

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SPAIN'S GOLDEN AGE THEATRE: NATIONAL HISTORY, EMPIRE, AND GLOBAL TRADE IN TIRSO DE MOLINA'S *EL BURLADOR DE SEVILLA*

Roberto Cantú*

Abstract: this essay argues one fundamental point: namely, that to understand our current globalized condition, one must first recall and rethink the first globalization of markets, exchanges of ideas, and the migration of peoples across the world's oceans in the sixteenth century under the flags of Spanish and Portuguese galleons. From this argument the critical task turns to the analysis of Tirso de Molina's El Burlador de Sevilla (The Trickster of Seville, 1620), a play that represents Spain's Golden Age in its artistic as well as political and religious dimensions, specifically in its representation of Islamic and Christian conflicts that contain in embryo form questions of religious tolerance and human rights across the globe from the Age of Discovery to the present. This study proposes that Tirso de Molina's comedias open paths of reflection on sixteenth century forms of European nationalism that coincided with the rise of other imperial nations—English, French, Dutch—and resulted in caste-like hierarchies and religious conflicts in colonial settings, problems that continue to divide peoples across the world.

Overshadowed in his time by Spanish playwrights like Lope de Vega (1562-1635) and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1601-1681), Tirso de Molina was all but forgotten by the end of the eighteenth century. His international impact on drama, music, poetry, film, and in daily discourse has been immense, and yet his creation—Don Juan, the archetypal libertine and seducer—is often assumed to be the leading man in the work of some other playwright, poet, or composer. Mostly known in Spain and in Latin America for his play *El Burlador de Sevilla, o el convidado de piedra* (The Trickster of Seville, or the Stone Guest), Tirso fathered a wide-ranging artistic progeny: Molière's play *Don Juan ou le Festin de pierre* (1665), Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787), Byron's *Don Juan* (1821), and José de Zorrilla's *Don Juan Tenorio* (1844), to name a few. The profile of Don Juan the seducer became a joke in modern Latin American fiction, above all in Julio Cortázar's novel *Rayuela* (Hopscotch, 1963), where a man's quest for knowledge and self-mastery in life stand in direct contrast to Tirso de Molina's "brainless" man who stops at a bridge only to smoke and gaze at women adjusting their stockings.¹ Hollywood has contributed to the amusement in the film *Don Juan DeMarco* (Jeremy Leven, 1994), a romantic comedy that confuses the roles of Don Juan and Don Quixote de la Mancha with humorous results. Although he wrote more than 400 plays in his lifetime—including some that are considered masterpieces in the history of Spanish drama—Tirso de Molina

*Dr. ROBERTO CANTÚ, Professor of Chicano Studies and English, California State University, Los Angeles. Email: rcantu@calstatela.edu

¹See Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York: Pantheon Books, 1966): 495.

was not a full-time playwright: he was a Mercedarian friar seized by the politics and religious schisms of his age. This essay is an attempt to set *El Burlador de Sevilla* in its historical context, to rethink and re-imagine Tirso's drama, and to associate the etymological roots of *seduction* with Tirso's ideas of national history, empire, and global trade.

I

Tirso was born in Madrid, Spain, in 1584, as the alleged natural son of the Duque de Osuna. If true, Tirso could have claimed a noble lineage. His real name was Gabriel Téllez, and at an early age he revealed a keen intelligence, withdrawn in character, ironic, prone to satire, and with expressive talents.² He studied at the famed *Universidad de Alcalá de Henares*, where he developed a solid foundation in the classics. In 1601, he entered the *Convento de la Merced* in Guadalajara, Spain, and in 1606 he began to write plays for the Spanish theatre. Known for his extensive travels throughout Spain and Portugal, in 1616 Tirso voyaged to the Caribbean (Santo Domingo) as representative of his order, with a return to Seville in 1618, thus becoming familiar with Spain's overseas colonial and trade interests in the Indies (Hispanic America) and in China, India, and the Philippines through the Manila Galleon (1565-1815). The majority of historians claim the production of his play *El Burlador de Sevilla* to have taken place in 1620, and his membership in the *Academia Poética de Madrid* in 1621, a year that marks the death of Philip III, known as King of Spain, Naples, and Sicily, and as Philip II, King of Portugal (1598-1621). Tirso was elected general chronicler of the Mercedarian Order in 1632, a post that resulted in his much lauded *Historia General de la Orden de Nuestra Señora de la Merced* (1639). Tirso died on 12 March 1648.

