a moral compass that sets the kingdom on the right course to glory.

La vida es sueño tells the story of a prince’s integration into a society whose system of belief and conduct he ultimately acquiesces to, but not before allowing for an exploration of what it means to be a prudent and moral king. On his road to conversion, the prince encounters a woman whose fractured relationship with her father has also made her a social outcast and whose need to establish a legitimate identity brings into question issues of gender and social roles. The confluence of disinherited prince and abandoned daughter highlights the interdependence of public and private spheres in the

health of the state. At the intersection of these two domains stands a nobleman who is at once father and *valido* and thus a dramatization of the individual's struggle to accommodate personal desires to public responsibilities. In a play that critics such as Fox have posited as focusing on the mastering of social roles, the three characters form different parts of a common mirror that reflects upon prevailing gender, social, and political concerns (*Kings* 112). Calderón's elevated status at court and the crown's taste for theater makes it plausible that the spectators glancing into the dramatic mirror included a king and a minister in need of finding their own path away from *liviandad*.

“De una parte, el amor propio, / y la lealtad, de otra parte, / me rinden” (vv. 433-35)

Once Clotaldo realizes that he is the father of the stranger outside Segismundo's tower, he laments the difficult decisions that lie ahead: “De una parte, el amor propio, / y la lealtad, de otra parte, / me rinden” (vv. 433-35). Like Roberto in *Casarse*, the nobleman experiences a conflict of interest that lies at the heart of the multiple tensions the present chapter has explored. The respective duties of fathers and daughters in patriarchy and the early modern tendency to consider the family a microcosm of the state makes the filial relationship a useful vehicle for exploring the individual's relationship to society. More specifically, fathers ought to give up some of their personal authority to ensure that their daughters enter into successful marriages, which in turn create alliances and propagate peace. They serve as intermediaries between private and public spheres whose dual responsibilities to family and society play a significant role in the health of the state. Calderón and Rojas depict fathers who are also *validos*, thus dramatizing the interdependence of private and public arenas. Roberto and Clotaldo prove incapable of

balancing their respective duties at home and in the palace, and their imprudence compromises their daughters' honor and their princes' ability to rule. The conflicts that ensue give audience members, regardless of their place in the *corral* or the palace, a lesson in the dangers that can result from an individual's nonconformity to social mores.

CHAPTER 3

FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS IN RELIGIOUS DRAMA

In 1862 the Spanish artist Ignacio Suárez Llanos shared first-prize honors at the *Exposición Nacional de Bellas Artes* (National Exposition of Fine Arts) in Madrid for a painting hailed as emitting “verdad, sentimiento, contraste [y] vida” (Pantorba 72-76). The prize-winning canvas depicts a funeral procession passing before the gated walls of a convent. The man in the casket may be the composition’s subject, but nearly all the figures in the center of the painting direct the viewer’s gaze toward the nuns behind the iron bars. For their part, the nuns surround and attend to one of their sisters in particular, funneling the viewer’s gaze to a single figure. The object of attention inside and outside the convent—as well as inside and outside the painting itself—strikes the most dramatic pose of any of the painting’s figures. She stretches her arms through the bars toward the passing procession, redirecting the spectator toward *her* principal focus, the corpse on its way to its final resting place. The composition thus establishes a relationship between the mourning nun and the deceased man, two figures separated as much by life and death as by the iron bars of the cloister that prevent the woman from joining the funerary rites. A striking irony emerges: though deceased, the man is in a sense free, as the open casket in the middle of the street suggests, while the woman left behind, though alive, will invariably recede into the darkness behind her, destined to remain forever cloistered.

The nineteenth-century work depicts a scene that took place two centuries earlier in 1635, when the funeral procession transporting the body of Lope de Vega passed before the convent of the Discalced Trinitarians in Madrid, where one of the writer’s

daughters, Marcela, awaited to pay her final respects (Arenal and Sabat-Rivers 5, 19).¹²⁵

Suárez's painting, *Sor Marcela de San Félix viendo pasar el entierro de Lope de Vega, su padre* (Fig. 8), thus presents a scene of filial love and mourning. The canvas grants a window into a father's final visit to the daughter who had become a confidante, spiritual advisor, and source of consolation in the tumultuous final years of his life (Arenal and Sabat-Rivers 11). Why did Suárez choose to immortalize this particular moment in the writer's legendary life? Why paint a deceased Lope, and, more importantly, why make one of the dramatist's daughters the composition's privileged mourner?



Figure 8

Ignacio Suárez Llanos, *El entierro de Lope de Vega*

El entierro de Lope satisfies contemporary aesthetic preferences: submissions to the *Exposición Nacional* between 1856 and 1892 tended to represent scenes of tragedy and mourning, in particular the deaths of notable historical figures (Pantorba 34-35).¹²⁶ Lope's mythical fame likely moved Suárez to elect the dramatist as the subject of his canvas; as for Marcela, the painter may have included a secondary principal figure to

¹²⁵ Marcela was the illegitimate daughter of Lope and the actress Micaela de Luján.

¹²⁶ Indeed, a painting depicting the death of St. Lorenzo won the second first-place medal at the 1862 exposition (Pantorba 72).

offset the scene's legendary overtones with a more patently "human" element. Indeed, Suárez's painting underscores the dynamic interrelation between Marcela's principal social identities: daughter and nun. Guarded behind the cloister walls, Marcela is more nun than daughter: she belongs more to her religious vocation than to the secular world. The casket outside the convent recalls the nun's worldly death and renunciation of the roles ascribed to her gender (wife, mother, daughter) that society demanded her father to control and protect. Suárez's representation of a filial relationship joins two worlds: the father symbolizes what the daughter left behind when she traded her home for the cloister and her physical sexuality for spiritual marriage.

A similar filial dynamic occupied the early modern Spanish stage when dramatists depicted the lives of nuns, woman saints, or penitent *pecadoras*. Playwrights often took liberties with biographical sources to accommodate religious drama into a more secular framework, such as the *comedia de capa y espada*. Part of the adaptation of source material frequently included the portrayal of a father's attempts to coerce his daughter into an unwanted marriage and the latter's recognition that she must submit to the will of God, even if it means rejecting marriage and father and leaving behind the trappings of the secular world. Filial conflict gave religious drama the kind of tension theater-going audiences had come to appreciate and demand. On a more theological level, the *comedia*'s perceived ability to *enseñar deleitando* and the filial relationship's metaphorical potential provided a means for exploring core Counter-Reformation concerns: the function of grace and free will and the state of (female) monasticism.

Christopher Gascón has argued that the desire to become a bride of Christ makes the nun and woman saint-to-be "site[s] of contention where worldly and religious desires

collide” (23). Indeed, the comedia’s metonymic nature renders the conflict between father and daughter in plays about nuns and women saints an outward representation of the religious woman’s inner struggle to leave behind the secular world. The fathers in these works function as tangible manifestations of the social expectations, such as pressure to marry and serve society as a wife, which the prospective nun confronts on her way to the cloister. Accordingly, the father’s capitulation to his daughter’s pious vocation represents the religious woman’s definitive break with the social demands of her gender in the secular world, a crucial step on her path to spiritual purity. Such are the issues at stake in the first part of Tirso’s *Santa Juana* trilogy and Lope’s *La bienaventurada madre Santa Teresa de Jesús*, the plays analyzed in the second half of this chapter.

The father-daughter relationship is equally central to the theological message in Antonio Mira de Amescua’s *El esclavo del demonio*, a play that depicts a woman’s journey from sin to penitence. Natalia Fernández Rodríguez holds that *santas pecadoras* on the early modern stage functioned as paradigmatic dramatizations of the Church’s position on the centrality of good works in salvation (29). No post-Tridentine discussion of good works and salvation in Spain would be complete without a reference to a key theological issue of the day, the dynamic between grace and free will. Mira gives evidence of his position on the matter in his depiction of family conflict in *Esclavo*. A daughter’s response to her father’s pressure to marry represents the believer’s freedom to reject either the gift of grace and engage in sin or assent to the divine will and lead a life of penitence and charity. The dynamic between a father and his two daughters allows the dramatist to analyze the complex relationship between believer and God.

3.1 “esclava de su padre:” Obedience to God and Father in Mira de Amescua’s *El esclavo del demonio*

Were you a slave when you were called? Do not be concerned, but, rather, even if you can gain your freedom, make the most of it. For the slave called in the Lord is a freed person in the Lord, just as the free person who has been called is a slave of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 7: 21-22

Esclavitudes hay nobles / que ensalzan a los que humillan.

—Tirso de Molina, *La joya de las montañas* (vv. 183-84)

In the final scene of Mira’s *El esclavo del demonio*, a man donning “un saco de penitencia” (p. 184) offers his life to atone for the sins he has committed against God and the nobleman Marcelo.¹²⁷ The penitent, Gil, avows that he is no longer an “esclavo...del demonio” (v. 3236) and has taken to a life of penance. He also announces that Marcelo’s oldest daughter, Lisarda, likewise expiated her sins and embraced “penitencia santa” (v. 3262) with such conviction that she died of remorse. Lest Marcelo doubt the state of his daughter’s soul, Gil affirms that Lisarda received divine forgiveness for repenting and becoming an “esclava de su padre” (v. 3246). The father receives incontrovertible evidence of his daughter’s salvation when Lisarda appears “más hermosa y más perfecta...que en vida” (vv. 3281-82), free of the chains she bore when he last saw her.

The references to slavery and penitence link Gil and Lisarda and point to the play’s principal theological message. During the early modern period, *esclavo* did not merely identify a person who was the property of or was legally bound to serve another. The term also had moral connotations and could refer to both a person ruled by passion (“el que se sujeta y rinde ciegamente a sus propios deseos y pasiones”) and to members of religious fraternities or congregations (“se dicen esclavos del Santísimo Sacramento, de Nuestra Señora, etc.”) who engaged jointly in acts of piety (*Autoridades*). Unlike the

¹²⁷ Textual citations are from James Agustín Castañeda’s edition of *Esclavo*.

loss of freedom that the legal definition of *esclavo* implied, the term's moral connotations underscored the role of volition and personal choice in the individual's submission to either sinful desire or pious devotion. This more ethically-oriented use of the word is in play in Gil and Lisarda's respective transformations from slaves of sin to slaves of God. Both characters become free when they submit themselves to God's will; nonetheless, their salvation also requires divine intervention in the form of grace offered through reconciliation and penance. The characters' road to redemption thus offers Mira an avenue for exploring the role of grace and free will in salvation. Gil desires that his penitence "asombre [...] en la religion primera / de España" (vv. 3271-74); so, too, does the dramatist aim to instruct his audience on a major religious topic of the period.

Mira relies on the metaphoric potential of the father-daughter relationship to accomplish his moralistic ends. Gil's admission to Marcelo, "A vuestra casa y al cielo / ofendí" (vv. 3228-29), identifies the father as the site in which the social and the religious intersect. Gil and Lisarda's parallel descents into lives of sin involve transgressions against both heavenly and earthly fathers. Accordingly, their attempts at redemption will require making amends with Marcelo as a prelude to achieving communion with the divine. Along the way, Leonor, Marcelo's younger daughter and the play's exemplar of filial obedience, will implicitly aid them. The following analysis proposes that Mira's inclusion of two daughters, one sinful and one virtuous, contributes to the play's theological message by creating what René Girard would call multiple "triangles of desire." These character triads elicit virtuous behavior from Lisarda and Gil and form the basis of the playwright's treatment of the function of grace and free will.

Esclavo was first published in 1612 but may have been written as early as 1605 or 1606 (Gregg 17; Rhodes, “Economics” 281; Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 5). The latter date of composition would have coincided with Mira’s move from Granada to Madrid, where he hoped to further cultivate his blossoming literary career at the royal court (Castañeda 17). By 1602, the dramatist enjoyed renown as a lyric and dramatic poet, and his subsequent integration into the court’s principal literary circles only furthered his reputation as one of Spain’s foremost writers (Gregg 15).¹²⁸ Mira the playwright enjoyed renown for formulating didactic, moralizing, and boldly innovative plots.¹²⁹ His religious drama was also hailed for demonstrating extensive theological knowledge and reflecting a firm belief in theater’s capacity and duty to defend the Catholic faith and provide edifying moral teaching (Valbuena Prat 26; Castañeda 11). As we shall see, *Esclavo* exemplifies both Mira’s originality and his catechistic concerns.

“Whoever shall affirm that a man is forgiven and justified because he steadfastly believes that he is forgiven and justified...let him be accursed.”¹³⁰

The years 1605 and 1606 also situate *Esclavo* in the midst of a theological debate at the center of Spanish religious thought since the 1580s. Trent’s decree on justification (i.e., the salvation of the faithful), which Philip officially proclaimed in Spain in 1564, reiterated the Church’s belief that salvation “springs from the...grace of God” in

¹²⁸ Cristóbal Suárez de Figueroa’s *Plaza universal de todas ciencias y artes* (1615) lists Mira as one of Spain’s best comedia writers (Gregg 17). Similarly, Luis Vélez de Guevara’s *El diablo cojuelo* lauds the dramatist’s hometown of Gaudix as a city celebrated “por el divino ingenio del doctor Mira de Mescua” (125). Juan Manuel Villanueva has gone as far as to describe the *granadino* as the only early modern Spanish writer unanimously applauded by his peers and whose work was never censured (430).

¹²⁹ Examples of Mira’s most original plots include: a woman goes unpunished for killing the man who dishonored her (*No hay burlas con las mujeres*); the tale of Jephthah, a man who kills his daughter to honor a promise to God (*El capitán Jepté*); and a man who accidentally slays his parents (*Animal*).

¹³⁰ *Decrees* 28.

communion with the free assent of the believer's will (Hsia 48; *Decrees* 14). The declaration countered the Protestant defense of salvation on the merit of faith and grace alone (i.e., without the influence of works); however, it did not explain how efficacious grace, believed to infallibly secure the cooperation of the will, could be compatible with the notion of human freedom (Sullivan 30; Sheerin, "Efficacious" 406). Subsequent attempts to clarify the role of grace and free will in salvation sparked a contentious division among Jesuits and Dominicans that continued well into the seventeenth century.

The Spanish Jesuit priest and jurist Luis de Molina's work on grace and free will, summarized in his 1588 treatise *Concordia Liberi Arbitrii*, largely informed the Company of Jesus' position on the issue. Molina proposed that God foresees those who will correspond appropriately to the gift of grace (i.e., through virtuous acts) and therefore predetermines who will be saved on account of foreseen future merits (Sheerin, "Molinism" 771). God bestows grace on all of humanity, argued Molina, but the divine gift becomes efficacious only in those who, through a free movement of the will, seek a life of virtue (Hill 50). The Molinist view that grace turns efficacious concurrent with assent of the will presumably counteracted the Protestant stance on predestination, which seemingly nullified the believer's power to act freely (Sullivan 32). The Jesuits held that Molina's teachings safeguarded belief in divine omniscience and human freedom because it affirmed that even though God already knows who will use the gift of grace appropriately, grace itself cannot carry out its salvific effect until the recipient assents.

On the other side of the argument, the Scholastic theologian Domingo Báñez, standard-bearer of the Dominican stance on the issue, insisted on the intrinsically efficacious nature of grace and on predestination's independence from foreseen merit

(Hill 50). The Thomist rejected Molina's argument that grace became efficacious contingent on the believer's will. Instead, Báñez argued that the will consents precisely because God grants efficacious grace to those he has elected for salvation (Hill 51). The Dominicans opposed the Molinist notion of one kind of grace that had the *potential* of becoming efficacious and argued for the existence of two types of grace: efficacious, which infallibly moves the will, and sufficient, which grants power to perform good but which can be hindered from effecting virtue due to the will's resistance (Sheerin, "Efficacious" 405; "Sufficient" 410). Báñez argued that God grants sufficient grace to all but limits efficacious grace to the predestined (Sullivan 32). Lest the a priori nature of efficacious grace be considered incompatible with human freedom, however, the Dominican also argued that God moves the believer according to his or her very nature, which is necessarily free and inclined toward virtue (Trubiano 37).

In 1594 the papal nuncio at Madrid ordered both factions to silence in anticipation of a proclamation from the Vatican (Hill 51). A definitive verdict never arrived, as the Congregatio de Auxiliis (1598-1607) that Clement VIII ordered to settle the matter could not decide whether the Jesuit or Dominican position represented the most accurate interpretation of Church doctrine. In 1607, Paul V ruled that both parties could continue teaching their respective views as long as they did not accuse each other of heresy (Sullivan 31). The contention thus continued until 1611, when the pope officially prohibited further public discussion on the matter and forbade the publication of all texts concerning grace, including Molina's *Concordia* (Wilds 39; Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 34). Mira, who by 1606 had been ordained a priest and had completed a doctorate in ecclesiastical law, certainly had knowledge about the intricacies of the *De auxiliis*

debate.¹³¹ The dramatist's decision to treat such a polarizing topic in his play should not surprise us, not only because of his personal views regarding the didactic nature of theater but also because public discussion of polemical religious issues had an accepted place in early modern Spain (Ruano de la Haza, "Unparalleled" 263).

