Vélez de Guevara's *Reinar después de morir* as a Model of Classical Spanish Tragedy

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This frankly polemical paper argues two somewhat unfamiliar points of view: (1) that the Spanish Golden Age dramatists consciously cultivated tragedy as a genre from about the mid-1620s to around 1648 and (2) that in so doing they developed a "classicism" peculiar to the *comedia,* a quality which had been lacking in its earlier, pioneering formula as established by Lope de Vega. In a preliminary theoretical section, I shall attempt to justify the validity of these claims in the light of statements concerning tragedy drawn from some seventeenth-century sources, and more particularly from the modern studies of A. E. Sloman, A. A. Parker, and others. I shall argue that the neo-Aristotelian Unities of Action, Time, and Place were replaced in Spain by less obvious Unities of Theme, Structure, and Imagery, an original system designed to achieve a sense of "Aristotelian" dramatic order while using non-Aristotelian means, one without true parallel in Western dramaturgy. In the latter sections, these theories are applied in practice to Vélez de Guevara's *Reinar después de morir.* Since the question of chronological development is essential to an understanding of the evolution of Spanish tragedy, the precise date of Vélez's *Reinar* cannot be ignored. Evidence is adduced assigning the date of Vélez's play (hitherto unknown) to the span of years 1636-40. The essay is rounded out with a detailed analysis of the workings of tragic guilt in the play's theme, an examination of the double plot in its relation to the play's Unity of Structure, and, finally, a study of the three "base" images in the play that constitute the work's Unity of Imagery.

I. Tragedy in the Spanish Drama

The question of whether the Spanish dramatists ever wrote tragedy is a fuzzy issue partly because of the problem of nomenclature. *Comedia* in the

seventeenth century simply meant "play"; there was no other word to denote that form of stage entertainment which we now call a drama, representation, or piece for the theater. Since semantically and historically Gk. *komoedia* has usually been contraposed to *tragoedia,* terminological shorthand suggests that the Spanish dramatists wrote only comedies, never tragedies; that, indeed, they were incapable of composing the latter. Now the issue of the meaning of the word *comedia* was adequately clarified by José Pellicer y Tovar as long ago as 1639. In his *Lágrimas panegíricas a la temprana muerte de . . . Montalbán* he states: "Aunque todas las acciones que se representan, ya sean históricas, ya novelas, ya fábulas, están por el uso comprendidas con el nombre genérico de *comedias,* no todas lo son; porque . . . la *tramoya* es *fábula*; aquella donde se introduce rey o señor soberano, es *tragedia*; donde muere el héroe, que es el primer galán, es *tragicomedia*; y sólo propiamente se llama *comedia* la que consta de caso que acontece entre particulares, donde no hay príncipe absoluto."[1] If we follow Pellicer, then, and simply regard the term *comedia* as the generic word for "play," we shall relieve ourselves immediately of a quite unnecessary terminological and semantic burden.

Secondly, the lively, often acrimonious debate over the legitimacy of the *comedia,* the first of several European "Quarrels of Ancients and Moderns," that ran at its height from about 1613 to 1624 in Spain, does seem to have spurred the more thoughtful and gifted of the practising playwrights to a deeper theoretical scrutiny of the aims and methods of their art. Since to "classicize" the *comedia* along the lines suggested by neo-Aristotelian critics like El Pinciano, Francisco Cascales, and others, was *a priori* impossible given the already clearly defined norms of the genre, serious drama and tragedy could only take the path of a regularization of the Lopean *comedia* within its own terms of reference. In this sense, the gifted and intellectually more powerful mind of Tirso de Molina acted as a bridge (both in the Mercedarian's theoretical statements and in his structural experimentation) between Lope's spontaneous poetical creations and the highly artistic, "classical" work of Calderón and, under the latter's influence, that of Vélez de Guevara, Rojas Zorrilla, and Moreto. As Albert E. Sloman noted, when El Pinciano's *Philosophía antigua poética* appeared in 1596, the *comedia* was still a new and experimental form and, even twenty years later, remained shapeless and trivial.[2] But a "classicizing" process did then take place. To quote Sloman: "By the early thirties, however, when [J. A. González de] Salas published his *Nueva idea de la tragedia antigua,* Calderón had written plays which by their remarkable craftsmanship and universality represented *a new and peculiarly Spanish classicism*" (p. 12; my emphasis). Even Franz Grillparzer, an inveterate nineteenth-century reader of *comedias,* sensed in the maturer productions of Calderón a "certain classicism" (*eine gewisse Klassizität*).[3]

But the neo-Aristotelian critics of Italy and Spain insisted that all "correct" playwriting should obey the three Unities of Action, Time, and Place. For

tragedy, they demanded the central presence of a highborn hero or heroine whose actions, according to Aristotle, constituted the praxis of the drama and whose undoing turned on a sudden change of fortune or peripeteia. This downfall was occasioned by the existence of some fatal flaw in the hero's makeup (*hamartia*) and his pursuit by a vengeful power above and outside him (*nemesis*). Before the catastrophe, some form of recognition or anagnorisis by the hero of the truth of his own situation was held to be essential to a perfect action. The hero's destruction, arousing pity and fear in the spectators, should succeed in homeopathically purging their emotions by catharsis. The Romans added notions of decorum and class distinction to this scheme, as well as a few mechanical incidentals such as ghosts, auguries, and messengers; the Unities of Time and Place were latterday fictions dreamt up by sixteenth-century Italian critics like Giraldi Cinthio and Castelvetro.

Tragedy in seventeenth-century Spain could not possibly function along these lines. Such stress on the downfall of a single individual ran counter to the strong Spanish tendency to view man in his social context, not at war with gods; to view even the individual as an example *sub specie aeternitatis*; and to view catastrophe when it occurred as a communal disaster. Despite sixteenth-century neo-Classical experiments using Seneca et al. as models, formal tragedy failed and the Spanish public opted for and applauded the three-act, polymetric, hybrid tragicomedy, established in the 1590s in its generic essentials by Lope de Vega responding to the demands of Spanish popular opinion. Searching for dramatic unity along anti-Aristotelian lines, the textbook Unities of Action, Place, and Time were thrown out the window or, to quote Lope in 1609, "locked up under six keys." In their place, the dramatists of the maturer period (circa 1620-48) gradually elaborated what I shall term the three Unities of Theme, Structure, and Imagery.