From this summary biographical sketch, four points must be raised before undertaking an analysis of Tirso's *El Burlador*: first, in spite of the dual name (Gabriel/Tirso), there is no "double life" in his dramatic writings in the sense of being internally divided and "against" the friar; instead, Tirso's dramatic oeuvre achieves unity in its spiritual and secular objectives; second, his theocratic views are in full accord with Spain's imperial interests on a global scale, thus in correspondence with Hapsburg emporium and colonial ventures in Asia, Africa, and in the New World; third, by the nature of his order, whose founder was Saint Peter Nolasco (1189-1256), the ransoming of Catholic captives from Arab pirates accentuated in Tirso's ideological inclinations a crusading spirit that impacted Spanish minorities (Jews and converted Muslims, known as Moriscos), and confronted Islamic politics from the Mediterranean to India, at the time under Mughal (Islamic) rule; and fourth, Tirso's writings were shaped by the religious conflicts of his age, such as the protracted hostilities with Islam in the peninsula; the Counter-Reformation; the Dutch revolt from Spanish rule (1567-1648), and the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), a religious military conflict between Catholic and Protestant countries that ended with the Treaty of Westphalia, signed on the year of Tirso's death.

²Federico Carlos Sáinz de Robles, *Ensayo de un diccionario de la literatura: escritores españoles e hispanoamericanos*, tomo II (Aguilar: Madrid, 1973): 1183.

From the above, one premise can be proposed: Tirso's life and work were crossed and inflamed by the militant religious fervor of his times. Spanish historian José Antonio Maravall characterizes Tirso de Molina as a "baroque writer" and the baroque as a period concept:

The baroque mind was familiar with exalted and irrational forms of religious, political and even physical beliefs, and to a certain extent baroque culture displayed itself in support of these feelings [...] The Church, the monarchy, and other privileged groups that had to draw to themselves sectors of opinion exerted all possible pressure to strengthen these extrarational aspects so they could make use of them. (12)

It should not be surprising to realize that Tirso de Molina's work was highly political, based on a *revivalist* historical understanding of his times. In accordance with his religious background, Tirso used his plays as part of a theocratic ideology related to his idea of a Hapsburg *universal empire*, conceptualizing his sense of historical memory according to the militancy of the Spanish *Reconquista*, which served as the heroic antecedent to his own era of Spanish imperialism and Counter Reformation politics.³

Tirso's historical moment of crisis turns against several "enemies": persons with leanings towards Erasmian teachings, crypto-Jews, and Moriscos, and against what Maravall calls "the epoch's nonconformists" (26). Spain's minorities felt the impact immediately, resulting in the revolt of the Spanish Moriscos (1569-1571), and in their final expulsion (1609-1614).⁴ The revival of a Crusade militancy in connection to the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) spread across Europe during Tirso's time, but his Mercedarian background and exposure to life in Seville (1616)--a city that had recently deported its Morisco population--might have served as the fertile setting for the writing of *El Burlador*. Given his *populist* bent, the two-tiered social world of *El Burlador* locates its historical expression in the language of the Spanish nobility and in the idiomatic regionalisms of the peasant, both viewed, after the Morisco expulsion of 1614, as one community of blood against Spain's former Jewish and Muslim minorities. This courtly *ingenio* and critique of manners find illuminating connections to Baldesar

³Commenting on Tirso de Molina's political criticism of Philip IV and of the Count-Duque Olivares, Blanca de los Ríos identifies Tirso's *historical drama* as follows: "De este terrible drama político, como de todos los trágicos sucesos con que se inauguró el reinado del Cuarto Felipe, fueron Quevedo y Tirso cronistas harto más veraces y poseídos de la espantosa actualidad que los profesionales. La mitad de la historia del siglo XVII está en las prosas fulmíneas de Quevedo; la otra mitad, en las sátiras restallantes de Tirso" (1946: 2000).