Multiple factors contributed to the popularity of Spanish religious drama during the period in which Mira composed *Esclavo*. Even though Spain was the only European country with a national institution charged with eliminating heresy, the threat of the Inquisition did not necessarily restrict religious discussion in public forums (Kamen 118). On the contrary, more than fifty percent of all texts published in the empire between 1500 and 1670 dealt with theological matters (Hsia 52). Religion also pervaded theatrical production; indeed, *autos sacramentales* and hagiographical plays remained among the most popular dramatic genres throughout the seventeenth century (Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 5). Moralism's censure of theater as a source of immorality raged on throughout the 1590s and contributed to a royal decree prohibiting secular plays in 1598, thus giving dramatists a practical reason for composing religious plots (Kamen 184; Wilds 41).¹³² Moreover, theological drama spoke to a theater-going public at large knowledgeable of Christian doctrine and eager for the spectacular fusion of the real and the marvelous found in *comedias de santos* such as *Esclavo* (Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 5).¹³³ Such

¹³¹ Though exact dates remain unknown, available records suggest that Mira studied ecclesiastical law in Granada between 1592 and 1595. He subsequently completed his doctorate and was ordained a presbyter between 1598 and 1601 (Gregg 15).

¹³² The decree was issued in response to the passing of Princess Catharine, who died in November 1597. Philip III allowed theaters to reopen in April 1599.

¹³³ The Toledo Inquisition conducted investigations at the turn of the seventeenth century that found evidence of basic knowledge of Catholic dogma even amongst members of Castile's lower classes. For instance, 82% of those questioned knew the major prayers, and 77% knew the commandments (Hsia 52). Spanish law had helped foment such basic theological knowledge since the medieval period: "todo

theatrical productions projected Christian audiences' own spiritual concerns onto the stage while satisfying the Counter-Reformation imperative that art remain an enjoyable and didactic medium for encouraging the faithful through clear and accurate representations of doctrine (Hsia 159; Ruano de la Haza, "Unparalleled" 254). It stands to reason, then, that Mira and his contemporaries treated the issue of human freedom, perhaps the most pressing Counter-Reformation concern, in diverse dramatic contexts.¹³⁴

Esclavo adapts the legend of St. Gil of Santarem found in the Spanish poet Hernando del Castillo's *Primera parte de la historia general de Santo Domingo y su Orden de Predicadores* (1588) (Castañeda 37). Mira's penchant for moralizing dramaturgy would have certainly recognized the Portuguese friar's conversion, which Castillo describes as "raro y casi solo y único en el mundo," as a prime source of edification and entertainment (417). Rather than directly recast the source text into a hagiographical play, however, the dramatist took creative liberties, keeping only the most salient features of Gil's life, such as the friar's alleged pact with the devil, dabbling in necromancy, and eventual repentance. Yet the playwright alters these aspects of the legend as well. The Gil of *Esclavo* does not enter into a demonic pact due to a Faustian yearning for knowledge but out of carnal lust. Mira also eliminates several episodes of the saint's conversion, as well as the intercession of the Virgin Mary on his behalf.¹³⁵

cristiano debe saber el *Pater noster*, y *Ave maria*, y el Credo in Deum" (*Partidas* I.III.xxvii). In Tirso's *El condenado por desconfiado*, the protagonist, Paulo, comes across a shepherd who gives voice to the generalized religious sapience of the period: "sé, / aunque rústico pastor, / todos los diez mandamientos, / preceptos que Dios nos dio" (vv. 1484-87).

¹³⁴ Tirso, for instance, treats the topic repeatedly in plays such as *Condenado* and *Quien no cae*.

¹³⁵ In Castillo's version of the legend, Gil has frightful visions of a knight who enjoins the sinner to repent. After the friar assents, the knight pierces the sinner's heart with a lance "para sanarle y darle vida," cementing Gil's conversion and initiating a life of prayer, penance, and charity (419).

The playwright replaces the sacred mother with a profane father and makes the saint's path to salvation contingent on Marcelo's relationship with his two daughters. Leonor and Lisarda are also original to Mira, as is the amorous intrigue between Lisarda, Diego, and Gil. The banditry, violence, and sexual victimization with which the play's characters are patently or latently associated do not come through in the source text and represent typical elements of hagiographical drama aimed at capturing the audience's interest. The vicissitudes of the play's familial and amorous conflict allow the playwright to recast the legend of St. Gil in dramatic terms that would resonate with a contemporary audience. For example, Castillo's text summarily describes Gil as a "desventurado esclavo de sus desatinado deseos," while Mira creates a visually powerful *esclavo del demonio*. The dramatist makes palpable the "raras muestras" (417-18) of God's mercy mentioned in the source text and appropriates the legend of the saint's life to weigh in on the predominant religious debate of his day. As this section proceeds to argue, the dramatist imbeds the *de auxiliis* debate in his play's father-daughter relationship.

"Plega a Dios que...en el mundo no haya cosa / tan mala como tu vida" (vv. 126-30)

The masculine form of the noun *esclavo* in the play's title may posit Gil as the protagonist, but the interaction between Marcelo and his daughters in the first scene establishes the three latter characters as the most important to the plot's unfolding. The opening verse, "Padre soy, hago mi oficio," introduces Marcelo's principal social identity and intimates that he judiciously executes the responsibilities inherent in that role. Now an old man, Marcelo hopes to conserve the honor gained over a lifetime of service to the king when he grants his two daughters the social state most appropriate to what he

believes are their respective inclinations. He proposes fulfilling the wishes of his older daughter, Lisarda (“te pretendo dar...el estado que amas,” v. 28) by arranging her marriage with Sancho, a member of the royal house of Portugal. Similarly, he allows his youngest daughter, Leonor, to enter a convent of her choosing, thus respecting her commitment to the religious life (“el pensamiento / a Dios eterno ofreciste,” vv. 41-42). His daughters’ futures apparently settled, Marcelo feels confident that he has granted his family further honor: “quedará mi casa honrada” (v. 67).

His joy is short-lived. Leonor identifies herself as Marcelo’s “esclava” (v. 74) and assents to his wishes, but her older sister refuses to marry Sancho and vows to remain “una hija inobediente” (v. 75) unless she can marry Diego. The mention of Lisarda’s beloved sours the family scene, as we learn from Marcelo that Diego killed his only son. Appalled at his oldest daughter’s behavior, the father retracts his earlier wish that Lisarda bring honor to the family name via marriage and instead curses her:

Plega a Dios, inobediente,
que casada no te veas,
que vivas infamemente,
que mueras pobre y que seas
abhorrecible a la gente
Plega a Dios que [...]
en el mundo no haya cosa
tan mala como tu vida. (vv. 121-30)

Leonor attempts to subdue her father’s anger, but to no avail. Instead, the offended father blesses his younger daughter, creating a sharp contrast between the two sisters: “Plega a Dios que desigual / tu vida a tu hermana sea” (vv. 181-82). The scene of paternal counsel goes awry, setting in motion the play’s principal conflicts.

Lisarda remains dead set on following her own inclinations (“Mudar...no pretendo / mi propósito,” vv. 101-02), while Leonor proves a paragon of filial obedience

who identifies her father's will as her own ("Tu voluntad es la mía," v. 770). The disparity between the sisters has significant ramifications for the play's theological ends and channels what has been termed the angel/monster dynamic in Western literature. According to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, throughout literary history male writers have tended to categorize female characters into one of these extremes (12, 17). The angel/monster duality recalls what Northrop Frye had proposed several years earlier regarding structural principles of romantic fiction, namely, that writers tended to polarize the ideal and the abhorrent in their depictions of two heroines, one associated with virginity and the other with marriage (*Secular* 79-80, 83). *Esclavo* establishes the division between virgin and wife when Marcelo categorizes his daughters as "una monja, otra casada" (v. 66). Mira further underscores the polarization of the exemplary and the detestable in Marcelo's blessing of Leonor and condemnation of Lisarda.

Leonor, a model of filial duty, embodies Gilbert and Gubar's description of the angel-woman as passive and selfless (21). The younger daughter's "angelic" identity resounds throughout the play: Gil calls her "un angel soberano" (v. 1203), and the prince later refers to her as "el angel que yo adoro" (v. 3110). The "slave" to filial obedience consistently subordinates her will to the demands of male authority. Lisarda, on the other hand, fits Gilbert and Gubar's definition of the monster-woman as the embodiment of "intransigent female autonomy" (28). If the "angel" represents exemplary female behavior, the "monster" exemplifies immorality. Accordingly, Marcelo affirms that Leonor "de virtudes está llena" (v. 1264) but compares Lisarda to female monsters of myth: "Hija que al padre desprecia... siga como loca y necia / a la antigua Flora y Lamia"

(v. 141-44).¹³⁶ The father essentially positions his daughters at opposite ends of the moral spectrum, and Lisarda's subsequent banditry, transvestism, and murder characterize the older daughter as the antithesis of the ideal woman (Rhodes, "Economics" 290).

Gilbert and Gubar argue that the angel-monster polarity expresses male ambivalence toward female sexuality (12, 34). Mira opposes an "angel" and "monster" in *Esclavo*, but I believe this polarization of female characters reflects something different—his own and/or his audience's anxiety and ambivalence regarding a specific theological issue, the aforementioned *de auxiliis* controversy. The theological terms that define the play's filial relationship render the conflict between Marcelo and Lisarda more than the dramatic trope of the father who arranges his daughter's marriage without her consent, spurring her to rebellion. Marcelo responds to Lisarda's refusal to marry Sancho by warning his oldest "angel" that her actions condemn her:

Marcelo:	Ángel, mira que me ofendo.
Lisarda:	Ángel soy, y así no olvido lo que una vez aprehendo.
Marcelo:	Tu aprensión te condena. (vv. 103-06)

Lisarda's disobedience parallels Satan's fall from glory and elevates the father to the status of a God figure (Howe, "Lisarda" 267; Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 27). Mira essentially characterizes Marcelo as a "mouthpiece of divine will" and subtly allies the father's authority with divine power (Rhodes, "Economics" 284). The father's use of parallelism in calling Lisarda's relationship with Diego a violation of his personal authority ("Se ha casado / contra mi gusto," vv. 1330-31) and God's justice ("se ha casado / contra el mandato de Dios," vv. 1339-40) consolidates the connection between

¹³⁶ Flora was a Roman goddess and infamous prostitute. The name *Lamia* referred to both a "célebre ramera de la antigüedad" or a demon in the form of a woman "que con halagos atraía a los hombres para devorarlos" (Covarrubias; *Autoridades*).

paternal and divine authorities.¹³⁷ Between “angel” and “monster” stands the f/Father, the creator/progenitor who blesses and condemns his children.

Given that Mira composed *Esclavo* at the time that the Congregatio de auxiliis finalized its deliberations, I contend that the play’s conflicted filial relationship gives voice to Mira’s position on the issue of grace and free will. Specifically, the tension between Marcelo and Lisarda dramatizes the Jesuit attempt to underscore the power of the individual’s will in securing salvation without downplaying the role of grace. The older daughter’s fall into sin and subsequent conversion make palpable the idea that grace remains sufficient and susceptible to rejection until the believer directs his/her will to virtue. Lisarda’s initial act of rebellion leads to Marcelo’s curse, evoking Satan’s revolt and banishment from heaven. The scene also underscores the duality between Leonor (good angel) and Lisarda (fallen angel/monster):¹³⁸

Hijas el cielo me dio,
ángeles han parecido,
porque la mayor cayó,
ya es demonio, y ésta ha sido
el buen ángel que quedó. (vv. 1259-63)

Unlike Satan’s definitive and eternal expulsion from heaven, however, Marcelo’s curse does not predestine his daughter to sin and damnation, as this would be incompatible with Trent’s rejection of the doctrine of absolute predestination of the elect and predestination of others to evil (Crossan, Tavard, and De Letter 86). Rather, the father’s harsh reaction to Lisarda’s disobedience recalls the scene in Genesis in which God destines Eve to a life

¹³⁷ Mira also links Marcelo to godly traits later in the play when Diego supplicates that the angry father imitate “a Dios que perdona” (v. 848) and spare his life.

¹³⁸ The story of Satan’s banishment has Biblical origins: “the huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth” (Revelation 12:9). In *Esclavo*, Angelio underscores the extent to which the devil’s fall represented a rejection of divine grace: “en gracia de Dios me vi, / en un instante caí / sin que pudiese jamás / arrepentirme” (vv. 1441-44).

of pain, dissatisfaction, and submission for her disobedience.¹³⁹ Both divine and secular curses foretell a life of tribulation, but neither forces the female will either to sin or to virtue. Lisarda freely chooses to become a bandit and lead a life of crime. In keeping with Molinist teaching, the F/father's will does not restrict her freedom.

Lisarda wholly succumbs to temptation and becomes "peor que el más mal hombre" (v. 1233). Yet even at the height of her sinfulness, she exhibits signs of contrition. She refuses to kill Marcelo and Leonor when given the chance and instead humbles herself before her father to beg that he forgive and bless her. The life of crime she has followed to this point renders her repentance surprising and reveals that, despite previously believing that her father's curse forced her will ("con su maldición prolija / a esta vida me obligó," vv. 1220-21), she acknowledges her freedom to embrace or reject virtue. Her father's response further posits the Marcelo-Lisarda relationship as a dramatic representation of Molinist teaching, as the father's blessing does not instantly lead to salvation but rather grants the sinful daughter the potential to reform. Lisarda's journey to redemption allows Mira to highlight the Tridentine definition of justification as "the renewal of the inner man by the *voluntary reception of grace* and divine gifts" (*Decrees* 15; emphasis added). The older daughter continues to sin, but her intimations of future repentance anticipate the moment when the father's blessing spurs her to righteousness, or, put differently, when the believer's free assent renders sufficient grace efficacious.¹⁴⁰

Contrary to her sister, Leonor declares herself her father's slave from the outset. Marcelo's blessing in the opening scene appears to infallibly seal the youngest daughter's

¹³⁹ "To the woman he said: 'I will intensify the pangs of your childbearing; in pain shall you bring forth children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall be your master' (Genesis 3:16).

¹⁴⁰ "Pecadora y ciega soy / y espero hacer penitencia" (vv. 1602-03); "bien es que el perdón pida / para tenello alcanzado / cuando mudare la vida" (vv. 1390-92).

fate; in fact, the father's wishes that Leonor lead a life "desigual" from that of her sister and one day reign in Portugal both come to fruition. She fulfills what Marcelo desires for her, but this does not mean that the father's blessing coerces her volition. While Marcelo's blessing may predict Leonor's behavior throughout the play, Mira grants his audience ample evidence of the younger daughter's freedom to exercise her will. Leonor *chooses* to become a nun ("el estado elegiste," v. 44) and repeatedly dismisses Sancho's attempts to woo her. More importantly, she acknowledges that her attraction to the prince involves the carnal temptation that her sister experiences. Unlike Lisarda, however, Leonor does not give in to amorous desire. She remains faithful to her father's demands, going as far as to agree to marry Sancho, the very man whom Lisarda rejects prior to her descent into sin. Leonor's freely choosing to be a slave to her father's will makes tangible the seemingly paradoxical truth that "the slave called to the Lord is a freed person in the Lord," that is, that one remains free while bound to the divine will.

As counterpoint to the play's obedient "angel," Lisarda rebels against Marcelo's demands and dedicates her life to sin. If Leonor proves that a slave of the F/father can remain free, the older sister demonstrates the extent to which "everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). In spite of her sinfulness, Lisarda gradually finds the world to which she has bound her will an empty and unfulfilling reality when compared to the eternal happiness available to those who cultivate the good of the soul: "la vida, el mundo, el gusto y gloria vana / son junto nada, humo, sombra y pena. / Del alma, que es eterna, el bien importa" (vv. 2046-48).¹⁴¹ She therefore decides to exchange one master

¹⁴¹ Comedias that narrate a sinful woman's path to conversion often depict the rejection of earthly pursuits as the protagonist's first step toward salvation (Fernández Rodríguez 133). Mira uses the convention in *La loca del cielo*, a play that has multiple parallels with *Esclavo*. The play's protagonist, Pelagia, also tries to avoid an unwanted marriage imposed by her father. Like Lisarda, Pelagia is dishonored by a man who

(sin/Angelio) for another (God). In keeping with the play's metaphorical treatment of Marcelo as a God-like figure, Lisarda uses her father as a conduit to beatitude. Her literal enslavement to her father dramatizes her subjection to the divine will, as the subtle association of God and Marcelo as Lisarda's "masters" reveals:

Marcelo:	¿Qué tiene en la cara escrito?
Leonor:	Levanta: 'Esclavo de Dios.'
Marcelo:	Dueño tienes infinito. Con temor te compraré, si eres de Dios.
Lisarda:	Lo seré si me compras. (vv. 2410-15)

Lisarda achieves salvation by turning jealousy and hatred ("la envidia me da inquietud / y matar [a Leonor] me conviene, / que me ofende la virtud / y aborrezco a quien la tiene," vv. 1214-18) into acts of faith, hope, and charity. Put another way, her imitation of Leonor, who acquiesces to their father's will all along, saves her.