Professor A. A. Parker has amply shown that Calderón's dramatic unity lies first and foremost in his theme; that this theme may be common to two different plots (thus contravening Aristotelian Unity of Action) and that character is developed only sufficiently to meet the needs of the drama's action.[4] In a series of articles from 1962 onwards, Parker has also attempted to define Calderonian tragedy. Central to his theory is the concept of diffused responsibility or guilt for the catastrophe in Calderón's tragic endings. The contribution, both large and small, to the precipitation of this catastrophe by almost the entire cast of characters in a Calderonian tragedy has been demonstrated by Parker in such plays as *El pintor de su deshonra* (1962), *La devoción de la cruz* and *Las tres justicias en una* (1966), *El mayor monstruo los celos* (1973), and *El médico de su honra* (1975).[5]

Aristotle said that Unity of Action was the heart of the drama. By a unified action, he meant a single, uncluttered fable without digressions and subplots and with a clear beginning, middle, and end that should secure a pleasing sense

of dramatic order. I believe it is possible to push Parker's conclusions about Calderón's techniques further and show that in the Spanish drama's "classical" period, precisely this overall Aristotelian goal of dramatic order was achieved, though by unprecedented, non-Aristotelian means. As noted above, according to Parker tragic guilt or responsibility in Calderón (and, we would add, in other Spanish dramatists) is subtly diffused among the different dramatis personae. The tragic hero or heroine is not responsible wholly for his or her downfall and death. In Greek drama, *hamartia* in the hero and *nemesis* in the domain of the gods operated on the doomed man to precipitate his tragic fall. In Shakespeare, who was deeply concerned with individual character, there is usually a single psychological trait in the hero which flaws his other fine or noble qualities and eventually destroys him (Macbeth's ambition, Othello's jealousy, Hamlet's dilatoriness, King Lear's lack of self-knowledge). In Calderón, the tragic conception is much more complex, subtle, and true to life. The guilt is on the hands of the people who do *not* suffer or receive punishment and death. The sufferer is the victim of other people's wrong actions, acts committed (even benignly) in partial or total ignorance of their final implications and effects, the victim of unforeseen accidents, inscrutable elements of preordained fatality, astrological prophecies, omens, auguries, and so on. This conception of tragic guilt (the sufferer innocent and others guilty) is therefore the total inverse of the Greek (the sufferer guilty and others innocent). And the originality of this conception has surely been a major obstacle to any modern coming to grips with Calderón's serious drama and tragedies. That the innocent suffer for the sins of the guilty is actually true tragedy, since the individual's power to control certain events of vital moment to him is radically circumscribed. This is the least "fair" conception we can have of life, the least comprehensible, and hence the least acceptable—even in Calderón.

II. Vélez's *Reinar después de morir* as Tragedy

The above remarks apply, I contend, to Vélez's *Reinar después de morir*, and Parker's concepts of Unity of Theme in separate plots and tragic catastrophe through diffused responsibility can clearly be illustrated in the action of the play. Before embarking on any such demonstration, however, it is necessary to ensure that Vélez's play does indeed fall in the self-consciously tragic category (irrespective of how its tragic essence is achieved), as well as in the time frame for the Spanish classical period which we have postulated. It would make nonsense of the whole case being erected here if it transpired, for example, that *Reinar después de morir* was actually composed around the year 1600. As to the first point, little difficulty exists; Vélez explictly denominated his work a tragedy in the closing lines of the play: "Esta es la Inés laureada / con

que el poeta da fin / a su tragedia, en que pudo / *Reinar después de morir*" (III, vv. 765-68).[6] The second point is a rather more complicated one and will require a separate discussion before we proceed to the main analysis.

III. The Date of Composition of *Reinar después de morir*

The earliest recorded edition of Vélez's play is found in the fourth volume of *Comedias de los mejores y más insignes ingenios de España* published at Lisbon in 1652 (fols. 85 ff.). Since Vélez de Guevara died in 1644, and since the Lisbon volume is an omnibus collection by different authors, it is logical to suppose that a previous edition of the play existed, probably a *suelta,* which served as the basis for the 1652 printing. Cotarelo proposed the existence of a Madrid *suelta* published previous to 1652, all copies of which have since been lost.[7] Whether this hypothetical *suelta* or other printing appeared in the poet's lifetime we cannot say for certain, and as to date of composition, Spencer and Schevill, writing in 1937, stated baldly: "There is no evidence to determine the date of composition."[8] As recently as 1944, Francisco Yndurain noted that Lope's *Doña Inés de Castro,* a possible source for Vélez, had also been lost, and he made no attempt to date *Reinar después de morir* either: "Desconocida la comedia de Lope y sin poder asegurar fecha de composición a la de nuestro VELEZ (yo, desde luego, no he podido fijarla con los materiales de que he dispuesto), que se publicó por primera vez en 1652. . . ."[9] In 1967, however, Enrique Rodríguez Cepeda maintained (correctly, in my view) that *Reinar* was a play written for the sake of art in Vélez's last years: "La gran tragedia *Reinar después de morir* es una de sus últimas obras y una de las más importantes y justamente famosa; es una obra de estudio, de gabinete, muy trabajada, de gran técnica escenográfica y de verdadero oficio. . . ."[10] It would, according to this view, postdate Vélez's considerable activity in composition *de consuno* during the late twenties and the thirties with Coello, Rojas Zorrilla, and others. Rodríguez Cepeda assigns *Reinar* to no specific year, however, nor does he offer any concrete evidence for a late date.