⁴According to Braudel, "During the summer of 1580, a major conspiracy with accomplices in Morocco was uncovered at Seville" (1976: 792); the wealthy Morisco population was viewed as "Diabolical unbelievers, they never go to mass, never accompany the Holy Sacrament through the streets, only go to confession for fear of sanctions against them" (793); "during the raids by the English in the following year, 1589, it was feared that the Moriscos, *who were numerous in Seville*, would give assistance to the attackers" (794, my italics). These events and suspicions ended in the expulsion of Moriscos. Braudel concludes with this observation: "Thus ended in failure the long experiment in the assimilation of Iberian Islam, a failure sharply felt at the time" (795).

Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier*.⁵ It is in light of Castiglione's book that Don Juan as a character acquires its function as a dramatic foil to the "absent" Courtier in *El Burlador*, illustrating in full measure Tirso de Molina's cultural criticism of his historical moment. Tirso's ideological program, consequently, achieves one of its constant manifestations in a long line of Donjuanesque characters, portrayed intermittently by Carlos in *La ninfa del cielo* (1613), in the first appearance of Don Juan in *¿Tan largo me lo fiáis?* (1616) and, among other seducers in other plays, by the sinister and more violent Tello García in *El Rey Don Pedro en Madrid* (1626).

A historical and cultural context marked by a rise and fall, expansion and decline, would provide us with challenging frontiers to our understanding of the character of Don Juan. An initial step in such direction has been traced by Maravall in a timeline of Spain's transformation, peak, and decadence: "In Spain, the years of Philip III's reign (1598-1621) encompass the period of transformation; those of Philip IV (1621-65) the period of its peak; and those of Charles II, at least in the first two decades, the final phase of decadence and degeneration" (4).⁶ Not by coincidence, the year 1621 marks the beginning of Tirso de Molina's *teatro de oposición* (1621-1643), motivated by the imprisonment of his alleged half-brother—the Duque de Osuna—and by the sudden rise of Count Olivares, who engineered the modernization of the affairs of state from 1621 till his death in 1643. Maravall's designation of the Spanish baroque as a period of increasing disillusionment, of political and economic instability, and of state corruption, contributes to one's understanding of the biographical conditions and literary work of Tirso de Molina in the aesthetic and historical context proper to a critical reconstruction of the Don Juan character in *El Burlador*.⁷

⁵In the fourth part of *The Book of the Courtier*--after having discussed the models for the Courtier (second part) and the Court Lady (third part)--Castiglione remembers the Court of Urbino as a *model* of political perfection, that is to say, as a microcosm of a city built on a moral foundation. The Courtier's political role is defined as follows: "Therefore I consider that just as music, festivities, games and other agreeable accomplishments are, so to speak, the flower of courtiership, so its real fruit is to encourage and help his prince to be virtuous and to deter him from evil [...] so it necessarily follows that a man who strives to ensure that his prince is not deceived by anyone, does not listen to flatterers or slanderers or liars, and distinguishes between good and evil, loving the one and detesting the other, aims at the best end of all" (285). For a theatrical application of the "real fruit" of courtiership, see Tirso de Molina's *La prudencia en la mujer*, *Obras dramáticas completas*, Vol I: 630.