The jealousy, hatred, and imitation played out in the Lisarda-Marcelo-Leonor relationship recalls Rene Girard's work on triangles of desire. Girard proposed that great fiction uncovers the "imitative nature of desire" via triangular configurations of interaction wherein one character desires another but cannot possess the object of his/her affection because a third character, the mediator of desire, either possess the object of desire or similarly vies for his/her love (2, 7, 14). According to Girard, the desiring subject feels envy and loathing of the mediator; paradoxically, however, the desiring subject's revulsion also causes a yearning to *become* the mediator in order to usurp

sneaks into her room at night pretending to be her beloved. Pelagia seconds Lisarda in becoming a violent bandit who wishes to kill her father and sister. Once she acknowledges the errors of her ways, the sinful woman takes a first step toward redemption by rejecting worldly goods: "torres fundadas en viento / son los deleites, y pasan / como bienes que, por serlo, / antes de gozarse acaban" (vv. 1840-3).

his/her place in the desired object's life (10, 12, 54). The mediator thus functions as both a despised obstacle and a model of behavior for the desiring subject to imitate.

Studies of early modern literature have identified the Girardian triangle as a structural component common to both the *comedia* and the Cervantine novel (Merrim 98; El Saffar, *Beyond* 5). Here, I would like to argue that the filial triad in *Esclavo* recalls the Girardian triangle of desire in significant ways and stands at the heart of the play's catechistic bent.¹⁴² Lisarda's rebellion in the opening scene fractures the filial triangle, and the remainder of the plot essentially revolves around the reconstruction of the familial triad. Her journey ultimately requires her to overcome her jealousy and hatred of Leonor, whom she must then imitate to gain reentry into the triangle.

The principal character trio in *Esclavo* may not constitute a typical Girardian triangle because Lisarda and Leonor do not compete for Marcelo's love; nonetheless, the play's religious overtones identify the relationship between the father and his two daughters as a triangle of specifically metaphysical desire. Marcelo's function as stand-in for God renders the sisters' respective attempts to achieve worldly happiness akin to the soul's search for the *summum bonum*, which Catholic theology equates to communion with God. Leonor's will obeys Marcelo's desires, and her constant physical proximity to her father (she appears on stage without Marcelo only three times) represents the virtuous

¹⁴² The Lisarda-Marcelo-Leonor triad is one of three such character configurations. Other important character groupings with traits of the Girardian triangle of desire form between Gil, Lisarda, and Diego as well as between Sancho, Leonor, and the Prince. The reiteration of the number three speaks to the number's theological symbolism. We also find the number used in Gil's boast that he killed three villagers (v. 2440) and offended God on three occasions (v. 1496), and in his definition of sin as containing three component parts (vv. 535-37). Lisarda also references the number when she laments that God has given her three enemies (Diego, Gil, and Marcelo). Moreover, the sinful daughter atones for three of Gil's sins by forgiving Diego, giving Lísida jewels, and selling herself into slavery for Arsindo. Profeti has identified a similar pattern of "obsessively repeat[ing] the number three" in another of Mira's religious plays, *El ejemplo mayor de la desdicha*, suggesting that the dramatist had a penchant for using sets of threes to structure his plots (Introduction, *Ejemplo* 210).

soul's continued closeness to the divine. Similarly, Lisarda's fall from grace serves as an analogue to the believer's rejection of the eternal for the worldly, and the longer she stays separated from the F/father the longer she remains a slave to sin. Reintegration into the filial triangle, and by extension a return to eternal beatitude, will require repentance and reform. For Lisarda, escaping a life of sin will involve imitating her sister. The family triad will not be restored until the "monster" turns "angel" once more.

The portrayal of Lisarda's rebellion indicates that ultimate happiness cannot be achieved unless the individual's will falls in line with the divine will. The older daughter's banishment from her father's home ("en mi casa no ha de entrar," v. 891) dramatizes the soul's rejection of God and its subsequent distancing from eternal beatitude. While Lisarda rejects Marcelo's authority, she takes on a life of crime and lives out her role as the play's monster-woman. Cohen posits that the bandit on the early modern stage represented a "complex parallel between rebellion against God and rebellion against society" whose turn toward virtue involved submitting to both societal norms and family authority (379). In a similar vein, Natalia Fernández Rodríguez's study of penitent female sinners in the comedia considers the protagonist's loss of honor in plays such as *Esclavo* a kind of social death that underscores how the heroine's sinfulness distances her from God and family alike (90, 93). Cohen and Fernández Rodríguez's respective linking of the spiritual to the social brings us back to the theological undertones of the father-daughter relationship in *Esclavo* and reveals that Lisarda must make amends with her father before she can turn to the Father. Once this process begins, Leonor serves as her sister's mediator, the person Lisarda envies, hates, and imitates. The "monster" secondly the "angel" and becomes their father's slave.

The basic elements of the theologically-based triangle of desire begin to take shape when Lisarda encounters her father and sister for the first time after fleeing her home and becoming a bandit. Lisarda expresses envy and hatred of Leonor, who in the *bandolera*'s eyes no longer represents the "hermana querida" (v. 749) of the previous act but a reminder of her father's curse and of the virtuous life she has rejected. Marcelo's praise of Leonor as a woman of incomparable moral goodness ("De virtudes está llena; / ninguna mujer la iguala," vv. 1264-65) elicits envy from Lisarda ("la envidia me inflama," v. 1269), who feels that her father has treated his daughters inequitably. Lisarda's anger leads her to abhor her sister and the virtue the latter represents. Still too proud to humble herself and repent, Lisarda resolves to kill her father and sister, thereby eliminating the conduits that can lead her back to the Father.

The pivotal moment in the scene occurs when Leonor offers her life for Marcelo, arguing that "menos daño será / cortar el temprano fruto / que no el árbol que le da" (vv. 1282-84). The reference to the fruit-bearing tree recalls the play's opening scene, when Marcelo compares his daughters to branches that will bear the fruits of his labor: "las dos sois las ramas / en que el fruto he de mostrar" (vv. 29-30).¹⁴³ Leonor thus invokes a time of filial union, before Lisarda's rebellion and descent into sin. Moreover, the Biblical resonances of the arboreal image foreshadow the play's dénouement. If "a good tree does not bear rotten fruit, nor does a rotten tree bear good fruit" (Luke 6:43), then either Leonor will prove a "rotten fruit" or Lisarda will eventually demonstrate goodness. The younger sister definitively affirms her virtue by laying her life on the line for her father, which necessarily identifies Lisarda as the one who will change her ways. Accordingly,

¹⁴³ Gil reiterates the Marcelo-tree / daughters-fruit association when he tries to dissuade Diego from entering Lisarda's room and bringing dishonor on her family: "Marcelo es árbol que pudo / dar el fruto que tú amas, / y si cual bárbaro rudo / le vas quitando las ramas / quedará el tronco desnudo" (vv. 430-34).

Leonor's selfless gesture spurs Lisarda to kneel before her father and beg for his forgiveness.¹⁴⁴ Her salvation is not yet certain, as she proves when she boasts that she imitates "las fieras Amazonas" (v. 1401) in her filial hatred shortly after prostrating herself. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that her first mention of future repentance coincides with her first imitation of Leonor's humility. According to the Girardian triangle of desire, emulation emerges when the desiring subject and the subject's mediator yearn for the same object. Lisarda's first mimetic act suggests that within the "monster" lies the same metaphysical desire that spurs the "angel" to obedience and virtue. Lisarda begins to recognize the F/father as the "entity that can redeem her, the one to whom she should rightly surrender her will" (Rhodes, "Economics" 286).

"Perdíme no obedeciendo, / y he de ganarme obediente" (vv. 2192-93)

Lisarda's imitative behavior escalates the more she sheds her pursuit of worldly pleasures in favor of greater metaphysical ends. Her first acknowledgement that a Christian should not risk condemnation by opposing the will of God "por el gusto que da vida tan corta" (v. 2051) precedes an act of charity (giving Diego a ring with which to buy himself clothes) and defense of her father ("no ofendas / cosas jamás de Marcelo," vv. 2110-11). While Lisarda does not offer up her life for Marcelo, she does imitate Leonor in expressing concern for her father and placing another person's interests before her own. The scene reiterates the play's Molinist undertones. As Ruano de la Haza has

¹⁴⁴ Mira depicts a similar scene in *Loca*. When Pelagia encounters her father and sister after becoming a bandit, she initially wishes to kill them. Her sister, Celia offers her life for her father, moving the sinful daughter to show mercy. The bandit's sudden change of heart moves the father, Liseno, to bestow upon the stranger the blessing he had wanted to give his disobedient daughter: "podré... a tu fe agradecido, / pedir al Cielo... que el bien que deseara / para ella siendo buena, te alcanzara [...] Muera al mundo y para el Cielo vivas" (vv. 1618-29).

proposed, the failure of Lisarda's pistol to fire when she tries to kill Diego dramatizes divine grace in action (*Slave* 35). Fernández Rodríguez identifies the sudden malfunction of a gun as a common convention in early modern religious drama that creates a tangible representation of an otherwise invisible process, the reception of divine grace (110, 116).¹⁴⁵ In keeping with the Molinist contention that grace does not conflict with human liberty, supernatural intervention keeps Lisarda from killing Diego, but she must still demonstrate preparedness to accept the divine gift. Her pardoning and clothing of Diego, an act with Biblical and Tridentine connotations, leads her closer to salvation and underscores the value of good works as proof of the believer's assent.¹⁴⁶

Elizabeth Rhodes has argued that "as long as Lisarda continues to manifest her own will...she will fail" ("Economics" 288). Rhodes's evaluation seems to focus on Lisarda as a representative of women in the Spanish patriarchy rather than as a conduit for the moralistic ends of the hagiographical genre. As other scholars have observed, Lisarda does not "fail" merely because she manifests her will; instead, her sins reflect a misuse of her volition and represent an abdication, not an affirmation, of free will (Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 31; Rauchwarger 49). Lisarda proves her freedom when she in fact becomes her father's slave, an action that proves her commitment to penitence and underscores the play's insistence that accepting the divine will as one's own constitutes

¹⁴⁵ In *Loca*, Pelagia's gun also fails to fire when she attempts to kill her father and sister. Mira associates the weapon's failure with the disobedient daughter's change of heart: "¿Qué nuevo impulso me llama / a conocer mis delitos, / ya piadosa, ya turbada?" (vv. 1651-53). The play's demonic figure interprets the event as a sign of divine grace: "tan prestas mudanzas / auxilios de Dios han sido" (vv. 1731-32).

¹⁴⁶ "What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2: 14-17). The Tridentine justification decree underscored the need for good works: "faith does not perfectly join us to Christ...unless hope and charity accompany it" (*Decrees* 16).

an act of liberation.¹⁴⁷ As Gilbert and Gubar posit, self-surrender constitutes the angel-woman's defining act (25). Lisarda imitates Leonor to the point of dying while her father's literal slave, thus shedding her identity as "monster" and becoming an "angel." Her return to the triangle of beatific desire ends in the ultimate good, communion with the divine: "de la penitencia santa / el alma a los cielos vuela" (vv. 3262-63). While Girard proposed that mediation yields only "a very vivid impression of autonomy and spontaneity precisely when [the desiring subject is] no longer autonomous," Mira makes it patently clear that Leonor's mediation ultimately frees Lisarda. The older sister achieves salvation because she (freely) aligns her will with the F/father's. Her submission loosens her from "los clavos y las cadenas" (v. 3283) that bound her will.

The filial triangle of desire constitutes the principal character configuration from which other tripartite groups emerge. The most important of these secondary triangles with regard to the play's catechistic intentions includes Gil, the saint-turned-sinner-turned-saint who swaps models of behavior on the path from sin to repentance. In her discussion of the Girardian triangle in Cervantes's novels, El Saffar describes the love triad as "an emblem of a misplaced desire for God" and posits that the desiring subject displaces his/her metaphysical yearning onto a secondary object that invariably acquires divine attributes (5). *Esclavo*'s filial triangle depicts a character's turn toward the metaphysical. The Gil-Lisarda-Diego configuration, on the other hand, falls in line with

¹⁴⁷ Filial self-sacrifice for greater theological ends lies at the heart of Mira's *El capitán Jepté* (ca. 1623), a dramatization of the Biblical story of Jephthah. If God grants him victory, the warrior vows to sacrifice the first thing he sees when he returns from battle, only to find his daughter upon his victorious return. Mira emphasizes the willingness of the daughter, Ana, to sacrifice herself for her father throughout the play, first when the two are accosted by bandits and later when Jepté vacillates about fulfilling his oath. Much like Lisarda at the end of *Esclavo*, Ana is a model of obedience ("Muera yo obediente" v. 2500) who embraces the metaphysical, even if it means losing her life. The father-daughter relationship once again becomes a didactic instrument that emphasizes the necessity of submitting to the will of God.

El Saffar's argument to the extent that the friar substitutes physical lust for metaphysical yearning and begins referring to Lisarda as a veritable divinity.

Ironically enough, Gil's fall begins with an ascent. He convinces Diego to refrain his "lascivos deseos / de Lisarda" (vv. 302-03) and desist from climbing into her room, only to give in to lust himself. Gil has second thoughts about trespassing into Marcelo's home but chooses to sin after an exchange with what he interprets as a disembodied voice (Diego's hidden servant). Gil's belief in kledonomanancy, supernatural revelation in words that are overheard seemingly by chance, convinces him that he has been predestined to damnation (Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 31).¹⁴⁸ If he cannot avoid condemnation, Gil rationalizes, then his life of penitence has been meaningless and he now has complete freedom to engage in a life of sin. Whereas the misfiring of Lisarda's gun inspires repentance, Gil takes another approach to perceived supernatural intervention: he deems the overheard words divine *omina* and directs his will away from God toward Lisarda.

Gil's resolve to sin gives rise to a triangle of desire that positions Diego as mediator and object of imitation. The friar rapes and flees with Lisarda, channeling and bringing to fruition Diego's desire to sexually possess and elope with Marcelo's oldest daughter: "Gozaré, don Diego, el lecho / que tú quisiste gozar" (vv. 533-34). Gil's earlier rebuke of Diego's passion as "bestia maliciosa / y caballo que no para / si no le enfrenan la boca" (vv. 314-17) has transformed into the friar's vow to act as "un caballo desbocado

¹⁴⁸ The question of the nature and provenance of supernatural revelation appears in religious writings of the period. San Juan de la Cruz addresses the issue in *Subida del Monte Carmelo* and warns the believer to be wary of any apparent revelation manifested to the physical senses: "más propio y ordinario le es a Dios comunicarse al espíritu, en lo cual hay más seguridad y provecho para el alma, que al sentido, en el cual ordinariamente hay mucho peligro y engaño [...] siempre se han de tener las tales cosas por más cierto ser del demonio que de Dios: el cual en lo más exterior y corporal tiene más mano, y más fácilmente puede engañar en esto que en lo que es más interior y espiritual" (75). Tirso also explores the topic in *Condenado*. Paulo's concern regarding a dream in which he sees himself condemned to eternal damnation leads him to ask for a divine revelation that clarifies his fate. The petition opens the door for the devil to deceive him into believing he is predestined to hell. Like Gil in Mira's play, Paulo then takes on a life of sin.

/ que parar no [ha] de saber / en el curso del pecado” (vv. 738-40). Furthermore, Gil echoes Diego’s use of courtly love tropes, underscoring the metaphysical implications of the friar’s descent into sin. The nobleman calls his beloved an “imagen de Dios hermosa” (v. 363) and promises to sacrifice “alma...y fe” (vv. 364-65) when he ascends into the “cielo de Lisarda” (v. 382). Similarly, Gil refers to himself as a man who “ha subido / hasta la divina esfera” (vv. 646-47) after raping Diego’s beloved and declares that his soul “no tiene / fe, caridad ni esperanza” (vv. 745-46). He rejects God to satisfy his carnal cravings, making literal what for Diego was merely poetic love language and negating the justification his previous life of penitence may have earned him.¹⁴⁹ Unlike Lisarda, whose imitation of her sister brings her closer to beatitude, Gil’s contentious relationship with Diego and Lisarda makes him the play’s second “fallen angel”: “Como en Dios no he confiado...soberbia angélica fue / y así Dios me ha derribado” (vv. 756-60). His redemption will require the creation of a new triangle of desire, one in which the disobedient daughter functions as imitable mediator.