The year of Vélez's death in 1644 admittedly provides an obvious, though rather unhelpful, *terminus ad quem* for the work's composition. But the play contains a number of stylistic and thematic features around which it is possible to establish a tentative *terminus a quo.* In the first place, there are numerous passages in *silvas pareadas,* notably Brito's long *relación* (I, vv. 114-294) and Blanca's speech breaking the news of Inés's death to Pedro (III, vv. 563-612) which are heavily Gongoristic in their imagery and diction. Lope de Vega avoided *silvas pareadas* to the end of his life. The gradual acceptance of *silvas pareadas* and Gongoristic diction into the language of the popular drama, despite the resistence of the *habla llana* school, occurred in mature Tirso and early Calderón around the year 1625 under the influence of the *Soledades*

(1613-17). Vélez's play would obviously, then, postdate this stylistic revolution. As regards concrete sources, there occurs at the close of Vélez's Act II a very strong textual reminiscence of the close of Act II of Lope's fine tragedy *El castigo sin venganza.* In both final scenes, the two characters probably left the stage by separate exits. The passages are here cited for purposes of comparison:

D.ª INES. Basta;
adiós, mi bien.
PRINCIPE. Adiós, dueño,
¡quién contigo se quedara!
D.ª INES. ¡Quién se partiera contigo!
Muerta quedo.
PRINCIPE. ¡Voy sin alma!
D.ª INES. Adiós, adorado esposo.
PRINCIPE. Adiós, esposa adorada.

(II, vv. 788-94)

FEDERICO. Apenas a andar acierto.
CASANDRA. Alma y sentidos perdí.
FEDERICO. ¡O qué extraño desconcierto!
CASANDRA. Yo voy muriendo por ti.
FEDERICO. Yo no, porque ya voy muerto.
CASANDRA. Conde, tú serás mi muerte.
FEDERICO. Y yo, aunque muerto, estoy tal
que me alegro, con perderte,
que sea mi alma inmortal,
por no dejar de quererte.[11]

(II, vv. 2021-30)

Both the dramatic effectiveness and the language of Lope's balletically symmetrical *envoi* may have influenced Vélez to exploit the device here and, in a more elaborate and semiburlesque manner, at the end of Act I. Granted this possibility, the known date of composition for Lope's play (August 1631) would certainly provide a useful *a quo.* It may, however, be possible to draw the circle tighter still. As Lope wrote in an enigmatic preface to his *Castigo sin venganza*: "Señor Lector, esta Tragedia se hizo en la Corte solo vn dia, por causas que a v.m. le importan poco. Dexò entonces tantos deseosos de verla, que los he querido satisfacer con imprimirla."[12] This preface accompanied the play's first printing as a *suelta* at Barcelona in 1634, and the text was quickly reprinted in the *Parte XXI de comedias* of Lope in 1635, the year of the poet's death. Hence *El castigo sin venganza,* an instant "hit" that created a major stir at its single performance and was published twice over soon afterwards, became available to the reading public from the period 1634-35 on.

While there are some thematic similarities in the power/love triangle of the Duke of Ferrara, Casandra, and Federico in Lope's drama and the triangle of King Alfonso, Inés, and Pedro in Vélez's, a stronger thematic similarity exists

between *Reinar* and the first wife-murder play of Calderón, *El médico de su honra.* This latter tragedy was premiered at the Palacio Real in Madrid on August 26, 1635. Mencía, like Inés, is innocent of any wrongdoing serious enough to warrant her cold-blooded murder; at worst, both women commit errors of judgement in impossibly complicated circumstances. In both plays, some form of royal approval of the crime compounds its infamy. If Vélez saw the first run of Calderón's *Médico de su honra,* this hypothetical circumstance would reinforce the timespan of 1634-35 which we have suggested for the gestation of *Reinar* in the Ecijan's imagination. In the years 1635-36, Vélez (born 1579 or perhaps 1578) was about fifty-eight years old and still at the height of his artistic powers. In 1638, he composed the witty court entertainment satirizing modern Spanish poets entitled "Juicio final . . . ," recently discovered in manuscript and published by Prof. Hannah E. Bergman.[13] It should also be remembered that the work by which he is best known to posterity, the satirical novel *El Diablo Cojuelo,* did not appear in print until 1641.

As to a more precise *terminus ad quem,* the actual setting of Vélez's tragedy may provide us with a clue. The action takes place entirely in Portugal in the mid-fourteenth century. Now Portugal and Spain had been united under the Spanish Hapsburgs since Philip II's formal coronation as king of the neighboring nation after the battle of Alcántara in 1581. Portugal remained under Spanish domination until 1640 when, taking advantage of the Catalonian uprising of that year and Spain's protracted war with France, the Portuguese nobility ejected the Spanish viceroy Margaret of Savoy, Duchess of Padua, and took control of the country on December 1, 1640. John, the eighth Duke of Braganza, was crowned as John IV on January 19, 1641.[14] Now under the Aviz dynasty and later (for different reasons) under the Spanish Hapsburgs, a peninsular and political unity had seemed highly desirable. The picture of Portugal painted by Vélez in *Reinar después de morir* is an extremely favorable one; in the play, the dynastic marriages of Portugal with Castile (Pedro and his deceased first wife, the Infanta Constanza) and with Navarre (Pedro's proposed consort-to-be, Doña Blanca) do stress peninsular unity. There is not a trace or echo of the *coup d'état* that reestablished Portuguese independence from Spain after 1640, nor any oblique reference to the state of war that ensued in the 1640s. The Portuguese revolt of 1640, I submit, would therefore constitute a plausible *terminus ad quem* of 1640 for the play, thus reducing the period of composition on stylistic, thematic, and historical grounds to the span of years 1636-40.