⁶Although Américo Castro is not convinced of the historical applicability of an aesthetic periodization based on terms such as Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque, etc., his judgment on seventeenth-century Spain agrees in major points with Maravall's: "Ahí siente uno con perfecta nitidez la situación del español del siglo XVII: ni podía superar su creencia mediante el análisis racional y la confianza en la útil eficacia de este último, ni podía permanecer dentro de ella con la seguridad de antes; más allá de sus fronteras comenzaba a triunfar el pensamiento crítico." In Américo Castro, *La realidad histórica de España* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1982): 325. To read Maravall's clarification of his differences with Castro, see *Culture of the Baroque*, p. xxxiv-xxxv.

⁷A coinciding point is found in the judgment of Blanca de los Ríos, the editor of Tirso de Molina's dramatic works. In her view, Tirso wrote *El Burlador de Sevilla*, "en un momento de plenitud espiritual, cuando al ir a exponer su vida a los riesgos mortales del Océano, consolaríale el dejar a

As of the opening act, and in ironic contrast to the lamentations of both the King of Naples and Duque Octavio--the first, disturbed with Cupid's cunning in climbing walls ("*que la de un niño hasta los muros penetra*," Act I, Scene vii;⁸ the second, afflicted with *Amor's* wound, complaining of Love's sorrows ("*siempre quiere madrugar...al fin, como niño*," Act I, Scene viii)--Don Juan enters the scene as a young, *disguised* lover, identified with Cupid and cupidity, therefore with unrestrained and disorderly love. The fact that Cupid--son of Mars and Venus--was associated with war tokens (bow and arrow) and--as *Amor*--with the jousts of Love, Don Juan's identity will reveal both a preference and a reversal: instead of being true to his military genealogy of city conquerors (from Islamic domination), and builders (the Tenorios of Seville), he will obey his inclination toward seduction and dishonor: instead of *Roma, Amor* [Love] ("*El amor me guía a mi inclinación*," says Don Juan in Act III, Scene vii). Don Juan, as a result, enters our interpretive field as a metafictional character, both in his personification of artifice and deceit (as Duque Octavio's "double") and through mythological allusion as Cupid, establishing intertextual connections to a classical literary history by means of the topos of the abandoned woman (e.g., Circe, Medea, Dido), the wily hero (Ulysses), and the hero's homecoming or the founding of a New Troy (Aeneas).⁹ Thus, if we are to understand Don Juan as a seducer, the first scenes of *El Burlador* restrict the horizon of such understanding according to the term's etymology, namely: to *seduce*, to be the cause of another's *error* (i.e., to "lead away"). Tirso's inclination for antithesis and symmetrical constructions forms the basis of an ideological program that interlaces a plot of seductions with a layered history of Error (the seductions of Calipso, Medea, and Dido in Homer, Apollonius, Virgil, respectively). In the internal logic of *El Burlador*, such a plot and such a history of Error have a symbolic culmination in the character of Don Juan.

España sentada en la cumbre de la cristiandad y confiada al Rey Piadoso a quien él veneraba como a santo. No sospechaba Fray Gabriel que en 1621 iban a morir con aquel Monarca sus esperanzas y las de su Orden y a empezar para él un período de luchas, persecuciones y duras pruebas." In Tirso de Molina, *Obras dramáticas completas*, Vol. II: 555. She adds later: "Y la segunda época, el Segundo período en que se divide la Dramaturgia de Tirso, el Teatro de Oposición, nacido en 1621 como indignada protesta de la prisión del grande Osuna y del abandono en que le dejaron los que vivieron de su magnificencia, y hasta Quevedo, su fiel servidor, secretario, agente político y aun compañero de alegres francachelas, que de *alter ego*, del gran Girón pasó al servicio de su encarcelador Olivares" (1496).

⁸ Tirso de Molina, "El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra," *Obras dramáticas completas*, ed. Blanca de los Ríos, Vol. II (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962): 637. All references to *El Burlador* will henceforth be taken from this edition and will be identified only by act and scene.