The scene in which Lisarda encounters her father and sister for the first time as a bandit is a pivotal moment in the disobedient daughter’s path to redemption. Significantly, the scene also depicts Gil’s second displacement of desire and the transformation of Lisarda from object of lust to mediating model of behavior. Gil’s promise to be Lisarda’s partner in crime and his repeated projection of personal guilt onto the sinful daughter (“Por ti perdí la prudencia,” v. 686) presage the role Lisarda takes on

¹⁴⁹ The Tridentine doctrine on justification affirmed that a believer received “gifts [of] faith, hope and charity” when s/he achieved salvation (*Decrees* 16). Gil’s description of the state of his soul as lacking faith, hope, and charity underscores the extent to which he has sacrificed salvific grace.

for the friar when he comes into contact with Leonor.¹⁵⁰ In the context of the Girardian triangle of desire, displacement of culpability demonstrates that the desiring subject holds the mediator responsible for the negative outcomes of the tensions the triad's conflicted relationships create (11). Gil's finger-pointing thus indicates that a new triangle will emerge in which Lisarda will serve as mediator. The newly-avowed sinner instantly lusts after the younger sister, who replaces Lisarda as Gil's idol ("esta imagen idolatra," v. 2725) and fuels the friar's unbridled passion ("por gozar de ti, Leonor, / daré el alma," v. 1426-27). Although Lisarda does not compete for Leonor's affection with Gil in the new triangle of desire, the older sister's ongoing imitation of the latter's virtue nonetheless makes her an obstacle to Gil's sinful designs. The friar emulates the sinful daughter's desire to kill Marcelo but also acknowledges that "lo que el alma desea / podrá Lisarda estorbar" (vv. 1309-10). He mimics the female "monster" and follows her criminal pursuits, all the while resenting and wishing to harm her ("la muerte quisiera darte," v. 1599) as cause of his fall and obstacle to his carnal urges.

The subsequent development of the relationship between Gil and Lisarda speaks to Girard's assertion that "as the role of the metaphysical grows greater in desire, that of the physical diminishes in importance" (85). The friar initially finds himself torn between what Girard described as the desiring subject's feelings of "the most submissive reverence and the most intense malice" toward the mediator (10). This paradoxical sentiment changes, however, the more Lisarda becomes as "angelic" as her sister. Gil's yearning to possess Leonor culminates in a moment of deception that causes the friar to acknowledge the ephemeral nature of worldly pleasure. In accordance with Lisarda's role

¹⁵⁰ Several scholars have noted that Gil repeatedly blames Lisarda for his immoral behavior (Howe, "Exemplary" 270; Rhodes, "Economics" 294).

as Gil's mediator-model, the friar echoes the sinful daughter's rejection of the temporal when he realizes that the "angel" with which he has been intimate is in fact "humo, sombra, nada, muerte" (v. 2823).¹⁵¹ Gil parallels Lisarda to the extent that his rejection of the worldly also gives way to divine intervention. The friar's first kledonomatic experience sets him on the road to sin; this time, however, the voice that tells the friar to reform his life has indubitable provenance: "sin duda es Dios con quien hablo" (v. 2812).¹⁵² As it did with Lisarda, grace here manifests as an instance of supernatural intervention, and, in keeping with the play's Molinist bent, the recipient of this divine gift must exercise free will and prove that he has chosen the metaphysical over the earthly to achieve redemption (Ruano de la Haza, *Slave* 36).

"Libre me vi siendo tuyo, / cautivo soy siendo suyo" (vv. 2586-87)

Gil emulates Lisarda in recognizing that a life of unfettered passion is not free: "Libre me vi siendo [de Dios], / cautivo soy siendo [del demonio]" (vv. 2586-87). Like the reformed bandit who appears dressed as a slave "y escrito en la cara, 'Esclavo de Dios'" (151) after her conversion, Gil also chooses the paradoxical route of liberating his will via subjection to God: "Esclavo fui del diablo / pero ya lo soy de Dios" (vv. 2918-19). As proof of his repentance, the man who previously denied God and rejected divine

¹⁵¹ In Mira's *Animal*, the devil tries to deceive the protagonist in similar fashion. Julián believes that God will not forgive him for accidentally slaying his parents and begins to ponder suicide. To spur him on, the devil spurs appears as the slain father and states that he has been condemned to hell because of his son. Julián initially takes the vision as a sign of damnation, but, as in *Esclavo*, the devil's deceit becomes a moment for repentance and affirmation of divine mercy: "¿Pues, en Dios puede cesar / la misericordia? No, / porque, a faltar, bien sé yo / que se había de condenar / la mayor parte del mundo" (vv. 2792-96).

¹⁵² Mira's *Mesonera* and *El santo sin nacer y mártir sin morir* also depict divine intervention as disembodied voices. In *Mesonera*, a heavenly choir tells the protagonist that María's struggle to leave behind her sinful ways has finally succeeded: "Con tanta fuerza volaron / al soberano hemisferio / los suspiros de María, / que en angel la convirtieron" (vv. 3710-13). In *Santo*, a voice orders a repentant woman to find the man whose absolution will save her: "Por la santa intercesión de mi amado religioso, / mi devoto fray Ramón, / no vas al fuego espantoso, / él te dará absolución" (vv. 2291-95).

grace echoes Lisarda's act of self-surrender when he lays his life on the line for another: "dalde esta muerte a don Gil; / no es bien que don Diego muera" (vv. 3226-27). In combination with his public and private acts of penitence, the friar's selfless act demonstrates a newfound desire to achieve communion with God.¹⁵³ Grace alone does not save Gil, nor does he nominally repent for his sins without actually paying for them, as some critics have argued.¹⁵⁴ If this were the case, salvation could be considered possible without assent of the will or acts of charity and penance, and such a conception of justification contradicts the Molinist teachings that the play espouses. Grace indeed comes to bear on Gil in his relationship with Lisarda, an association that ultimately proves fortuitous when she becomes his exemplar of virtue; nonetheless, it takes the friar's own acts of contrition in imitation of his model-mediator to earn redemption.

The triangle of beatific desire that brings Lisarda to salvation via imitation of Leonor becomes the foundation of a second character triad in which Lisarda functions as Gil's model for redemption, positing the father-daughter relationship once more as the driving force behind the play's moralizing ends. Lisarda's road from sinner to penitent slave highlights the importance of filial obedience because it is predicated on an imitation of Leonor's submission to Marcelo. Gil replicates the older daughter's conversion, echoing Lisarda's enslavement to Marcelo and becoming a slave to the Father. Girard

¹⁵³ Gil's "saco de penitencia" and "soga a la garganta" (p. 184) give evidence of his private penitence, while his confession at play's end represents a public display of repentance. During the early modern period penitence was deemed a type of "epiritual medicina" (*Autoridades*) that afforded the sinner another opportunity to be saved: "Those who by sin have fallen from the grace of justification received may be justified again, when, moved by divine influence, they succeed in recovering their lost grace by the sacrament of penance" (*Decrees* 22).

¹⁵⁴ Roger Moore opposes Lisarda to Gil and states that the former's salvation relies on good works while the latter depends on grace alone (284). Rhodes also dismisses Gil's penitence and holds that he does not pay for his sins like Lisarda but instead "cursorily repents, and is venerated" ("Economics" 283, 294). The text does not explicitly support either position. Characters in the final scene do not "venerate" Gil after his confession; rather, their attention turns, first to Lisarda's sanctified body, and then to the marvelous nature of the events that have just transpired: "Merecen estos sucesos / una admiración eterna" (vv. 3290-91).

described metaphysical desire as a “contagion [that] is so widespread that everyone can become his neighbor’s mediator without ever understanding the role he is playing” (99). In *Esclavo*, Lisarda does not consciously show Gil the path to salvation, nor is Gil aware that his experiences on the road to redemption parallel those of his partner in crime. The playwright has created a kind of liminal space outside the level of awareness in which divine grace can operate and inspire the two characters to virtue without necessarily forcing their wills. In this way, Lisarda’s role as Gil’s mediator dramatizes the notion that justification “brings about an interior renewal that is the fruit of grace and divine gifts, even if this origin cannot be detected at the psychological level” (Crossan et. al. 85).

Mira uses the filial triad as a metaphor for the believer’s relationship with God and intimates an analogy between (dis)obedience of a biological father and (dis)obedience of the heavenly Father. Divergent readings of the father-Father metaphor in the critical literature underscore the ambiguity and limits of this complex analogy. Rhodes maintains that seventeenth-century standards would have presented Marcelo as a paragon of fatherhood and nobility in two key ways. First, he tries to secure his daughters’ futures according to their respective inclinations. Furthermore, his initial attempt to seek legal redress against Diego through the king instead of taking vengeance into his own hands proves obedience to the established hierarchy (“Economics” 283, 285). By contrast, Ruano de la Haza presents a darker vision of Marcelo and calls the character a vengeful father who oversteps the bounds of paternal authority, even by early modern standards, when he tries to coerce Lisarda into an unwanted marriage and then curses her (*Slave* 26, 27). The latter scholar also holds that Marcelo’s failure to show mercy toward Diego, whom he plans to have killed before Gil confesses to raping Lisarda

and exculpates the accused nobleman, negates identification with the divine (28, 32).

While both critics make valid points, in the final analysis the complexity of Marcelo's characterization only further enhances the play's theological message.

Marcelo is indeed vengeful; however, this does not make him a bad father. The contentious history between Diego and Marcelo explains and partly mitigates the father's hostility toward the nobleman. It is hard to believe that an audience would be overly critical of a father who wishes ill upon the man who killed his son and whom he later suspects has murdered his oldest daughter. Marcelo does not curse Lisarda out of an unjust overreaction to her refusal to marry the man he has chosen for her but out of surprise at her choice of suitors: "¿A un traidor, a un homicida / que priva de dulce vida / a un hijo que yo engender, /tienes amor, tienes fe? / ¿No es tu sangre la vertida?" (vv. 111-15). The father's ire reveals a man concerned for his surviving daughter's safety: "no por vengar los que has muerto, / mas por guardar la que queda" (vv. 2271-72).

More importantly, Marcelo's alleged vengefulness does not invalidate his role as stand-in for divine authority. Within the play's theological context, the seeming cruelty of the father's curse allows Mira to counter the heterodox notion that God predestines some people to evil. The filial conflict provides the playwright with the dramatic elements needed to create a story of redemption akin to a Biblical parable. Much like the prodigal son who regrets squandering his inheritance and returns home willing to serve his father, Lisarda also repents for her crimes and humbles herself before Marcelo. The father's condemnation of Lisarda's romantic inclinations as "contra mi gusto" and "contra el mandato de Dios" parallel the Biblical son's admission of guilt: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you" (Luke 15:21). In both cases, the physical and

metaphysical are aligned via the father, indicating communion with paternal authority as the foundation for unity with God. Marcelo's curse does not damn Lisarda; instead, it allows the dramatist to underscore the importance of penitence in redemption, thus proving a "maldición dichosa" (v. 3287).

Lisarda and Leonor, the other two vertices of the filial triangle, are equally central to the play's didacticism. Leonor, paragon of obedience, receives the Portuguese crown, a reward commensurate with her constant virtue: "virtudes te hacen reina" (v. 3225). For her part, Lisarda earns redemption despite her descent into sin by repenting and imitating her sister in charity and obedience. The angel/monster dichotomy established in the first act gives way to a larger theological message: even the worst of fallen angels can achieve salvation with the assistance of grace and good works. The two daughters reach the maximum heights of the earthly and spiritual domains (the monarchy and heaven, respectively) and thus become powerful models of behavior, not only for other characters in the play but for the audience as well. Accordingly, both sisters play crucial roles in Gil's conversion, Leonor as evidence of the ephemeral and deceitful nature of physical pleasures and Lisarda as icon of repentant sinner who precedes Gil and lights the path to redemption. As Rhodes affirms, Gil uses Leonor and Lisarda "as tools to display and meet the objectives of his salvation" ("Economics" 283). If Marcelo brings together the play's social and spiritual dimensions in his role of analog to the Father, his daughters dramatize the place of grace and free will in quotidian reality, confirming the filial relationship's role in exploring the relationship between God and mankind.

In his work on drama and theology in Golden Age Spain, Gabriel González argues that all early modern Spanish playwrights were Molinists. From an artistic

perspective, González writes, Báñez's insistence on the *a priori* efficaciousness of divine mercy rendered the Thomist position "dramáticamente estéril" because it did not appear to make salvation as contingent on the assent of the believer as the Molinist stance (81). If the believer acts virtuously because s/he has been predestined to do so, then the road to salvation is not as potentially dramatic and entertaining as it would be if grace could be lost through sin and regained through repentance and penitence. Whether out of aesthetic convenience or theological conviction, Mira takes full advantage of the dramatic potential of the Molinist position in the *de auxiliis* controversy and composes a plot that runs the gamut of virtuous and evil behavior. Moreover, his creation of multiple Girardian triangles of desire enhances the plot's dramatic content. Gascón's study of religious drama describes the mimetic drive that fuels the Girardian triangle as *pharmakon* to the extent that it moves the believer to sin but also functions as an instrument of redemption (111-12). For Gascón, the ambiguity of the mimetic drive underscores the early modern Spanish belief in free will as the means by which the believer *chooses* which model of behavior to imitate (116). *Esclavo*'s multiple triangles of desire present an array of models from which to choose, reflecting the complex world of hope and temptation every Catholic must learn to navigate to achieve salvation.

3.2 “tratar con Dios y con el mundo:” Filial Discord and the Religious Woman’s Rejection of the Secular World in Tirso’s *La Santa Juana* and Lope’s Teresian Plays

Cuando salí de casa de mi padre, no creo será más el sentimiento cuando me muera; porque me parece cada hueso se apartaba por sí.

—Teresa de Jesús, *Libro de la vida* (114)

[D]ichosamente consagra / vuestro afecto, hacienda y vida, / la libertad, cuerpo y alma. / Con cuatro nudos amor / con vuestro esposo os enlaza, / prisiones son, pero dulces.

—Marcela de San Félix, “Al velo de Sor Francisca” (vv. 38-43)

Religious women proved central to many of the theological debates that preoccupied Spain in the transition from the late medieval to the early modern period (Lehfeldt 8). Indeed, the five woman saints canonized between 1540 and 1770 were all nuns or tertiary *beatas*, suggesting an underlying current of preoccupation with female spirituality and monasticism in Counter-Reformation Europe (Hsia 127, 147). On the Spanish stage, plays such as Tirso’s *La Santa Juana (primera parte)* and Lope’s *La bienaventurada madre Santa Teresa de Jesús* underscore the religious woman’s place in the Post-Tridentine social consciousness. The two plays reflect the popular nature of early modern theater, for both were composed amidst efforts to secure the beatification of their respective protagonists. The prospective *beatas* occupied a liminal space in the popular consciousness: not yet beatified, they remained markedly “human”; nonetheless, the miracles ascribed to them (that spearheaded petitions for beatification in the first place) identified them as superhuman and divinely chosen. *Juana* and *Bienaventurada* take advantage of this ambivalence and situate their protagonists in a conflict between the secular and sacred. Whatever Juana or Teresa do to reject the worldly underscores the role of free will in salvation and renders the heroines models of virtue. Moreover, the scenes of divine intervention depicted in both plays remind spectators of the equally

powerful presence of God's will in the world. The impulse to humanize their protagonists leads the two dramatists to use the filial dynamic as a representation of the woman saint's inner struggle at the threshold of religious and secular life.

“la clausura / ya nuestra casa profesa. / Ya no hay salir del convento”¹⁵⁵

Longstanding assumptions regarding women's propensity for lust and sinful behavior contributed to the Church's concern about monastic enclosure throughout the medieval and early modern periods. The 1298 papal directive *Periculoso* mandated strict claustration of all nuns and put forth a message that remained a constant throughout the Counter-Reformation: nuns, not monks, should be locked away from the secular world lest their carnal instinct lead them astray and threaten their chastity and the integrity of their religious vows (Lehfeltdt 4). In Spain, a multitude of religious reform movements permeated the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, many of which aimed to create rigid boundaries between the monastic and secular world via enclosure (106). The Catholic Monarchs especially sought to restore religious purity to the realm and came to associate claustration with a return to social and spiritual order (135). As with previous efforts at reform, expectations evidenced gender bias: Fernando and Isabel prioritized female enclosure but did not impose similar limitations on male monasteries (121, 145).