IV. A Model of Classical Spanish Tragedy

The concept of Unity of Theme and tragic catastrophe through diffused responsibility, as we have stated above, can be clearly illustrated in the action

of Vélez's *Reinar después de morir.* The plot tells the well-known legend of the beautiful Inés de Castro, her love and secret marriage with Prince Pedro of Portugal and her untimely death. Many pens—those of García de Resende, Luis de Camoens, Antonio Ferreira, Jerónimo Bermúdez, Mexía de la Cerda, and in all probability Lope de Vega—had treated this material before Vélez. The broad theme of Vélez's play may be defined as the unwarranted assassination of an innocent woman for reasons of state. But the deeper thematic interest revolves around the whole question of licit and illicit union. As in Calderón, we really have two plots which are unified by this central theme: (1) the love of Pedro and Inés and their attempt to establish the legitimacy of their union in Pedro's father's eyes and (2) the political problem of the dynastic union of Portugal with Navarre, the "reason of state." Inseparable from the second plot is the reported existence of a *conjuración* in Portugal opposed to Inés as their prospective queen (III, vv. 315-16). For obvious reasons, the chains of causality in these two plots are inextricably interlinked. In the love plot, the clandestine union of Pedro and Inés (by virtue of their secret vows, the obtaining of the proper Papal dispensation [III, vv. 269-75], the birth of their two children Alonso and Dionís) has some claim to be licit. But the marriage has been kept secret and King Alfonso refuses to recognize its legitimacy. The father's prohibition and his view of Inés as the "illicit" object of Pedro's young love also strongly suggests a symbolic displacement of the Oedipal triangle, which further unites the two actions and on which we shall comment shortly. In the second plot, the theme of legitimate union (the dynastic marriage proposed between Portugal and Navarre) revolves around the problem of political necessity: How far is it licit to commit a crime in order to secure, preserve, or advance the interests of the state? Alfonso IV has attempted to seal a political alliance with Castile once already and failed by reason of the Infanta Constanza's premature decease. Such pragmatic considerations dominate Alfonso's thinking, and when he is personally overwhelmed by Inés's beauty and undeniable charm, the King's original arguments are taken over by the two Machiavellian villains Egas Coello and Alvar González. Thus, in both plots, the themes of appropriate union—of how far the licit may justify the illicit or the expedient excuse the unpardonable—are questions which prove to be two faces of a single coin.

The Infanta Blanca of Navarre, in Portugal as Pedro's bride-to-be, forms part of the causality of the disaster in both plots. By incarnating in her person the "reason of state," she is central to Alfonso's designs. But as a woman, slighted with trenchant lack of discretion both by Pedro in Act I and by Inés in Act II, she has personal motives of justified pique and anger in seeking vengeance, and throws her political weight against the lovers when she complains to King Alfonso. This emotional outrage is clear after Pedro has explained with such cavalier imprudence why he cannot marry her:

INFANTA. ¿Han sucedido a mujer
como yo tales desaires?
¿Cómo es posible que viva
quien ha oído semejante
injuria? ¡Al arma! ¡Venganza!
Despida el pecho volcanes
hasta quedar satisfecha.
Muera conmigo quien hace
que a una Infanta de Navarra
el decoro le profanen. . . .

(I, vv. 609-18)

The burden of the dilemma therefore falls on the monarch who has reminded his son forcefully of a sovereign's duties (I, vv. 371-77), but who has arranged the match without consulting Pedro at all. As stated above, the father's Oedipal prohibition is probably the real obstacle to the solution of Portugal's apparent political dilemma. The reason of state is cited as the basis for this opposition, but never very fully explained. Who or what, after all, constitutes the *todo el reino* (III, vv. 315) that is opposed to Inés? The Oedipal conflict is a normal rivalry which arises when the father forbids his small son's sexual access to his own mother, and teaches him by the paternal "no" to select a suitable exogamous partner in maturity. Alfonso regards Blanca as the "fit" consort for his son, the woman permitted and recommended by his choice; Inés is an illicit object choice for Pedro.

For Charles Mauron, the Oedipal drama and the anguish surrounding that archetypal situation provide the basis for dramatic situations in general. The tragic genre in his view is a dream upon which the spectator gazes, troubled by the revelation of forbidden material that can raise his emotional unrest to the pitch of a nightmare. The comic genre on the other hand is a game in which fear has been removed and laughter permits the spectator's triumph over the forbidden material presented now in a liberating, external, and everyday reality. Beneath both genres, however, the incestuous pattern of the Oedipus complex is visible. The following remarks on forbidden love and father/son conflict apply with particular force to Vélez's *Reinar después de morir* and illuminate the deeper thematic significance of the drama:

> Or l'amour interdit, sacrilège ou adultère, a nécessairement pour prototype l'amour incestueux. Il faut en conclure que des deux composantes de l'oedipe–conflit avec le père et amour interdit–la première seule se manifestait dans la comédie antique, l'autre s'exprimant simplement par le phantasme du vieillard ridiculement amoureux ou rival de son fils (ou de son neveu). Dans la comédie moderne, l'évolution sociale et psychique permet à l'imagination de jouer avec l'autre composante. Dès lors, selon la technique des déplacements, substitutions, suppressions partielles, atténuations allusives, etc., le théâtre comique présentera tous les termes de passage, toutes les combinaisons possibles entre la fantaisie où l'on berne (ou vole) un

personnage paternel et celle où l'on satisfait un amour interdit. La nuance incestueuse de l'adultère affleure parfois nettement à la conscience.[15]

Now Alfonso and Inés are not related by marriage, it is true. But the elements of veiled and symbolic displacement (*la technique des déplacements*) of the Oedipal conflict appear in the King's strong personal, sexual attraction to Inés when he first meets her, and Inés's all-but-conscious casting of Alfonso in the role of progenitor of her children. She pleads with him for her life in Act III saying:

D.ª INES. Dionís, Alfonso, llegad,
suplicad a vuestro abuelo
que me quiera perdonar.
REY. No hay remedio.
ALFONSO. ¡Abuelo mío!
DIONIS. ¿No ve a mi madre llorar?
Pues, ¿por qué no la perdona?
REY. Apenas puedo ya hablar....

(III, vv. 317-23)

D.ª INES. No os digo tales afectos
aunque el sentimiento eligo
por mujer de vuestro hijo,
por madre de vuestros nietos....