⁹ See John Watkins, *The Specter of Dido* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), for a analysis of how a Homeric tradition was revised and culturally appropriated by Virgil, Ovid, St. Augustine, Dante and, among others, Ariosto and Spenser. Although Watkins' book makes no reference to Spanish drama of the Golden Age nor to its treatment of classical hemes (e.g., abandoned women, such as Dido and Medea), one should note that Tirso de Molina's plays (particularly *El Burlador*) propose a vigorous Counter Reformation critique of the post-Renaissance reinterpretation of the Homeric canon.

II

With this historical and aesthetic context in mind, I now turn to the play itself,¹⁰ beginning with Tirso de Molina's ideological construction of a *national memory* in *El Burlador*, where the Iberian past functions through rhetorical mediations that fully express the playwright's idea of Spanish history founded on the thirteenth-century *Reconquista*, and with Spain's imperial might in the seventeenth century, both by reasons of religion and "ownership" of nearby Portugal and Naples at the time of Tirso's writing of *El Burlador*. As part of his national and imperial vision, Tirso includes a dramatized plan for the empire's recalcitrant "minorities": Spain's Erasmian followers, crypto-Jews, and Moriscos--all viewed as "heretics" and thus as enemies of God's truth. These rhetorical mediations in the act itself of *remembrance* give *El Burlador* a complex anachronistic texture wherein one reads of a seventeenth-century Mediterranean world inserted in the time-frame of Alfonso XI (1312-1350), the Spanish King who defeated the Moslems in 1340 at the Rio Salado, the main battle of the Spanish *Reconquista*. Thus, when Duque Octavio meets King Alfonso XI in the second act of *El Burlador*, these are his words:

*Quien espera
en vos, señor, saldrá de premios lleno.
Primero Alonso sois, siendo el Onceno.*
(Act II, Scene iii)

[He who waits on you, Sir, shall be granted bounteous gifts,
Alonso you are first, as well as the Eleventh]

Blanca de los Ríos comments on how Tirso critics (e.g., Farinelli) responded to the "anachronisms" created in *El Burlador* with references to King Alfonso XI in the historical context of discoveries and conquests that took place in the post-Columbian era (e.g., Goa)¹¹ By contrast, Tirso's audience must have understood such anachronisms as obvious "historical correspondences" (i.e., eras of anti-Islamic wars); consequently, far from being an instance of historical ignorance, Tirso appears to have been indulging in a genealogical consciousness that gave his audience--through the problematics of a

¹⁰Tirso's critics usually dismiss his art because of supposed flaws in *El Burlador*, in particular Juan Luis Alborg, who states: "Permítasenos afirmar que el *Don Juan* de Zorrilla aventaja en muy gran medida, como construcción teatral, al *Burlador* de Tirso, hecho de escenas sueltas, desligadas, de 'flashes' momentáneos." (609). Along similar lines, Mandel's opinion in regards to *El Burlador* is the following: "a spirited though crude and faulty piece of entertainment. Properly restored (for it is unjust to blame Tirso for textual faults), the play is an excellent romp, a tough morality play, more play than morality [...] To praise *El Burlador* as a masterpiece of the human intellect is to make the mistake of ascribing the significance of the mythical hero to the vehicle which first carried him. Unlike Hamlet, but like Faust, Don Juan was not born in a work as important as his own person" (44).