Trent reevaluated the topic of monastic reform and claustration, and the Council's rulings made official the distinction between male and female orders that had begun taking shape with *Periculoso*. On the one hand, a renewed emphasis on charity and evangelization fomented the establishment of male orders, such as the Society of Jesus, devoted to missionary activity (Lehfeltdt 29; 188-89). On the other hand, the Council

¹⁵⁵ *Juana* (vv. 3532-34). Textual citations are from Blanca de los Ríos's edition of *La Santa Juana*.

ruled in 1563 that “nunneries should be kept carefully closed, and egress be absolutely forbidden to the nuns, under any pretense whatever, without episcopal license, on pain of excommunication” (*Decrees* 90). The Tridentine enclosure decree was followed three years later by the papal bull *Circa pastoralis*, which extended claustration to tertiary orders and non-tertiary congregations of religious women who lived together. By the 1570s, all women in religious communities lived, at least theoretically, in claustration (Lehfeldt 179).¹⁵⁶ The divergent Counter-Reformation views on monasticism with regard to gender were particularly visible in Spain, where both Teresa of Ávila, embodiment of religious mysticism and internal piety, and Ignatius of Loyola, exemplar of active missionary activity, were canonized on the same day in 1622 (Hsia 128, 133).¹⁵⁷

Religious drama of the period that made reference to female monasticism therefore flourished in a milieu that celebrated active service of male clergy—Tirso himself traveled to Santo Domingo in 1616 as a preacher and lecturer for the Mercedarian order (Ayala 9)¹⁵⁸—while constraining female piety and service to the cloister.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ The historical record presents strict enclosure as more of an ideal than a reality. Studies of female monasticism in Spain and Italy during the early modern period suggest that nuns often maintained close contact with their families and that relatives were sometimes allowed in the cloister to seek spiritual advice from their religious kin (Hills 13; Lehfeldt 39). Lope de Vega, for instance, visited his daughter almost daily after she became a nun (Arenal and Sabat-Rivers 19). While this may have been the reality, the drama of the period promoted the idealization of claustration and its sociocultural correlates.

¹⁵⁷ Teresa, though herself an active reformer who frequently stepped outside the cloister walls, espoused strict claustration in her convents and required aspirants to sever ties with the emotional, economic, and social concerns of their families (Weber, “Angels” 212; Lehfeldt 192). In *Libro de la vida*, Teresa regrets spending her initial years as a nun in a convent that did not mandate claustration: “me hizo harto daño no estar en monasterio encerrado [...] hubiérame cierto llevado al infierno” (143). Accordingly, she advises parents to marry off their daughters “muy bajamente” rather than place them in convents that did not enforce enclosure and where they could thus be tempted to sin and lead their fellow sisters astray (144).

¹⁵⁸ The Mercedarian Order required, in addition to vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, a fourth “vow” or promise to surrender one’s life as a hostage in exchange for the freedom of a captive Christian (Ríos xci). This latter vow underscores the extent to which the order remained active in the secular world.

¹⁵⁹ That is not to say that cloistered nuns never took a more active missionary role, as the famous case of Luisa de Carvajal (1566-1614) demonstrates. The Spanish nun traveled to England to aid persecuted

The prospect of increasingly stringent enclosure did little to hinder the spread of female monasticism. On the contrary, historical records point to growth in the number of convents and female orders during the post-Tridentine period.¹⁶⁰ Secular society valued female monasticism for a number of reasons, such as nuns' intercessory prayers (Lehfelddt 13, 15). At the same time, cloisters attracted parents who could not afford to arrange marriages for their daughters due to prohibitive secular dowries or because they wanted to create entailed estates for eldest sons (40). In such cases, celestial marriage in a space that safeguarded female chastity and, by extension, family honor, became a highly-regarded alternative (Hsia 34). Women across social classes may not have had the same opportunity to enter the cloister, as families who wished to place daughters in a convent had to pay a dowry and provide a yearly allowance to cover costs of clothing and food (Lehfelddt 48). Such expenses, however, often proved more affordable than the cost of secular dowries, making the cloister the preferred choice for parents with more than one daughter or for families at the heights of the social ladder reticent to see part of their fortune go to other noble lineages (Lehfelddt 39; Gascón 39).¹⁶¹ Female monasticism's

Catholics and evangelize among Protestants. As Elizabeth Lehfelddt affirms, however, Carvajal's deeds constitute an "extreme form of an active apostolate" and represent the exception rather than the norm among the female religious of the period (208).

¹⁶⁰ St. Teresa alone founded seventeen convents before her death in 1582, and the number of Discalced Carmelite houses continued to grow into the 1590s (Elliott, *Spain* 243). In Valladolid, the number of convents more than doubled from seven in 1500 to twenty-three in 1650 (Lehfelddt 16).

¹⁶¹ Women certainly had other reasons for entering convents. The cloister served as a viable refuge for women who had poor chances of marrying because of their social situation (e.g., being illegitimate daughters), as well as an isolated space in which women could pursue talents they would not be permitted to cultivate to the same degree in the secular world (Ayala 10; Arenal 149). Marcela de San Félix, for instance, was able to cultivate her literary talent while garnering the kind of reverence and respect afforded to a nun that would have otherwise been denied her in the secular world as an illegitimate daughter (Arenal and Sabat-Rivers 5, 9, 11). Similarly, the Mexican nun Juana Inés de la Cruz took on the monastic habit in an effort to protect her love of learning against the limiting duties and restrictions of marriage and motherhood. For the purposes of the present analysis, however, the focus will remain on the question of a daughter's right to choose and her father's preoccupation with marriage, as these constitute the most pronounced topics in the *comedias de santas* of the period.

capacity to fulfill both spiritual and pragmatic needs meant that, in many a European convent, nuns who took on religious vows in a spirit of true devotion lived alongside women whose families forced them into the cloister (Weinstein and Bell 48). Accordingly, sixteenth-century confessors' manuals warned against the practice of coercing women into the cloister, and the Council of Trent recommended excommunication for anyone that "compelled females to enter convents against their will, from avaricious or other motives" (Lehfeldt 12; *Decrees* 91).¹⁶²

***"juntáis diablo, carne y mundo"*¹⁶³**

Comedias occasionally allude to the practice of forcing daughters into convents, but this aspect of the historical reality was generally not the norm on stage.¹⁶⁴ Dramatists tended to focus on the other clause of the aforementioned Tridentine decree on female monasticism: "whoever... hindered such as were desirous of the monastic life, should be excommunicated" (*Decrees* 91). Rather than depict parents forcing daughters into convents, *comedias de santas* more commonly portray filial conflict as a battle of wills between a daughter who rejects the secular world in favor of the cloister and a father

¹⁶² Arcangela Tarabotti's (1604-1652) autobiographical writings give us a glimpse into the life of a daughter forced into the cloister. Her *Paternal Tyranny* presents a scathing condemnation of parents who treated the monastery as a "dumping ground for their unwanted, maimed, mentally retarded, and illegitimate daughters" (Panizza 1, 3). Tarabotti was born lame, leading her father to consider her fit only for a convent. In her writings she criticizes not just her family but the Venetian patriarchy at large for fomenting "the abuse of forcing... young girls to take the veil" (Tarabotti 37-38). She repeatedly refers to the cloister as a "living Hell" for nuns forced there against their will and censures those who supported the "sacrifice of virgins to the Lord [...] as if they were criminals sentenced to life imprisonment" (41). Not surprisingly, the Holy See condemned the text in 1660 for fear that it would deter girls from entering religious life or discourage novitiates from making permanent vows (Panizza 27).

¹⁶³ Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "Hombres necios que acusais" (v. 68).

¹⁶⁴ The brazenly unchaste Margarita in Tirso's *Quien no cae*, for instance, mocks her father's concern about her behavior and accuses him of wanting to lock her away: "pretendes... monja encerrarme" (vv. 171-74); "debes de gustar / que... me entre monja, porque el dote / temes que acá me has de dar" (vv. 181-84).

committed to coercing the prospective nun into an unwanted marriage. As Donald Weinstein and Rudolph Bell assert in their study of medieval and early modern hagiography, contention over marital union formed “the usual theater of crisis” in the *vitae* of women saints (52). The protagonists of hagiographical works typically faced pressure to marry and opposed their spiritual inclinations to parental efforts to protect the family’s wealth and social prestige (74-75). These scenarios of family conflict carried over onto the Spanish stage, where production of hagiographic drama peaked between 1600 and 1640 despite the censure of some moralists who accused the genre of indecorously combining the sacred and profane (Dassbach 1-2; Gascón 26). The continued performances of saints’ plays during the early modern period suggest that the genre’s depiction of themes that captured the public’s interest while promoting post-Tridentine Catholicism met the Horatian objective of *enseñar deleitando* (Gascón 30).

Spanish dramatists fitted their hagiographic source material within the thematic parameters of the *comedia nueva* to create religious drama that deftly combined exemplary piety, special effects that captured audience attention while rendering saintliness more visible, and elements of secular drama such as amorous intrigue and violence (Fernández Rodríguez 11; Dassbach 3-4). In the case of women saints, the family conflict related to marriage in the *vitae* found a productive analogue in the *comedia*’s preoccupation with honor and *libertad de amar*. In fact, the major difference between a *comedia de santo* and a *comedia de capa y espada* is often the female protagonist’s rejection of her father’s proposed suitor, not in favor of another man but out of a desire for spiritual marriage. Like their counterparts in profane drama, women saints battle the forces of patriarchy and resist pressure to enter into unwanted unions. The

central tension that moves both dramatic genres thus hinges on the control of the female protagonist's sexuality. Yet unlike her secular counterpart, whose rejection of marriage does not indicate a desire to remain chaste and does not therefore call into question her femininity, the woman saint's drive to enter the cloister implies a struggle against what society assumed was her intrinsically lustful nature (Dassbach 24; Gascón 15).¹⁶⁵

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz addresses the issue of gender and female monasticism when she asserts, "aquí me vine / porque, si es que soy mujer, / ninguno lo verifique" ("Señor" vv. 94-96). Ever since St. Augustine penned his thoughts on original sin, woman's *raison d'être* in the Catholic consciousness remained bound to procreation and thus inextricably linked to her physicality and alleged concupiscence (Fernández Rodríguez 16). On and off stage, the woman who wished to enter a convent abjured her traditional social role(s) and chose virginity over marriage, thereby negating a femininity that the patriarchy defined almost exclusively in terms of her sexuality (Arenal 150). The nun's body exists "sin que a uno u otro se incline" and thus takes on a "neutro, o abstracto" (vv. 106-107) character. If, as sor Juana argues, "solo a las casadas dicen / úxor, o mujer," then the perpetual virgin leaves her womanhood behind because "no [es] mujer que a alguno / de mujer pueda servirle" (vv. 98-104).

Moreover, a woman's supposedly weak and lustful nature implies that her decision to remain a virgin would require strength not normally attributed to her gender; in other words, she would have to be *varonil* (Fernández Rodríguez 20-21). Accordingly, documents concerning the beatification and canonization of Teresa of Ávila employed

¹⁶⁵ One may argue that the *mujer esquiva* and the woman saint faced similar questions regarding their femininity because both rejected the marital institution itself and not just a particular suitor. The major difference, however, is that the religious woman invariably enters the cloister, which effectively removes all possibility of future marriage, while the *mujer esquiva* frequently finds herself married, or at least engaged to be married, by play's end.

encomiastic expressions such as “virile woman” and “manly soul,” participating in what Alison Weber identifies as a diffuse pattern of “linguistic gender reassignment” in writings about woman saints (“Women” 144-45).¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the *vita* of Blessed Juana de la Cruz states that the *beata* was conceived a male and became a woman on account of the Virgin Mary’s intercession, leaving a prominent Adam’s apple as an emblem of Juana’s “divinely determined androgyny” (Surtz 6-7). So, too, did the biographer of the seventeenth-century Mexican nun, Isabel de la Encarnación, celebrate the religious woman’s “ánimo varonil” and consider her a “mártir de la castidad” for her staunch commitment to chastity (Rice 23; Salmerón 93, 113).

Viewed together, these anecdotes reveal a tendency to underscore the strength of a woman saint/nun’s devotion by downplaying her feminine nature. The religious virgin’s femininity must be redeemed from its presumed lustful propensity precisely through its suppression (Fernández Rodríguez 20), hence the insistence on keeping nuns securely locked away behind cloister walls lest their sinful nature get the best of them and their intercessory prayers lose their power.¹⁶⁷ Many convents even required nuns to cut their hair, further eliminating signs of their femininity and enhancing their new, androgynous identity (Ferrús and Girona 47). Once she took a vow of chastity, the nun’s body lost its secular (procreative) value and became a kind of relic that enhanced the spiritual

¹⁶⁶ Following suit, *Bienaventurada* alludes to the future fame of “la virgen santa” (v. 2670) as “mujer varonil y fuerte” (v. 1006).

¹⁶⁷ Tirso’s *Quien no cae* dramatizes this dual vindication/suppression of femininity. The future saint, Margarita, initially appears as proudly unchaste, the epitome of a woman’s lustful nature unfettered (e.g., she maintains a secret relationship behind her father’s back and at one point desires to have an affair with a married man to know “a qué sabe un casado” [v. 1389]). With her conversion comes a definitive rejection of all sexual desire, and she thus approaches an angel who suddenly appears lying in a bed, not with lust, but as “toda voluntad / sin tener el sensitivo / apetito entrada” (vv. 2983-85).

significance of the place where it was housed and which had to be carefully kept in its sealed reliquary (cloister), away from the reach of the outside world (Hills 32, 34).¹⁶⁸

The complex treatment of the nun/female saint's sexuality in *vitae* and religious drama modifies the social correlates of the father-daughter relationship that forms the basis of the protagonist's struggle. While not making explicit reference to fathers, Sor Juana's censure of "hombres necios" (v. 1) who bring together "diablo, carne y mundo" (v. 68) in their unjust treatment of women nonetheless captures the stress of paternal pressure in the religious woman's life. Although "diablo, carne y mundo" were considered antagonistic to all Christians (i.e., not just in the context of monasticism and sainthood), these forces of temptation took on particular significance in writings by and about nuns and woman saints, particularly with regard to the filial relationship.¹⁶⁹ Fathers in hagiographical works pressure their daughters to marry, usually for selfish or sociopolitical reasons, and thus represent the demands of a patriarchal society ("mundo") that treats women as objects of exchange.¹⁷⁰ In turn, the prospect of a physical union

¹⁶⁸ The fate of St. Teresa's corpse offers us a powerful example of the almost divine nature of the nun/woman saint's body. The deceased nun was disinterred and reburied repeatedly due to an ongoing desire to prove her sanctity via her body. Ecclesiastical and lay authorities alike repeatedly amputated small pieces of her corpse "to partake of her bodily sanctity" (Hsia 135).

¹⁶⁹ Sor Marcela's life and writings give testimony to the association between a father and the worldliness the nun leaves behind. Electa Arenal and Giorgina Sabat-Rivers affirm that "el mundo, el demonio y la carne, que conoció tan de cerca... en la vida de su padre, se [manifiestan] como preocupación principal en su obra" (10-11). Marcela worked briefly as a messenger to the duke of Sessa's secretary, a job that entailed copying love letters exchanged between Lope and his mistress (8, 18). At age sixteen, she left her father's home for the cloister, and instead of copying profane love letters she composed poetic works that condemned the worldly: "Todo cuanto precia el mundo / son miserias, son mentiras, / accidentes sin substancia, / todo apariencias fingidas" ("Otra loa. A una profesión" vv. 49-52).

¹⁷⁰ The pressures of patriarchy upon a saint-to-be can be appreciated in Tirso's *Joya*, a play Gascón describes as a woman ascetic's "struggle against patriarchal objectification for the purposes of achieving political goals" (81). The play opens with the conversion of Eurosia, a Bohemian princess who offers her virginity to God. Arcislo, her uncle and a bishop with ties to the Pope, stands in the way of the protagonist's vow of chastity and tries to secure a marriage between her and the prince of Aragon. Arcislo attempts to coerce Eurosia into the union by emphasizing filial obedience ("Vuestros padres lo desean," v. 373) and the utility of the proposed marriage for Christendom's struggle against the Moors ("la ley de

projects the very sexuality (“carne”) the nun and saint-to-be must overcome, which itself is frequently linked to diabolical intervention (“diablo”).¹⁷¹

The saintly daughter remains steadfast in her monastic vocation, which means unwavering filial disobedience. Unlike her counterpart in profane drama, however, the religious woman’s defiance is invariably celebrated, differentiating her from the *mujer esquivia*, whose rebellion either resolves in eventual acquiescence to marriage, which reaffirms both her femininity and the patriarchy’s rule over her sexuality, or leads to her demise.¹⁷² The distinction between profane and religious drama reflects the Tridentine reaffirmation of free will and insistence on female monastic enclosure. Stated differently, religious drama does not depict fathers forcing daughters into convents because the exemplary nature of the hagiographic genre demanded that claustration be accepted (and promoted) as a free act which, with the assistance of divine grace, brings the prospective nun closer to salvation.¹⁷³ As mouthpiece for Counter-Reformation ideals, the woman

Cristo ensalzas / coronando tu cabeza / con el sagrado laurel / de Aragón,” vv. 1729-32). His arguments articulate the overarching obligations faced by women to serve society as obedient daughters and passive pawns in the securing of alliances.