(III, vv. 368-71)

This stress on the grandfatherly progenitor relationship of Alfonso to Inés obliquely emphasizes her symbolic wife role to him. The paternal prohibition to the union of Pedro and Inés is eventually removed by the King's unexpected death. Pedro can then publicly acknowledge the woman he desires (not realizing that she is also already dead). But the dramaturgical originality of Vélez's tragedy lies in the fact that it is Inés who must assume the guilt for the forbidden love. While Pedro in a Greek play would be the obvious tragic hero, doomed to perish for his illicit passion, he does not die here. Nor does his father die by an act of reciprocal vengeance, but as the consequence of a seizure or accident while hunting. The death of the villains Egas Coello and Alvar González is a *post-factum* judicial execution for the crime of murder. According to the inner necessities of Spanish tragic poetry, however, it is Inés who must die as scapegoat even though she is the least guilty of any offense. She dies a victim of other people's wrongdoing and can at most be accused of a lack of caution in her partly warranted though recklessly expressed claims to queenly status. So, as in Calderón, tragic catastrophe befalls the innocent, while the guilty go largely unpunished and the responsibility for this catastrophe is diffused subtly among the entire cast of characters.

The play also demonstrates a clear Unity of Structure based on the principle of diffused responsibility. As Alison Weber has shown, Pedro is unaware of the real dangers that beset him and must shoulder a major portion of the blame for the eventual disaster.[16] He is impractical, irresolute, and wordy, taking refuge from responsibility for his actions in poetical dreaming and lyric effusions that provide him with some emotional release, it is true, but with little objective insight into his situation. Pedro's fecklessness and imprudent solipsism probably contribute most to Inés's undoing. Blanca also contributes to the disaster through her haughty and vengeful pride. How much blame we lay at her door depends on our perception of the degree of provocation she suffers at the hands of Pedro and Inés, the one by his insensitivity, the other by her overweening sense of self-importance. The King directly effects the outcome by his determination to marry Pedro off according to his own will. Pedro's secret love is an open challenge to the paternal prohibition. Alfonso's strongly mixed feelings towards Inés–hostility for what she represents as a block to his dispensation complicated by strong physical attraction to her beauty and charm of character–finally resolve themselves in the direction of severity not clemency. The legality conferred by the Papal dispensation appears to exasperate him and forces him, perhaps, to a more irrational stand than an ideal monarch would take. The steady pressure applied by the Machiavellian assassins is to be explained by their amoral conception of political necessity rather than by motives of personal animosity, even though they may be termed "secret villains" (*traidores encubiertos*) by Pedro (I, vv. 837-38).

The intrinsic structural unity arising from this cause-and-effect pattern of character interaction and individual wrongdoing is formally reinforced by the symmetry of scene with scene. In Acts I, II, and III, for example, the first shift of milieu always brings Inés and her maid Violante before us, and in all three scenes this symmetry is highlighted by the lyric poems that are sung or recited. Similarly, in the third scene of Acts II and III, we witness the two key interviews of Inés with the King. In each case, the King appears all but won over by Inés's beauty and discretion and, in the latter scene, by pity for his grandchildren. The emotional and dramatic impact of these widely spaced scenes is unquestionably heightened here by their mirrorlike correspondence. The close of Act I displays a number of characteristic syntactic symmetries such as the long anaphora on the word *Ahora* (I, vv. 845-53) and that on the word *adiós* (I, vv. 899-910).

The *gracioso* Brito, apart from his function as a messenger, creates structural parallelisms and contrasts as well. So, for example, when Pedro rewards him with a golden chain and kisses the letter Brito has just brought from Inés, Brito kisses the chain in a form of parodic symmetry. This parallelism is borne out further in the language and form of the two *redondillas*:

PRINCIPE. Toma esta cadena, Brito,
en tanto que a besar llego
las letras de aqueste pliego
que Inés con el llanto ha escrito.

BRITO. Besa muy enhorabuena,
mientras que, tomada a peso,
primero yo también beso
las letras de esta cadena.

(I, vv. 299-306)

In the same way, Brito by his interjections provides the brand of comic *burlas/veras* inversion of the tragic theme so dear to the practitioners of the *comedia nueva.* For example, when Pedro exclaims with all seriousness: "¡Muerto estoy, estoy perdido!" Brito replies with an absurd reminiscence of the ballad of Durandarte: "Sólo Belerma ha vivido / con el corazón difunto" (II, vv. 280-82).

Vélez had great success in this play with his poetic deployment of what we have termed the Unity of Imagery. The repeated use of images as a function of the organic development of a play's total meaning is a device present embryonically in Lope de Vega (in his *Peribáñez,* for example). The systematic use of three "base" images derived from intrinsic elements in the play's theme and story line achieved a degree of perfection with Tirso de Molina. As I have written elsewhere: "As far as I have been able to judge, Tirso's procedure is to select three base images, predicated in the actual story to be dramatized, and work the imagery of the whole play around them. . . . Tirso develops the base image in two ways: by extracting all its double meanings and lexical ambiguities, and by extending the 'field' of the base image into closely related images, which then begin to constitute a cluster."[17] Like Calderón in his early maturity, Vélez de Guevara applied these lessons in *Reinar después de morir.* His three base images are "the sun in heaven," "mourning," and "the forest creature at bay." These three, separately and in combination, pervade the language and dramatic poetry of the whole piece. The constant comparison of Inés to the sun in heaven is a hyperbole for her beauty. The choice of this admitted cliché is Vélez's, but what counts is the use he makes of it. The idea of mourning corresponds to a datum of the plot: the fact that Pedro is a widower once already by the death of Constanza, an event predating the play's opening. The image acquires a foreboding, ironical, and proleptic force by its implicit connections with the death of Inés. The forest creature at bay is suggested by the old ballad "Por los campos de Mondego" and its evocation of the woods around Inés's country retreat, in combination with Inés de Castro's third *apellido* Garza (heron), a metaphorical connection already exploited by previous poets. These base images are developed into clusters and complicated by repetition, extension, and "crossing" or combination one with the other.

The sun image is established straight away in the opening line: "Soles, pues sois tan hermosos." The sun and its realm of heaven are used interchangeably to refer to Inés from this point forward. In the opening scene, Brito's *précieux* account to Pedro of his embassy turns almost entirely on this image:

[BRITO.] cuando, dando al Aurora
celos, el Sol parece que enamora
el Oriente divino
de Inés, Sol para el Sol más peregrino.