¹⁷¹ Isabel de la Encarnación’s adolescence attests to the union of “diablo, carne y mundo” with relation to the filial relationship. A wealthy suitor’s courting of Isabel prompts her parents to insist “cuán bien le estaría casarse y no perder una ocasión tan buena en utilidad suya y de sus padres.” The parental pressure gives the devil an avenue for tempting her “con la obediencia que debía a sus padres” (Salmerón 92).

¹⁷² In Tirso’s *Quien no cae*, Clenardo’s initial vehemence that his daughter not enter a convent eventually resolves in feelings of pride regarding Margarita’s vocation and a promise to enter a religious order himself. In similar fashion, the pagan Filipo in Calderón’s *El José de las mujeres* desists in his efforts to secure a marriage for his daughter as a “remedy” (v. 919) for her Christian inclinations and also expresses a desire to convert. In Mira’s *Loca*, Liseno repeatedly tries to force his daughter to marry a suitor of his choosing (“habrás de escoger / la boda o la sepulture,” vv. 631-2), only to later consider himself “el padre más venturoso” for fathering a holy woman (v. 2813).

¹⁷³ The editorial fate of Lope’s *La buena guarda*, a play based on the legend of a nun who flees the convent in pursuit of a romantic relationship, makes evident the propagation of enclosure during the early modern period. The original version of the play (1610) included an abbess as its protagonist, but the work likely fell under censorial scrutiny, for the first published version (1621) no longer took place in a convent but in a lay female oratory (*oratorio de doncellas*), which meant that the protagonist no longer violated the enclosure vow (Menéndez y Pelayo xxxvi).

saint had to actively embrace what amounted to a loss of freedom (enclosure) through a voluntary act of disobedience that detached her from her father.¹⁷⁴ The latter in turn became a metonym for the secular world from which the saint-to-be disengaged in preparation for a life of monastic claustration.

“tratar con Dios y con el mundo:” Filial conflict in Lope’s Teresian plays

In *Libro de la vida* (1588), Teresa describes her journey to the cloister as a “batalla y contienda de tratar con Dios y con el mundo” (159). An integral part of the saint’s “battle” involves her relationship with her father. Although Teresa identifies herself as “la más querida de mi padre” and depicts an affectionate filial bond, she nonetheless describes paternal resistance regarding her desire to become a nun (97-98). The saint also references worldly vanity, which she defines in terms of excessive interest in books of chivalry and preoccupation with physical appearance, as another obstacle to entering the cloister. The multiple tensions portrayed in the saint’s autobiography provided later playwrights with sufficient material to produce hagiographical plays rich in profane content. *La bienaventurada madre Santa Teresa de Jesús* dramatizes the complicated filial relationship and struggle with worldly temptations described in *Vida* as a secular love triangle and a father’s efforts to force a daughter into marriage.

Critics have not reached a consensus regarding the play’s origins, but evidence exists which points to Lope as composer of the Teresian comedia.¹⁷⁵ The possibility of

¹⁷⁴ Thus Tarabotti scolds parents who force daughters to become nuns: “women who voluntarily withdraw to a solitary cell after experiencing the world’s vanities and men’s deceptions are truly praiseworthy [...] but in our age such privileges are granted to few and only to those brought up by families to exercise their free will and who have therefore chosen such a life prompted by the breath of the Holy Spirit” (49).

¹⁷⁵ The earliest published manuscript (1638) attributes authorship to Luis Vélez de Guevara. Nonetheless, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo included the work in his collection of Lope’s corpus because he believed the

Lope's authorship yields fertile ground for literary analysis, for the dramatist likely also wrote the later play *Vida y muerte de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, a work that lacks the filial conflict of *Bienaventurada*. Ultimately, however, the authorship of *Bienaventurada* is largely irrelevant to the present analysis, which will explore the treatment of filial conflict in the Teresian play and compare it to Tirso's depiction of the father-daughter relationship in *Santa Juana*. More to the point is therefore the play's proposed dates of composition, all of which tend to coincide with the process of Teresa's beatification, which began in 1604 and received official papal approval in 1614.¹⁷⁶ *Bienaventurada* dramatizes the historical Teresa of *Vida*, the famed nun who in 1614 still lived in the popular consciousness as a blessed woman and not as the idealized, mythical *saint* depicted in the later *Vida y muerte*, which was written around the time of Teresa's canonization (Howe, "Teresa" 479). Concomitant with the greater *humanity*, as it were, of the Teresa in *Bienaventurada* is a father-daughter relationship akin to the Juan-Juana dynamic in the first part of Tirso's *Juana* trilogy. Both plays adapt their biographical material to fit the mold of a secular comedia and oppose the protagonist's holiness to the social demands of a father who stands in for worldly ideals and gender constructs.

Bienaventurada opens much like a secular play: two *galanes* vie for the female protagonist's affection in a milieu of secret love letters, jealous confrontations, and

play was written in the Lopean style (I). Emilio Cotarelo accepted that Vélez penned the published manuscript but argued that the dramatist adapted an earlier Lopean text (Aragone Terni 9n1). Catharine Gilson has also suggested that the Teresa of *Bienaventurada* fits the "mold" of the Lopean female saint who resists paternal pressure to marry and presents as a *mujer varonil* (93, 95).

¹⁷⁶ Some critics have proposed 1604 as a plausible composition date; however, a play, possibly *Bienaventurada*, was performed in 1614 to celebrate Paul V's signing of the Brief for beatification (Aragone Terni 12; Cao 299). The latter date of composition seems reasonable given the apparent artistic propaganda campaign that took place, in Spain and elsewhere, in support of Teresa's beatification (Thøfner 66). For instance, a series of twenty-five folio prints depicting Teresa's life and ministry was released in Antwerp, amidst the beatification process in 1613, to serve as "a compelling visual supplement to the already existing textual hagiographies" (60, 74). The same could be said for a comedia, such as *Bienaventurada*, composed around the same time as the prints and for the same purpose.

threatened duels. The young lady's father intervenes to defend his family honor and reprimands his daughter for her apparent coquettishness. In keeping with the conventions of secular drama, Teresa's father, Alonso, utters the word *honor* no less than seven times in a span of four hundred lines (vv. 144-543) and laments the plight of the man "Quien tiene hijas que casar" because "de vidrio tiene el honor" (vv. 338-39).¹⁷⁷ The father frets that the rivalry between Teresa's suitors, Ramiro and Diego, will threaten his family's honor and tries to settle the matter himself, forcing his daughter to marry Ramiro.

Teresa's subsequent refusal is notably ambiguous. She dismisses the possibility of marriage outright ("no tengo de ser casada," v. 567) and pronounces a desire to enter the religious life. Alonso mocks his daughter and warns her that "pocas monjas hay contentas, / y muchas arrepentidas" (vv. 608-09).¹⁷⁸ The father's arguments against entering the religious life strongly affect Teresa, who consequently modifies her rejection of the proposed union and insists that if she marries "sólo ha de ser con don Diego" (v. 621). Although a similar vacillation between marriage and cloister appears in *Vida*, Teresa never mentions a desire to marry a specific suitor as she does in *Bienaventurada*. On the contrary, *Vida* indicates that, even when she doubted her call to enter the convent, she nonetheless feared marriage: "todavía desease no fuese monja...aunque también temía el casarme" (109). The dramatist thus characterizes the fictional Teresa as a woman bound to secular and social interests via personal inclination and her father's influence.

Alonso's struggle to defend his honor and keep Teresa out of the convent reaches its apex when he concedes that his daughter may decide which suitor to marry. On the

¹⁷⁷ Textual citations are from Menéndez y Pelayo's edition of Lope's plays.

¹⁷⁸ An audience knowledgeable about Teresa's life would realize that the father's teasing ultimately proves prophetic: "Ya te imagino una santa [...] luego querrás fundar / Convento de las Descalzas; / darás ejemplar doctrina / mostrando a tu religión / suspiros en la oración / y sangre en la disciplina" (vv. 574-83).

surface, the decision appears to respect Teresa's freedom to choose; in fact, upon hearing the news the daughter reiterates her inclination toward Diego. Alonso's plan ultimately backfires, however, as Teresa does not turn to her father for counsel but instead seeks refuge in a convent, where she prays that Christ act "como...mi padre" (v. 814) and inspire her to make the correct decision. In a scene that recalls Gil's kledonomantic experience in Mira's *Esclavo*, Teresa interprets a voice she overhears (the sacristan trying to keep Diego's servant from entering the convent) as divine revelation:

Leonido:	Amigo, luego saldré.
Teresa:	Dios, ¿con cuál marido iré?
Sacristán:	Con Cristo se puede ir.
Teresa:	Con Cristo una voz me dijo; el cielo debe de hablar.
Leonido:	¿No entraré?
Sacristán:	No hay que dudar [...]
Teresa:	[...] cuando lo digo yo que es el cielo quien me habló, no hay que dudar, me responde. (vv. 817-27)

Unlike Gil, who erroneously ascribes a supernatural provenance to the voice he hears and uses it to justify his ensuing life of sin, Teresa recognizes in the partially overheard conversation an invitation to enter the cloister. Thus upon the arrival of Alonso and her two suitors she declares that she has chosen God as "verdadero esposo" (v. 921). The kledonomantic episode presents an external manifestation of the believer's interior call to monastic life, as the conversation between the sacristan and the servant essentially acts out the religious woman's inner tensions between physical and spiritual desires. The spiritual (sacristan) ultimately wins, and thus the act ends with the definitive fissure of the filial relationship that had kept Teresa bound to the worldly: "a mi esposo he de seguir, / y a mi padre he de dejar" (vv. 928-29).

Notably, the scene of monastic calling in *Bienaventurada* does not depict the intense emotion Teresa details in *Vida* when she recalls leaving her home for the convent: “cuando salí de casa de mi padre, no creo será más el sentimiento cuando me muera; porque me parece cada hueso se apartaba por sí” (114). It may seem ironic that a play depicting a particularly “human” Teresa should treat the final interaction between father and daughter in such undramatic fashion. Yet while the final family scene in *Bienaventurada* contradicts the saint’s autobiography, it nonetheless accords with the symbolic nature of the filial relationship so often found in plays about women saints. Fathers of women saints-to-be represent the ties to the secular world the protagonists reject on their way to acquiring a new identity that is neither daughter (i.e., an exchangeable commodity that belongs to her father) nor, in a sense, woman (i.e., a person who can fulfill a sexual function in society, such as wife or mother). The aspects of the *comedia de capa y espada* at work in *Bienaventurada* yield a more “human” Teresa, but they also serve a greater dramatic purpose: allowing the dramatist to visually represent the woman ascetic’s inner struggle to follow her religious calling.

Alonso does not return to the stage, and immediately following the resolution of the filial conflict we find Teresa on her deathbed amidst a “pleito...entre el Angel de Guarda y el Demonio, / sobre un alma que ya sale del cuerpo” (vv. 1112-4). The scene recalls the historical Teresa’s nearly fatal illness shortly after becoming a nun but omits Alonso’s commitment to finding a cure for his daughter. The dramatist leaves out the father and turns the episode into a symbolic death from which a new “mujer varonil y fuerte” (vv. 1006) emerges. The scene makes visible the definitive nature of Teresa’s transformation to a virginal bride of Christ by means of a scene of (near) death and

resurrection. Our protagonist enters as Teresa de Ahumada and comes out as “Teresa de Jesús” (v. 1236), the possessive preposition emphasizing that she is no longer *of* the secular world (i.e., daughter of Alonso Sánchez and Beatriz Dávila y Ahumada; potential wife and mother). At the end of the scene Teresa learns that the church hierarchy has granted her permission to found a convent. The sequencing of events makes clear that such a prominent Church role cannot be granted to a woman with strong ties to the secular world and thus in perpetual danger of falling into sin. An ecclesiastical position of power can only fall upon a “virgen santa” (v. 2670), a woman who can conquer the sinful propensities of her sexuality and prove herself more male (*varonil*) than female. As Alonso’s absence from the scene implies, the first step in that transformation involves separation from her father.

“no podrás, / si la gracia no te ayuda” (vv. 2871-72): *Vida y muerte de Santa Teresa*¹⁷⁹

Lope takes a notably different approach to the woman saint’s filial conflict in *Vida y muerte de Santa Teresa de Jesús*, a play more reminiscent of the allegorical and contemplative *auto sacramental* than of the action-driven *comedia de capa y espada*. Lope likely penned *Vida y muerte* in 1622 to commemorate Teresa’s canonization (Aragone Terni 20). The date of composition suggests that a more mythicized and idealized Teresa would have existed in the popular consciousness than was perhaps the case at the time of *Bienaventurada*’s writing. By 1622, the Carmelite nun’s identity as “virgen santa” was a foregone conclusion. The changed character of Teresa’s place in the collective mindset perhaps explains Lope’s rather superficial depiction of the father-

¹⁷⁹ Textual citations are from Elisa Aragone Terni’s edition of *Vida y muerte*.

daughter relationship in *Vida y Muerte*, particularly with regard to the themes of forced marriage and daughterly disobedience.

We see the play's strong allegorical character in the opening scene when the characters Envy and Vanity plot ways to tempt Teresa. Although the protagonist has not yet even decided to enter the religious life, the myth of the recently canonized Carmelite shines through as Envy includes Teresa among a group of legendary Biblical heroines that includes the Virgin Mary herself. The presence of allegorical figures and the idealization of a "milagrosa y divina" (v. 179) Teresa at the play's outset downplay the protagonist's humanity and characterizes her as the central figure in a cosmic battle between divine Providence and forces of sin. Envy commands Vanity to use "libros profanos," "amigas," "galanes," and "galas" to tempt Teresa and ensure that the young woman "se aparte y se divierta / de la continua oración" (vv. 215-28). The references to worldly pleasures echo Teresa's admitted youthful vanity, but the sense of personal struggle that comes through in both *Vida* and *Bienaventurada* does not appear in *Vida y muerte*.¹⁸⁰ Divine Love need only replace the books of chivalry on Teresa's desk with Augustine's *Confessions* and fire an arrow in her direction to instigate an urge to "dejar...arrepentida, / galas" (vv. 503-04) and become "otra mujer...más cuerda" (vv. 471-72). The dramatist keeps further with the tradition of the *comedia de santa* when he associates the ascetic woman's decision to enter a convent with her renunciation of the "vanidad del mundo" (v. 468). Unlike the Teresa of *Bienaventurada*, however, our protagonist decides she will enter a convent without previously rejecting her father's demands to marry. In fact, the filial conflict that fills an entire act of *Bienaventurada*

¹⁸⁰ Teresa often recalls her youthful preoccupation with "la honra del mundo" in *Vida*: "Comencé a traer galas y a desear contentan en parecer bien, con mucho cuidado de manos y cabello, y olores y todas las vanidades que en esto podía tener" (103, 105).

occupies only the end of the first act in *Vida y muerte* and reflects an attempt to proselytize, not to humanize the protagonist's inner tension.

Teresa speaks about marriage in the opening act almost exclusively with her brother and does no more than reaffirm the rejection of matrimony she espouses while reading St. Jerome: "Jerónimo me ha enseñado / a saber tomar estado, / y el de religiosa ha sido; / ya he puesto el mundo en olvido" (vv. 605-08). The conversation between the siblings becomes a Counter-Reformation sermon on the superiority of celibacy over marriage. Lope also references Jerome's claim that the only redeeming aspect of matrimony is the possibility of producing "vírgenes que a Dios se ofrecen" (v. 657), and Teresa's brother accordingly lauds his sister's decision to enter a convent in response to the Church father's teachings as a successful conquest of her sexuality: "¡Qué bien supiste escoger! / En nada fuiste mujer, / pues lo mejor apetece" (vv. 635-37). The protagonist's resolution to remain a virgin represents a conventional hagiographical trope; nonetheless, Teresa's decision regarding marriage is not associated with filial conflict, reducing its dramatic intensity. The nun hurriedly progresses through the steps of what the audience already knows will be a successful path to sainthood, and by the time Teresa's father enters the play divine forces and the daughter's own decision to free herself from the chains of the secular world have already determined her future.

The protagonist's secured fate renders a prolonged filial conflict superfluous. In many a hagiographical play the conflicted father-daughter relationship externalizes the saintly woman's inner struggle. The absence of this tension in *Vida y muerte* eliminates the need to dramatize a father's attempts to force his daughter into marriage and prevent her from entering the cloister. Consequently, the dramatist makes no attempt to humanize

the fictional Teresa's father. Lope does not even give the character a name, identifying him only as "Padre." The character serves as another of the play's (impersonal) allegorical figures, not as a "human" antagonist to Teresa's religious inclinations. "Father" expresses a desire to see his daughter married for the sake of his family's "calidad" (v. 765), but his intentions never move beyond asking his son to identify the best suitor and then acting outraged when he learns that Teresa has already chosen a husband without first consulting him. His anger does not lead to a confrontation with his daughter over her right to exercise her free will; instead, he immediately accepts Teresa's desire to be "de Dios esposa" as something he cannot oppose: "estobarlo yo no es justo" (vv. 845-46). Even the prospect of securing a union between Teresa and a wealthy man fails to move "Father," who contradicts the behavior of prototypical comedia fathers in his insistence that "forzar voluntades / sólo puede hacerlo el cielo, / y más en cosas de gusto, / pues no tienen privilegio / en el albedrío los padres" (vv. 947-51).

Not surprisingly, Teresa's final rejection of "amorosos deleites" (v. 1075) before entering the cloister does not spur a filial conflict but a direct confrontation with the devil, who takes on the guise of a *galán* to tempt the protagonist into marriage. The presence of other allegorical characters that directly intervene in Teresa's life sets the protagonist on a path in which cosmic forces of good and evil vie to take control of the future saint. Given this context of supernatural intervention, it is appropriate that Teresa's definitive triumph over the secular should be dramatized as a clash with Satan and not as a battle of wills with her father. The devil often appears in the *vitae* of women saints as a source of sexual temptation that gives the protagonist ample opportunity to defend her chastity and thus prove her virtue (Fernández Rodríguez 77; Rice 14). Hence, the devil in

Lope's play attempts to chain the protagonist to her social identity via carnal temptation, preempting Teresa's father as symbol of worldly desire. In the final analysis, *Vida y muerte* contains no real filial conflict, a fact ultimately attributable to the play's date of composition and to Teresa's place in the popular consciousness at that time.¹⁸¹

“esto merece...quien quiere casar por fuerza / sus hijas” (vv. 2233-35): Santa Juana

Tirso wrote the first part of the *Juana* trilogy in 1613 during his most fecund period of dramatic production (Ríos cxvi, 589). The playwright doubtlessly drew inspiration for his work from the renewed interest in the life of Juana de la Cruz (1481-1534) that took hold in the seventeenth century thanks to the publication of two biographies and the initiation of the canonization process (Trubiano 43; Surtz 8).¹⁸²

According to Tirso's hagiographical sources, Juana's parents blocked her initial efforts to enter the religious life and tried to force her into marriage at age fifteen, leading the young girl to flee her home disguised as a man and seek refuge in a convent (Lehfeldt 169; Surtz 3). These episodes of the *beata's* life would have resonated with a playwright who composed more plays about women saints than any of his contemporaries and who demonstrated a proclivity for the theme of filial (dis)obedience and personal liberty (Gascón 79; Trubiano 71). *Juana* thus constitutes a valuable work for a consideration of the treatment of the father-daughter relationship in the *comedia de santos* and the place of female monasticism on the early modern stage. The similarities between Tirso's play and

¹⁸¹ On a more speculative note, the play may also reflect upon the dramatist's acceptance of his own daughter's religious calling, and "Father's" respect for Teresa's free will might give evidence of Lope's own coming to terms with the inevitability of Marcela's abandonment of the secular world.

¹⁸² Antonio Daza's 1610 biography of Juana likely served as Tirso's principal source. The beatification process began in 1621 and led to Juana receiving the title of venerable (Surtz 8; Ríos 593). Although she was never officially canonized, the faithful considered Juana a saint, as Tirso reflects in the many characters who declare, "Juana de la Cruz es santa" (v. 2890).

Bienaventurada shed light on the factors that may have driven dramatists to include conflicted filial dynamics in their depictions of religious women.

The first scene underscores the complex relationship between the nun-to-be and the secular world and outlines the principal terms of the play's filial conflict. *Juana* opens with the wedding of two servants, and our protagonist first appears on stage with her father, Juan. Both flank the bride and groom, as their *padrinos*. Juana's reputation as "la virtud de España" (v. 64) gives the newlyweds confidence that God will bless their new home because, as the groom reasons, "la madrina es casi madre / y los novios son los hijos," and therefore "el bien que el cielo la ofrece / es bien que a los novios caiga" (vv. 57-61). The groom's words introduce us to the protagonist's ambivalent position between secular and religious domains: the couple may be blessed "por virtud de la madrina" (v. 55), but the allusion to a mother and her children emphasizes Juana's femininity, her identity as a member of secular society with a predetermined sexual role.

The newlyweds do not make similar allusions to the *padrino*'s virtue. Instead, they laud Juan because "con ser hombre tan rico / de ninguno es envidiado" (vv. 70-71). The detail of Juan's wealth does not appear in Tirso's source material and presages a character anchored in the material world.¹⁸³ Furthermore, the father's proposition that a contest be held to determine who can best describe "las propiedades, / efectos y calidades / del amor" (vv. 201-03) also inscribes him within the realm of sexual/secular love. This early characterization anticipates the father's coercive behavior with regard to marriage and social standing. Juan dismisses Juana's counterproposal that the guests tell exemplary

¹⁸³ The historical Juana was born to farmers of modest means (Surtz 3). Her mother passed away at age seven, and her father subsequently sent the young Juana to live with wealthy uncles (Daza 19). Tirso mentions an uncle who is a merchant but concentrates in the *filial* relationship the wealth and materialism Juana eventually rejects.

tales of “casados santos” (v. 218) and insists that she follow his example and leave the religious and secular separate: “has de hablar, según mi ejemplo, / en el templo, como en templo, / y en las bodas como en bodas” (vv. 225-29). Juana humbly acquiesces, and as the scene ends we find the young lady caught amidst the influences of *mundo y carne* as represented by Juan and her own role in the servants’ wedding.

Juan’s characterization in the opening scene explains his positive reception of a noble’s offer to marry Juana. The father initially claims to have reservations about Francisco Loarte’s proposition due to the “notable diferencia / de...estado” (vv. 775-76) between the two families and his daughter’s young age. Juan also recognizes that “negocios de casamientos, / es razón primero / comunicarlos” (vv. 823-26), but instead of consulting with the prospective bride he opts to discuss the matter with his brother, Mateo. The father’s decision does not bode well for Juana, not only because it demonstrates disregard for her own freedom to choose but also because her fate will be partly determined by her uncle, a man who in the previous scene showed himself incapable of managing his own disobedient son.¹⁸⁴ Mateo argues that the proposed marriage would be “honroso para todos” (v. 1033), leading Juan to negate his earlier concern about social disparity when he notes that love “mezcla y teje / con la lana la seda, aunque más valga, / igualando al villano con el noble” (vv. 862-64). The juxtaposition of love and material wealth (fine cloth) reiterates the father’s function as metonym for the protagonist’s struggle against worldly desires that pull her away from the convent.

Juana finds herself in a monastic context at the end of the first act, but not yet as a cloistered nun. As Juan’s family accompanies fellow villagers in a festive pilgrimage to

¹⁸⁴ Mateo scolds his “hijo mozo y travieso” (v. 700) for engaging in late-night amorous excursions. Not knowing how to handle his son’s behavior, Mateo decides to send him away to study at Alcalá.

the convent of Santa María de la Cruz, Juana narrates the legend of the building's foundation. Significantly, the story draws multiple parallels between Juana and the convent's founder, Inés. Like our protagonist, Inés had a reputation as a virtuous woman since childhood. At age thirteen (the same age of Juana in the opening act) the Virgin Mary appeared to Inés multiple times, and over the course of these apparitions the Blessed Mother identified a site where a church was to be built in her honor. A community of *beatas* built a house near the church that eventually became a Franciscan convent. Inés was appointed abbess of the convent, but soon she and her fellow nuns "apostataron todas / y el monasterio [dejaron]" (vv. 1252-53). The disgraced abbess would repent and go on to live a life of penitence; nonetheless, the origins of the convent remained marred with the stain of lost chastity and broken vows.

It is important that Juana should be the character narrating Inés's story, for she, too, will become abbess of Santa María de la Cruz, and her unwavering chastity will atone for the foundress's sin (Dassbach 20).¹⁸⁵ Daza indicates that the historical Juana made this trip to the convent at age seven and resolved to stay with her aunt in a Dominican convent in Toledo, but her father stopped her and "[put] her in mind of her tender years and the austerity of religion" (17-18). Tirso modifies the episode such that Juan's resistance to his daughter's monastic intentions coincides with his efforts to secure her marriage, emphasizing the predominantly social nature of the protagonist's difficult road to the cloister. At this point in the play Juan has arranged a marriage for his daughter

¹⁸⁵ Daza's biography of Juana makes this latter point explicit because it does not begin with the *beata's* birth but with the story of Inés and the founding of the convent. When the biographer arrives at Inés's fall, he affirms that Mary "besought her most blessed son that he would send such a person as was meet to restore such a breach" (13). Years after being appointed abbess, Mary appears to Juana in a vision to remind the nun of her role as the convent's second foundress (Surtz 75). Tirso includes this scene in his play; however, Juana's guardian angel addresses the nun, not Mary: "después que la pastora / Inés se dejó vencer / del mundo, como mujer, / la Reina, nuestra señora, / a su Hijo soberano / pidió que al mundo enviase / quien su casa gobernase; / y su poderosa mano / te crio para este fin" (vv. 2988-96).

without her knowledge, and the introduction of Inés's sin confirms what Tirso has been building since the opening scene: Juana will need to overcome both her father's secular interests and the presumed sinfulness of her own gender before entering the convent.

The second act also opens with talk of marriage, but unlike the joyous celebration of the previous act, Juan now appears on stage with a tearful Juana. The father expresses disappointment at his daughter's resistance to the union that he has arranged without her knowledge: "De tu humildad y obediencia / jamás, hija, imaginara / mi gusto tal resistencia" (vv. 1288-90). Juan's arguments emphasize Juana's expected place in society as a woman who will bring him descendants. He references Juana's earlier description as "casi madre" twice, first in the context of the potential joy of marriage ("Verás / si te casas mil efetos/ de gusto, y más si me das / hidalgos y nobles nietos," vv. 1329-32), and then as an imperative ("nietos quiero que me des," v. 1441). Tirso depicts a progression from metaphorical motherhood (to the newlyweds in the first scene), to hypothetical motherhood ("si me das...nietos"), to attempted forced motherhood, underscoring Juana's sexuality and, more importantly, her father's control over it. Moreover, as Mateo reminds his niece, marriage to Loarte would be beneficial to the young lady's family because the suitor "es hombre / con quien nos podéis honrar...con su sangre hidalga" (vv. 1319-25), rendering father and uncle representatives of the principal functions of patriarchal exogamy, propagation of family lines and intergroup alliance. The terms of the marital exchange, however, leave Juana in a compromised position: her family expects her to perform the social role of motherhood, but the request entails a violation of her free will and thus an affront to Counter-Reformation theology. Juana seems destined

to serve as a desired sexual object and marketable social commodity with little room to make her own decisions (Gascón 81).

Our protagonist affirms her freedom and deemphasizes her prescribed social function in response her father and uncle's implorations. Juana laments that her father's negotiations with Loarte have become a personal cross: "la carga con que quedo / de la palabra que has dado, / sobre los hombros me ha echado / los peñascos de Toledo" (vv. 1344-47). The daughter draws an analogy between the filial conflict and Jesus' reputed moments of doubt, making the aforementioned Christological allusion all the more explicit: "Dios la muerte que mandó / darle su padre lloró, / pero no fue inobediente; / pues si Dios la llora y siente, / ¿he de ser más fuerte yo?" (vv. 1353-57). *Vitae* of woman saints typically outline parallels between the protagonist and Christ to indicate that just as the latter vindicated the human body from its naturally sinful state, so, too, does the woman saint redeem the flesh for her gender and erase the stain of lust and corruptibility (Ferrús and Girona 20). The saint does this in refusing sex, and thus Juana replaces the "carga" of motherhood with the burden of Christ's cross as an initial step toward releasing herself from her identity as a (corruptible) sexual being.

If the protagonist cannot be a woman in terms of procreation, then she cannot serve any of the other social functions expected of a marriage, either. Juana therefore inverts her father's earlier use of materialistic language and highlights the incompatibility of her "labrador sayal" to Loarte's "terciopelo noble" (vv. 1373-5), asserting that the "cargas" of marriage would therefore be insufferable. In other words, the peaceful alliance expected of the exogamic exchange would not be secured, and the marital institution itself would serve no useful social purpose. From there it follows that Juana

should forsake the yoke of secular marriage for a “más noble cautiverio” (v. 1409): she asks her father to grant her “otro estado mejor” (v. 1403) and mentions entering a convent for the first time. Her stated desire to live “entre vírgenes puras” (v. 1412) and to take “Dios por...esposo” (v. 1414) represents a spoken rejection of the social functions her father has tried to force upon her, a rebuff that becomes tangible in the ensuing scene.

In an episode original to Tirso, Loarte sends Juana “galas de desposada” (p. 655) in anticipation of the proposed marriage, not knowing that this gesture will actually grant the protagonist an opportunity to physically dispose of the trappings of the secular world. Consistent with his materialistic vision of Juana’s marriage, Juan believes Loarte’s gesture will essentially buy his daughter’s assent because “no hay tan grande cuidado / en la que llora o suspira, / ni con el gozo se iguala, / de ver una gala nueva” (vv. 1498-1501). Juana’s love cannot be bought so easily, and she therefore dismisses the shoes (*chapines*) and chains Loarte has gifted her as belonging to the evil “galas del mundo” (vv. 1518). She calls the *chapines* an unstable foundation upon which society builds its “presunción loca y vana” (vv. 1531); similarly, she equates the chains with a prisoner’s shackles and argues that marriage to Loarte would be an insufferable captivity that would bind her to “galas viles” (v. 1571).¹⁸⁶ Our protagonist’s actions do more than prepare the future nun for the kind of life the monastic vows of poverty demand. Not by chance does Tirso depict Juana disdaining *chapines*, as the term *chapín* could denote both an article of clothing and, in the locution *poner en chapines*, the action of arranging a marriage for a

¹⁸⁶ The protagonists of other religious comedias echo Juana’s actions, underscoring a generalized belief in the ephemeral, illusory nature of worldly goods. Margarita in Tirso’s *Quien no cae* rejects the purported vanity of female dress on her way to a life of virtue and penitence. She removes jewels and articles of clothing as she listens to a moving sermon until she finds herself in the street “medio desnuda” (v. 1870) lamenting her life of vanity: “han de ver todos / que la hermosura fingida, / que en mí lo encadenó, / prestada fue, que no mía. / Fue hermosura de alquiler” (vv. 1905-09).

woman (“poner en estado a una mujer”) and giving her “diferente ... empleo de mera doncella” (*Autoridades*). In rejecting the *chapines*, Juana dismisses the secular and the sexual: she neither dons feminine adornment nor fulfills the roles of wife or mother.

Once she confirms that she cannot be put *en chapines* literally or figuratively, Juana flees her home for the convent of Santa María de la Cruz dressed as a man.¹⁸⁷ The rejection of her social identity that begins with the eschewing of the *chapines* continues with her cross-dressing and reaches its apex in her miraculous invisibility when she crosses paths with Loarte. Daza does not specifically mention that Juana became invisible on her way to the convent; rather, when the *beata* comes across the unnamed “gentleman that pretended to have her for his wife,” God simply “permit[s] him not to know her” (28). Tirso is more explicit in his treatment of the miracle, and his previous depiction of Juana’s reactions to the *galas* makes her ensuing invisibility emblematic of what she leaves behind. She cannot serve Loarte as a wife; on the contrary, she now represents a “cuerpo que de los lazos / del mundo se desenreda” (vv. 2168-69) and is thus unattainable to her suitor, who literally and figuratively searches for something that no longer exists. Juan and Loarte both lose the woman whose sexuality they try to possess and control. Juana accordingly becomes a “man” (not a transferable social commodity) when she escapes her father and *nothing* (not a wife) when she runs from Loarte.

The act ends with yet another marriage and a final confrontation between father and daughter. Juan’s previous “lo quiero y basta” (v. 1342) takes a more dramatic turn when he vows to kill Juana before allowing her to become a nun: “¡Primero que monja

¹⁸⁷ Daza underscores the break with femininity implied by Juana’s cross-dressing: “she resolved that as soon as Easter should be passed, to go to the happy monastery, two leagues from her town (and as she imagined it, so she did it, not as a weak woman, but as a strong and forcible man, putting herself into the garments of one of her cousins, and making a pack of her own) in the habit of a man” (27).

sea / bañaré estas canas blancas / en la sangre de sus venas!” (vv. 2231-33). Juan’s attempts to remove Juana from the convent forcefully showcase the daughter’s perceived role as marketable commodity one last time, as the father claims Juana as “mi hacienda” (v. 2545). Juan echoes his daughter’s previous claim to personal freedom, “si es la libertad vida / y esa la pierdo por ti, / muerta soy, tú el homicida” (vv. 1359-61) when he warns Juana, “no quiere Dios / que a tu mismo padre viejo / mates, siendo tú el verdugo” (vv. 2451-3). The statement is ironic, and not only because the father had just threatened to kill his daughter for her obstinate disobedience. His affirmation that God does not want Juana to become a nun, which the audience knows is inaccurate given the divine intervention that has aided Juana thus far, situates the filial conflict in a greater discussion of individual and divine will, both of which are considered inviolable (Trubiano 72).