(I, vv. 127-30)

[BRITO.] al fin el muro,
el oriente dorado
de aquel sol, de aquel cielo, franqueado,
sin reparo ninguno,
corro los aposentos uno a uno
y no paro hasta donde
está la esfera que tu Sol esconde.

(I, vv. 160-66)

Pedro tells Blanca that the faces of Inés's children, Alfonso and Dionís, are "dos soles" (I, v. 575), and climaxes his speech to her by requesting permission to go and be by his "heaven's" side (I, v. 606). Others use this image of her too. The King asks rhetorically: "¿El cielo / mayor belleza ha formado?" (I, vv. 864-65). Doña Blanca uses it to express her feelings of rivalry with Inés at the opening of Act II:

[INFANTA.] que compitiendo las dos,
aunque es grande su belleza,
para igualar mi grandeza
el Sol es poco, ¡por Dios!

(II, vv. 21-24)

The image is complicated in various ways. Brito warns Inés of impending doom and, in the following metaphorical extension of the image, urges that she hide herself:

BRITO. Esconde, Inés, si es posible,
. . . . . .
lo lindo, lo más que bello
de esa cara, que un nublado
no le ha de faltar a un cielo
donde no hay tantas pesadumbres.

(II, vv. 389-403)

Pedro comments, with more ironical truth than he knows, that her light has dazzled and blinded him. By this he means blind adoration, but in a deeper

sense the image conveys the fact that unrestrained passion has blinded his judgement:

PRINCIPE. Sí, que ciego
a tus luces soberanas,
no es menester que te vea
para que te adore.

(II, vv. 785-88)

A similar extension of meaning occurs in Act I when Pedro asks Brito joyfully: "¿Posible es, Brito, que estoy / donde pueda ver mi esposa, / entre cuya llama hermosa / simple mariposa soy?" (I, vv. 711-14). The idea of the moth or butterfly attracted by a flame or hot light expresses his conscious meaning of fascination, but also implies the normal end of insects thus attracted: singed wings and ultimate demise. When Brito originally informs Pedro about Inés's misgivings concerning the proposed match with Doña Blanca, the *gracioso* extends the heaven image by appropriate color symbolism (blue, not green, symbolized jealousy in Golden Age Spain):

[BRITO.] Y con celosas quejas
prosiguió, más hermosa
que lo está una mujer que está celosa,
porque han dado los celos
hasta el color que viste a los cielos. . . .

(I, vv. 214-18)

The base image of mourning is applied in the strict sense of the sorrowing caused by a loved one's death. It is rapidly combined, however, with grieving in general (*llanto*) and with the nostalgic pain traditionally said to characterize the Portuguese temperament and their popular songs (*saüdade*). The second stanza of the musicians' song in the opening lines establishes this idea early on, and Pedro immediately seizes upon it and develops it:

MUSICOS *(cantan). Vuestra benigna influencia*
mitigue airados incendios,
pues el raudal de mi llanto
es poca agua a tanto fuego.
PRINCIPE. ¡Ay, Inés, alma de cuanto
peno y lloro, gimo y siento![18]

(I, vv. 7-12)

When Pedro imprudently retells the tale of his first bereavement to the listening Blanca, he repeats his "quoted" declaration of love to Inés in the accents of grieving that follow:

PRINCIPE. "Nunca pensé que pudiera,
muerta mi esposa, querer
en mi vida otra mujer,
ni que otro cuidado hubiera
con que el dolor divirtiera
de mi pena y mi dolor."

(I, vv. 513-18)

The sad song *Saüdade miña / ¿Cuando vos vería?*, a traditional *cantar velho* glossed frequently by Portuguese and Castilian poets, is sung by Violante in Act I, Sc. ii, paralleling the opening scene with Pedro in its music, dolorous tone, and stage effect. Pedro's mournful exclamation in Act II, "¡Qué doloroso trasunto!" (II, v. 279), is followed a few lines later by a fit of actual weeping as Pedro's feelings of sadness overwhelm him:

BRITO. No te enternezcas, señor;
mira que llorando estás.
PRINCIPE. ¡Ay, Brito!, no puedo más.

(II, vv. 321-23)

The carefully primed expectations raised by this image are visually satisfied when the unsuspecting Pedro sees the Condestable and Nuño dressed in mourning with news of the King's accidental death. Pedro asks himself: "Nadie responde; pero ¿qué enlutados / a la vista se ofrecen?" (III, vv. 487-88). The final satisfaction of this same expectation comes, logically, with the faintly gruesome, posthumous coronation of Inés and the literal bereavement which this apotheosis of the dead queen enshrines.

The third base image, that of the forest creature at bay, assumes various guises. The forest associations lead into floral imagery; the creature at bay is a hunted bird or an animal obliged to defend itself in the continuing war of the natural world. Conversely, the hunted implies the hunter, his hounds, and the beast of prey. Inés is associated (via her solar deity) with the realm of forest birds, plants, and flowers in Pedro's first speeches about her. Brito ingeniously picks up the idea of the hunted animal in an apparently absurd inversion when he explains his jester's profession to the King. He introduces himself as a specimen of palace reptile or vermin (*sabandija de palacio*), but then moves towards the central theme via his involved use of the creature-at-bay image. He requests:

BRITO. Vuestra real Majestad
perdone estas baratijas,
porque hasta en las sabandijas
la defensa es natural.

(I, vv. 363-66)

Hinting as he does that Pedro's love will cause a conflict in the palace, Brito says with apparent inconsequentiality that even reptiles and vermin must be ready to defend themselves against predators in the natural state. The true victim is, of course, Inés, sequestered in the forest hideaway. Imagery drawn from trees, branches, and plants occurs frequently in the next two hundred lines, and then the enraged Blanca threatens Inés and Pedro using the verb *acosar* (I, v. 621). This verb, used of bulls cornered in the bull ring or animals at bay generally, applies the sense to Blanca herself. If jealousy hems her in and holds her at bay, not even the heavens (i.e., Inés) will be safe from her in her rage to break out of the circle.

It is a visual stroke of genius that Vélez should have first introduced Inés in person dressed in hunting garb ("en traje de caza, con escopeta"). She actually becomes an emblem of her own situation in this way, and the fowling piece she carries reminds us of the necessity of the hunted forest creature to protect herself. In the prophetic dream which she has shortly after falling asleep in a forest glade, Inés sees a frightening vision of a crowned lion who robs her of her children and leaves them to the mercy of two inhuman brutes. The crowned lion is a symbol of royalty (the threat of King Alfonso), but the lion is also the king of beasts, the highest creature in the medieval natural order of land animals and a beast of prey.

The most elaborate play on the image of the forest creature is the suspenseful and elliptical, symbolic dialogue between Blanca and Inés in Act II. The Infanta, Alvar González, and Egas Coello come to Mondego as hunters of the heron both literally and figuratively. Brito tells Inés (II, vv. 409-10) that Blanca has brought down a heron while hunting and, so as not to lose the prize, has arrived in their vicinity. The quarrel of the two women that ensues is central to the drama and remarkable in that it is cast almost entirely in terms of the basic poetic symbols of the play. The following example will convey Blanca's ill-disguised viciousness:

INFANTA. Inés,
suspended un poco el vuelo
con que altiva habéis volado,
reducíos a vuestro centro,
y sírvaos de corrección,
de aviso y de claro ejemplo
que a una blanca garza, hija
de la hermosura del viento,
voló esta tarde, y, altiva,
cuando ya llegaba al cielo,
la despedazó en sus garras
un gerifalte soberbio,
enfadado de mirar
que a su coronado cetro

desvanecida intentase
competir; esto os advierto,
Inés, no más que de paso.
¿Ya me entenderéis? [19]

(II, vv. 491-508)

Inés, using the white color of the heron (*blanca/Blanca*), then turns the tables on the Infanta by suggesting that she herself will be the ultimate loser. Doña Blanca's words to the King immediately afterwards pursue the double meaning of *garza*, and Alfonso is at a loss to understand her. The opening of Act III presents us with a hunting scene, evoking bloodhounds or beagles (*sabueso*) and the female roe deer in flight (*corcilla*). Brito later wonders about the veiled threats to the heron presented by two saker hawks (*sacres*), a reference to the two assassins.

In the final act, the image appears in the various meanings of the verb *prender*, the King's warning to Inés that her needle (for embroidery) is "little steel" to defend herself in the coming battleground (III, vv. 228-31), Blanca's account of Inés's death using the anticipatory imagery of cut or trampled flowers, and Pedro's own disbelieving question as to the identity of the assassin:

PRINCIPE. ¿cuál fue la mano cruel
que de mi inocente Abel
(a pesar de mi sosiego),
bárbaro, atrevido y ciego
cortó el hermoso clavel?

(III, vv. 638-42)

In a general sense, the combination of the three base images conveys the essential sense of the play. Inés is the sun principally in Pedro's conception. His refusal to see her in any other terms is the partial clue to his tragedy. For others, however, Inés is a heron or forest creature in imminent peril of being captured and killed: a more accurate conception of the true situation. The conflict between these two irreconcilable views gives rise to mourning and grief in the final catastrophe, but also in the constant grief arising from the togetherness of their clandestine marriage: a togetherness in perpetual conflict with their enforced separations. Vélez actually combines these images in a variety of skilful ways, a technique I have termed "crossing." For example, the extended play on the hunted heron in Act II is applied to the realm of heaven to which it flies in order to escape. In the following exchange, Inés uses the word *cielo* in a somewhat inscrutable remark that does, however, reveal her consciousness of the way in which a metaphorical sense is being extracted by others from the idea of sky:

INFANTA. Mucho he sentido perdella [i.e., la garza]
ALVAR. Remontó, señora, el vuelo
tanto, que ha sido imposible
el hallarla.
INFANTA. El aire creo
que en sí la habrá transformado
para volar más ligero,
pues della envidioso pudo
tomar ligereza.
D.ª INES. El cielo
dé a vuestra Alteza, Señora,
la vida que yo deseo.

(II, vv. 445-54)

Earlier in the same act, the Infanta appropriates two of the base images and crosses them during her long account to the King of her arrival by ship in Portugal. She complains that she spent four days in the host country before Pedro deigned to pay his respects to her. In so doing, she combines the sun and mourning images in startling fashion:

INFANTA. Cuatro veces murió el Sol
en los brazos de la tarde,
por cuya muerte la noche
vistió luto funerable,
primero que de su cuarto
fuese al mío a visitarme. . . .

(II, vv. 113-18)

In Inés's pleadings to the King towards the end of Act II, she combines the notion of grieving or wailing with the idea of beasts of prey, a part of the cluster already derived from the fundamental forest-creature-at-bay image. The poetic landscape is converted into a mountainous one. Offering to give up Pedro and live with her children in a harsh and remote exile, she says:

D.ª INES. Con tus hijos viviré
en lo áspero de los montes,
compañera de las fieras;
y con gemidos feroces
pediré justicia al cielo,
pues que no la hallé en los hombres. . . .

(II, vv. 703-08)

One of the finest examples of crossing occurs in an earlier speech of Inés's, when, with a certain poetic inevitability, she combines the ideas of forest bird and mourning in the traditional image of the bereaved turtledove pining for its lost mate. She tells Pedro of her forebodings and how the sight of the

turtledove brought these thoughts to her mind. That she should have been hunting at the time reinforces the Unity of Imagery still further:

D.ª INES. Nunca como hoy, dueño mío,
temí de mi amor mudanzas,
no porque de ti no fío,
sino por ser desdichada.
Apenas de nuestra quinta
salí a caza esta mañana,
cuando vi una tortolilla
que entre los chopos lloraba
su amante esposo perdido.

(I, vv. 771-79)

Finally, it is no accident that all three images appear together in the closing lines of the play. Inés as the sun appears mentioned for the last time, Pedro retires to perpetual mourning for his lost love, and, echoing Bermúdez's play on this subject *Nise laureada,* the heroine's name is linked to the victorious laurels of the bay tree:

PRINCIPE. Cubrid el hermoso cuerpo
mientras que voy a sentir
mi desdicha. ¡Ay, bella Inés!,
ya no hay gusto para mí,
que faltándome tu sol
¡cómo es posible vivir!
Vamos a morir sentidos;
amor, vamos a sentir.