Juana opposes Juan’s “lo quiero y basta” with “Dios lo quiere y yo lo quiero” (v. 2540) and finally overcomes her father’s threats with a spiritual marriage in the cloister. While it may seem inconsistent that Juana should previously state that “la prisión es siempre mala” (v.1560) only to gladly accept the seemingly restrictive vows of poverty and obedience, the issue at stake is ultimately freedom. Like Lisarda and Gil in *Esclavo*, both of whom recognize that choosing to become a slave to God in fact liberates the believer, so too does Juana’s ability to exercise free will render her acquiescence to monastic obedience, in the words of Marcela de San Félix, “prisiones...dulces.”

The ensuing argument between saints Francis and Dominic over which order the novitiate will belong to emphasizes Juana’s freedom to choose while in the convent, as the saints ultimately decide it should be left to “su voluntad” (v. 2965). The episode also appears in Daza’s text; unlike the biographer, however, Tirso inserts the scene just after

Juana leaves her father. The sequencing of events reflects the playwright's preoccupation with the topic of free will and communicates a clear message: the convent walls do not restrict a woman's freedom but provide a space in which to exercise her will without the coercive forces of the external world (Surtz 50-51; González 81). Juan never formally expresses respect for his daughter's freedom to choose; nonetheless, he acquiesces to the divine will: "No quiero a Dios ofender" (v. 2581). His reluctant acceptance represents a permanent fissure in the father-daughter relationship, as Christ will now be "Señor, Esposo y Padre" (v. 1780). For her part, Juana's appearance in the monastic habit, the final step in the progression from *labradora* to "varonil vestido" (v. 1810) to nun, signals a definitive break from the chains of sexuality and social obligations of secular marriage.

When the final act opens, Juan has died and Juana has spent two years winning admiration with her virtue and humility, so much so that the "reino todo / la llama la Santa Juana" (vv. 3392-93). The nun's widespread notoriety is key to the two principal and complementary events remaining: the institution of claustration and the miraculous blessing of the rosaries. As Juana rises through the monastic ranks, her guardian angel reminds her of her divinely-appointed destiny to govern the convent and institute "el voto de la clausura" (v. 3003). Juana's introduction of the fourth monastic vow in Santa María de la Cruz vindicates Ines's legendary abandonment of the convent and ensures that the *beata*'s fellow nuns do not succumb to the same sinfulness as the foundress. Significantly, Juana's presence outside the convent does not diminish with enclosure. On the contrary, the nun actually gains more renown when she asks God to bless the town's rosaries (Dassbach 21). The rosaries' subsequent power to grant "perdones y indulgencias" (v. 3557) makes the beads desirable spiritual commodities outside the

cloister, and their identification with a specific convent gives the nuns who reside there a tangible place in the secular world despite their enclosure.¹⁸⁸ Daza indicates that the beads were celebrated throughout the world (85), and Ronald Surtz reports that missionaries introduced devotion to the rosaries in Japan (1), confirming the reach of nuns who were theoretically prohibited from contact with the outside world.

Returning briefly to the second act, we can now say that the miracle of invisibility foreshadows Juana's continued existence in the secular world after taking a vow of enclosure. Loarte knew Juana was near but could not find her; so, too, in a near paradox, would the secular world feel Juana's presence through the blessed rosaries without actually seeing her. The miracle presents a fitting end to the first part of the *Juana* trilogy, as the seemingly paradoxical freedom Juana gains via enclosure serves as the perfect counterpoint to the loss of freedom she previously faced at the hands of her father. The filial conflict highlights the various social identities and duties the daughter must shed before she can truly be free, and the resolution to that conflict creates an idealized vision of female monasticism consistent with Counter-Reformation theology.

“en esto paran las hijas / que a sus padres no obedecen” (Esclavo vv. 669-70)

With the exception of Leonor, all the daughters referenced in this chapter are disobedient. Teresa, Juana, and Lisarda's defiance of their respective fathers, however, all culminate in a blessed life of religious devotion, rendering the daughters models of imitable behavior. Tirso, Lope, and Mira do not espouse female insubordination in and of itself. On the contrary, the dénouements of the plays analyzed in this chapter invariably

¹⁸⁸ As Helen Hills posits in her study of nuns and relics in post-Tridentine Naples, nuns could use relics to negotiate their spiritual authority beyond the cloister, and the ability to strategically process relics during feasts could make the absent nuns' presence more tangible in the secular world (12-13, 15).

depict acts of complete female surrender and submission. At stake is not female freedom per se but the woman's ability to assert her free will when an inner call to the religious life leads her to reject the identities that society pressures her to fulfill. Even Lisarda, whose defiance initially leads to sin, recognizes that a life of devotion to God implies letting go of her sexuality, which invariably means no longer wishing to enter into a secular marriage. Women and men were believed to be *spiritual* equals: both had a common claim to divine grace and a similar ability to achieve salvation (Sommerville 40, 44). Nonetheless, women were alleged to have a greater propensity for carnal sin, a belief that dictates the depiction of filial conflict in plays about female piety: only in letting go of their sexual ties to the secular world, represented by paternal pressure to marry, can women be truly free to assent to the gift of divine grace and dedicate their lives to God.

The multitude of gazes in Suárez's painting directed away from Lope and toward Marcela reminds us of the daughter's own journey away from her father to the cloister. Lope's death may have provided an occasion for spectators inside and outside the painting to witness the fracture of the filial relationship, but in reality the father-daughter dynamic was definitively altered the minute Marcela donned the veil and took monastic vows. The daughter's visible grief stems from the passing of the man who gave her life, not the death of her *father*, that is, the socially-determined construct of the male authority charged with safeguarding and managing her sexuality. That "father" ceased to exist over twenty years before Lope's death, when Marcela first resolved to become more a confidante and spiritual guide than daughter in the strictly social, patriarchal sense of the term. Suárez's painting thus highlights more than the family fracture that biological death causes. Like the conflicted filial relationships in *Esclavo*, *Bienaventurada*, and *Juana*, the

painting also reifies the religious woman's break with the demands that the conventions of a male-driven society place upon her gender.

CONCLUSION

A TIMELESS PLOT

I'm recording my story for the scientists in the future. In a million years, when kids go to school, they gonna know: once there was a Hushpuppy, and she lived with her daddy in The Bathtub.

—*Beasts of the Southern Wild*

In 2004, six years after her husband passed away, Valerie Spruill confirmed via DNA testing an unsettling secret: her deceased husband had been her biological father (Carter). Learning that the man she married had also been the father she never met took an emotional toll on Spruill. Nonetheless, she gradually started coming to terms with her situation, and today she acknowledges that her husband/father likely “was aware of the taboo he had committed but was simply afraid to tell her” (B. Dyer). She recently began writing about her experience with an eye toward publication. Multiple factors undoubtedly motivated Spruill to write her story of an atypical father-daughter relationship, such as a chance at fame or a (subconscious) need for validation through confession. She insists, however, that her inspiration lies in the didactic potential of her story: “I want people to know that they can survive something like this” (Carter).

Unlike Spruill, who remained ignorant of her origins until after her husband/father’s death, an 18-year old woman from the Great Lakes region knowingly entered into a romantic relationship with her biological father after twelve years of estrangement (Tsoulis-Reay). In 2014, the couple moved to New Jersey, where they could hold an unofficial wedding ceremony and start a family together without fear of legal prosecution (New Jersey law does not prohibit consensual adult incest). The couple also hoped to live free of social censure, as the daughter asserted in an interview with

New York Magazine: "I just don't understand why I'm judged for being happy. We are two adults who brought each other out of dark places."

How could such relationships develop between fathers and daughters? Barbara Gonyo, founder of a support group for adoptees who reconnect with biological relatives, would likely consider Spruill and the anonymous woman's stories examples of Genetic Sexual Attraction (GSA), a condition in which individuals who are reunited with siblings, parents, or children after long periods of separation develop obsessive emotions, even feelings of sexual attraction, for one another ("Genetic"). Gonyo coined the term GSA in the late 1980s, and subsequent research has suggested that up to fifty percent of reunions between long-lost blood relatives show signs of romantic attachment. The biological and sociological factors at work in GSA remain largely unknown, for the social stigma attached to incest often prevents sufferers from reporting their experiences and has kept the condition out of many academic circles.

One trend that researchers *have* identified is that romantic relationships between fathers and daughters do not get reported as frequently as other variants of GSA, such as mothers and sons or brothers and sisters ("Genetic"). Some experts, including Gonyo, maintain that consensual sex between fathers and daughters remains the most taboo GSA relationship due to assumptions that the men involved often abuse their daughter-partners (Tsoulis-Reay; "Genetic"). The nearly six hundred user comments left in response to the aforementioned *New York Magazine* article underscore the particularly polemical nature of an incestuous father-daughter relationship. While some readers defend the couple's right to happiness ("can't you just let them be happy? [...] Their consensual relationship

is not harming anyone”), most condemn the father, arguing that “he had the responsibility to not allow himself to feel for his daughter in a sexual way.”

Twenty centuries separate the fictional tale of Mycon and Pero with which I began this study and the real-life testimonials of Valerie Spruill and the anonymous woman from the Great Lakes mentioned here. Despite this temporal distance, one constant remains: the prospect of incest acquires acute significance when it involves a father and a daughter. The *Factorum* and the *New York Magazine* website represent vastly different societies and cultural registers, but the evocative power of this specific filial relationship is at work in both. The user comments from the *New York* article that denounce the anonymous daughter and father in the name of “civilized” society echo Lévi-Strauss’s argument that exogamy lies at the heart of cultural development.¹⁸⁹ Just as the anthropologist posited the father-daughter dynamic as a catalyst of alliance and social organization, a reader’s comment that “If people followed all their feelings and impulses” like the father and daughter in the *New York* article, “then THEORETICALLY [sic], you shouldn’t judge a person who enjoys killing [or] cannibalism,” reveals that the incest prohibition continues to be linked to social well-being in the popular unconscious.

Although their works did not depict personal experiences of incest, the dramatists treated in this study created tales of conflicted family interactions motivated by both personal and public agendas. As men who wrote for Spanish commercial theaters, their careers depended on their ability to compose plays that would draw large audiences. As playwrights at the center of Spanish cultural production, moreover, they used their works to reflect upon the most pressing social, political, economic, and theological issues facing

¹⁸⁹ As one reader commented, “This isn’t about two equals being happy. It’s about an unhealthy, disgusting, predatory arrangement that is completely unacceptable in a civilized society.”

the monarchy and the Spanish people. The inherent drama of the father-daughter plot made it a natural vehicle for both practical ends and cultural exploration.

Great theater is at once particular and universal: it goes to the heart of the tensions and anxieties specific to the historical period in which it is produced while treating themes that will always resonate with human society in general. Not all audience members would recognize the Blanca-*blanca* connection in *Casarse* or the finer details of the *de auxiliis* debate as they unfolded during a performance of *Esclavo*. Nonetheless, audiences would have appreciated the multiple conflicts of gender, generation, and power—the same conflicts in play in the *Factorum*, Shakespeare's corpus, and the previously cited cases of GSA—that Lope, Calderón, and their contemporaries brought to the stage in the guise of a contentious father-daughter relationship.

The plays included in this study span roughly thirty years, starting with *Esclavo* (1612) and ending with Calderón's *Alcalde* (1640). They all responded to a specific moment of social concern during the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV. At stake in *Esclavo*, *Santa Juana*, and *Bienaventurada* is the empire's self-assigned role as defender of Catholicism, while in *Vida* and *Casarse* the spotlight falls upon the gradual movement towards rule by *privanza* and kingdom-wide economic crises, respectively. Questions regarding the limits of law and justice pervade *Alcalde*, and tensions along the social hierarchy come through in *Serrana*. The multiple crises that developed during this period gave playwrights material to explore through their depictions of familial conflict.

This does not mean, however, that father and daughters did not grace Spanish stages before 1612 or after 1640. The enduring nature of the father-daughter plot invites us to analyze works composed during the second half of the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries in order to produce a more comprehensive view of Golden Age drama. One could look to Lope de Rueda, the sixteenth-century dramatist whose work influenced the development of the *comedia nueva*. Of Rueda's four known plays published in 1567, two of them, *Los engañados* and *Armelina*, depict family relationships marked by unknown identity and a daughter's resistance to marrying the suitor her father tries to force upon her. Similarly, works composed near the end of the Baroque period merit equal consideration, such as Agustín Moreto's *El lindo don Diego* (1662), a play in which a father struggles to affirm his authority over his two daughters, neither of whom desires to marry the man their father proposes. A broader overall chronological framework would allow richer analysis of trends in the depiction of family dynamics in response to the challenges the Spanish monarchy and its subjects faced during the early modern period.

Further research also ought to consider alternate artistic perspectives. This study has focused on male depictions of filial conflict. A more encompassing vision of fathers and daughters in early modern Spanish literature, however, should include the works of women writers, such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, María de Zayas y Sotomayor, and Ana Caro. For example, Sor Juana's *Los empeños de una casa* (1683) features a notable interplay between a brother-sister and a father-daughter pair. An example of Spanish colonial production, *Empeños* has also garnered critical attention given the dramatist's role as a nun-poet whose fame in Spain and Mexico rendered her "an icon of New World culture" (Merrim, *Writing* 33) and gave her a privileged yet complex position amidst the male-dominated worlds of monasticism and letters. Delving into points of contact and dissonance between the works of women writers and their male counterparts during the

early modern period would provide further avenues in which to explore the repercussions of the father-daughter plot.

One could also broaden the national parameters of this study and include English Renaissance drama and the Italian *commedia dell'arte* and novella. Analyzing filial dynamics in stories that crossed national borders would add to the study of the give-and-take between a country's sociopolitical context and its literary production. The Romeo and Juliet tale, perhaps the literary father-daughter story *par excellence*, lends itself particularly well to this kind of comparative analysis. The story originated in the sixteenth-century Italian novellas of Matteo Bandello and Luigi da Porto, then found its way into the hands of Europe's premiere dramatists, including Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1597), Lope de Vega (*Castelvines y Monteses*, c. 1606-1612), and Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla (*Los bandos de Verona*, 1640). A transnational line of inquiry highlighting points of intersection and divergence would undoubtedly shed more light on the *comedia*'s own milieu within a larger European context.

The enduring and universal nature of the father-daughter relationship invites exploration well beyond early modern literature. Film, which in contemporary society has become akin to popular theater in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, has produced memorable representations of filial tension. Few people would think about Vélez's *Serrana* while watching Benh Zeitlin's *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (2012), yet the complex interaction between Hushpuppy and her father, Wink, raises similar questions regarding the influence of parenting on a child's social development. Scenes in which Hushpuppy jumps on the table and flexes after Wink teaches her how to "beast" a crab (i.e., crack it open with her bare hands) or proudly exclaims, "I'm the man!," after

“beating” her father in an arm-wrestling match may very well elicit reactions in moviegoers that parallel what audiences felt at the sight of Gila’s masculine exploits. Similarly, Calderón’s *Alcalde* may not come to mind while watching Michel Franco’s *Después de Lucía* (2012), but Roberto’s murder of the young man whom he holds responsible for his daughter’s disappearance no doubt invites viewers to consider the place of law and vengeance in society. Ultimately, much as early modern theater reflected upon contemporary society, so, too, do cinematic portrayals of fathers and daughters provide a window into today’s beliefs about family, gender, and power.

Despite Hushpuppy’s earnest desire, children one million years from now will probably not know that “once there was a Hushpuppy, and she lived with her daddy in The Bathtub.” Nonetheless, future generations *will* have knowledge of the girl’s analogue(s) in their own day, much as we are aware of Hushpuppy and Wink but may not know much about Clotaldo and Rosaura or Pero and Mycon. The larger point is that from a first-century tale of filial devotion set in a Roman prison to a twenty-first century film of a family’s struggle to survive in a downtrodden bayou community, the father-daughter plot has withstood the test of time. The enduring nature of its multiple and complex sociocultural facets has sustained its presence in the world of art from ancient Roman frescoes to early modern theater and contemporary film. The present study has explored how seventeenth-century Spanish dramatists tapped into the universality of this familial dynamic to create entertaining and instructive works. Whether commenting on the nature of kingship, the administration of law, or the role of free will, playwrights found infinitely creative ways to use the filial plot as a metaphor both topical and transcendent.

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