(*Vase el* PRINCIPE.)

CONDES. Esta es la Inés laureada
con que el poeta da fin
a su tragedia, en que pudo
Reinar después de morir.

(III, vv. 757-68)

* * *

It should be clear from the foregoing that Vélez de Guevara's dramatic masterpiece is composed with the greatest of care. And the high degree of organization evidenced in his deployment of the three Unities of Theme, Structure, and Imagery is concealed, if anything, by the apparent effortlessness of his art and his unerring appropriateness in the choice of materials. It is the self-assured use of these devices which produces the extraordinary sense of unified tone and pervasive melancholy that characterize the work. The unity of mood and the inexorability of the play's direction grip the attention throughout, however familiar the reader or spectator may be with the rough

outline of the Inés de Castro legend and its foreknown conclusion. There can be little doubt that Vélez set out consciously to write a tragedy and that he succeeded. That he achieved this in ways that would have seemed strange to Aristotle and stranger to his Renaissance epigones is beside the point. To accomplish his task, Vélez availed himself of all the refined techniques which decades of patient experiment by Lope, Tirso, and Calderón had brought to a high degree of perfection. Writing most probably towards the latter end of the 1630s, Vélez followed the young Calderón and the recently rewritten book of rules of an *authentic* Spanish classicism, enriching his nation's theater with a model composition in the new tragic genre.

Notes

1 Cf. José Pellicer y Tovar, *Lágrimas panegíricas a la temprana muerte de . . . Montalbán* (Madrid, 1639). Cited by J. E. Hartzenbusch, *Comedias de D. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, vol. IV*, BAE, Vol. 14 (Madrid, 1945), pp. 685-86, n. 1.

2 See Albert E. Sloman, *The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón* (Oxford, 1958), p. 12.

3 "Es ist eine Art Korrektheit, *eine gewisse Klassizität in Calderón*; in der organischen Entfaltung seiner Kunst, kommt Calderón kein Dichter gleich, Shakespeare kaum in einigen Stücken, von den alten etwa Oedipus Tyrannos" (my emphasis), quoted by Hilda Schulhof, "Grillparzer und Calderón," in *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft*, 33 (1934), 53-65, at p. 65.

4 Parker's celebrated five principles were first set out in his frequently reprinted essay, "The Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age," *Diamante VI* (London, 1957; rpt. 1962, 1964), p. 27.

5 For these discussions, see A. A. Parker, "Towards a Definition of Calderonian Tragedy," *BHS*, 39 (1962), 222-37; "The Father-Son Conflict in the Drama of Calderón," *FMLS*, 2, No. 2 (1966), 99-113; "Prediction and its Dramatic Function in 'El mayor monstruo los celos,' " in *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age Presented to Edward M. Wilson*, ed. R. O. Jones (London, 1973), 173-92; and "*El médico de su honra* as Tragedy," *Hispanó*, special number, 2 (1975), 3-23.

6 All citations are from the standard edition of the play, *"Reinar después de morir" y "El Diablo está en Cantillana,"* ed. Manuel Muñoz Cortés, Clásicos Castellanos (Madrid, 1948), and refer to act and line numbers.

7 See Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, "Luis Vélez de Guevara y sus obras dramáticas," *BRAE*, 4 (1917), 414.

8 Cf. Forrest Eugene Spencer and Rudolph Schevill, *The Dramatic Works of Luis Vélez de Guevara: Their Plots, Sources, and Bibliography* (Berkeley, 1937), p. 236.

[9] Francisco Yndurain, ed., *Reinar después de morir,* Clásicos Ebro (Zaragoza, 1944; 5th ed., 1963), p. 27.

[10] See the introductory essay by Enrique Rodríguez Cepeda to his edition of *La serrana de la Vera* (Madrid, 1967), p. 13.

[11] Cf. Lope de Vega, *El castigo sin venganza,* ed. C. A. Jones (Oxford, 1966), Act II, vv. 2021-30, pp. 88-89.

[12] Reproduced by C. A. Jones, ed., p. 121.

[13] Her edition of Vélez's court entertainment may be read in her "El 'Juicio final de todos los poetas españoles muertos y vivos' (MS. inédito) y el Certamen Poético de 1638," *BRAE,* 55 (1975), 551-610.

[14] Insurrections bearing witness to the general discontent occurred in Lisbon (1634) and Evora (1637), but never really seriously endangered the Spanish ascendancy. Margaret's secretary of state, who ruled harshly, was called Miguel de Vasconcellos de Brito, the last name also being that of the *gracioso* in Vélez's play. Whether this is a coincidence, or whether there is any political significance in this possible allusion which could aid in the question of dating, it is extremely difficult to judge. Cf. "Portugal," *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 11th ed. (1911), XXII, 148.

[15] Charles Mauron, *Psychocritique du genre comique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 134-35.

[16] Alison Weber, "*Hamartia* in *Reinar después de morir,*" *BCom,* 28, No. 2 (1976), 89-95.

[17] See Henry W. Sullivan, *Tirso de Molina and the Drama of the Counter Reformation* (Amsterdam, 1976), p. 160, and the section entitled "Tirso's Imagery," pp. 159-63.

[18] The Lisbon edition and various *sueltas* have the reading "vivo" for "gimo" and the Yndurain edition prefers "gimo." I have supplied this reading here as being more probable for both sense and tone. See Muñoz Cortés, ed., p. 1, note to v. 12.

[19] The last two lines of this quotation are missing in the Muñoz Cortés edition, and I have supplemented them from Yndurain, Act II, vv. 508-09, p. 84. The error appears certainly to be that of the editor, since the loss of half an octosyllable in the *romance* and the entire preceding line bring the two assonances in *e-o* together in successive lines, which is impossible. Muñoz Cortés' v. 507 is also reduced to a trisyllable by the omission, which is equally impossible.