¹¹Tirso de Molina, *Obras dramáticas completas*, Vol. II: 645.

historical consciousness mediated by conflictive religious relations--a "regenerative" effect through the recollection of a heroic past now turned into a redeemed present in which Spain had just defeated and expelled its Moriscos, thus fully "reconquering" Spanish territory. In relation to Morisco expulsions, *El Burlador* would seem to give its Spanish audience a dramatic legitimacy of ownership over confiscated lands and property of Moriscos. On the other hand, the anti-Semitism in Tirso's play *Mari Hernández la Gallega* (1612) continues to be thematically present years later in *La prudencia en la mujer* (1630), long considered by Tirso's criticism to be his best historical play. Tirso's adverse depiction of Spanish Jews and Moriscos in his plays turns into a revealing ideological code for the seventeenth-century Spanish "Reconquest," and its obsession with *limpieza de sangre* and ethnic cleansing.¹² To his elaboration of the disturbances and protracted violence in the Spanish countryside, Maravall adds the increasing emphasis on Spanish *limpieza de sangre*: "Other tensions were not lacking: the inhuman consequences of the purity of blood stature [including] xenophobic manifestations [and] the first nonconformist feminist voices" (45-46).¹³

Tirso's most creative theatrical phase flourished shortly after Spain's *Decreto de Expulsión* of 1609, later enriched by his first visit to Seville (1616), and his voyage to Santo Domingo (1616-1618). A historical reconstruction of Tirso's conceptualization of the era's political anxieties and policies would, therefore, frame the writing of *El Burlador* in relation to Tirso's initial visit to Seville, to his two-year religious post in the Caribbean, and--shortly after his return from America--to his trip to Portugal (1619-1620), where perhaps Tirso conceived of an adaptation of his previous *¡Tan largo me lo fiáis!* into *El Burlador*. On this point, one must recall that it is in the first act of *El Burlador* where Tirso's utopian text begins to acquire significance, particularly with Don Gonzalo de Ulloa's description of Lisbon ("*una octava maravilla*" and "*ciudad opulenta*" [Act I, Scene xiv]), clearly a testimony of Tirso's impressions while in Portugal, and a construct of his ideal monarchical capital. Tirso's utopian center for the Spanish empire achieves its expression in an assumed Luso-Spanish unity based on uterine ("entrañas de España") and umbilical metaphors ("nace el caudaloso Tajo/...entra en el mar Océano"),

¹² Describing the years of the Morisco expulsion from Spain, Fernand Braudel writes: "Everywhere, in town and countryside, the Morisco was oppressed by the victorious society. The strongest defenders of the *fellahin* were in fact the feudal landlords. They were to protect the Moriscos much as in the United States southern plantation owners protected their slaves. But alongside them, there had grown up, the product of several centuries of Christian domination, a proletariat, both rural and urban, of Old Christians, fanatical and cruel, who can be compared, to pursue the analogy, to the poor whites of the southern states" (1976: 786).

¹³ In his thorough review of the literature on Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla*, Armand E. Singer includes one doctoral dissertation relating Islamic civilization to the Don Juan figure: Sobhi Saad Youssef's "Don Juanism in Arabic Literature," *DA* 31 (1970): 2354A (University of Utah). According to Singer, this dissertation treats "almost virgin territory" (8). For a recent illustration of emerging scholarship on "Muslim Spain" as a cultural unconscious in Islamic countries, and its associations with the political aftermath of 9/11, see Atef Louayene's path-breaking study "Pathologies of Moorishness: Al-Andalus, Narrative, and 'World Humanism,'" *Journal of East-West Thought*, No. 1, Vol. 3 (Spring 2013): 31-44.

an affiliation based on geographic, architectural, and market determinants. As such, in Don Gonzalo's *relación sucinta*, the Tagus becomes a symbol of an Iberian manifest destiny unified through two of the "capital" centers it crosses--Toledo and Lisbon--before flowing into the Atlantic and toward a global emporium. The real "marvel" of the world was the fact that at this time Spain was a double-headed seaborne empire: the Portuguese empire, however, ranging from Africa to India and China (Macao) was under Spanish rule, a fact that clarifies the ambivalence regarding the site for the capital of a Hapsburg empire stretching through lands across the globe. According to Anthony Disney, the first encounters and interactions of Portuguese with non-Europeans were similar to the Spaniard's treatment of its Jewish and Morisco minorities, including indigenous peoples in the New World:¹⁴

Early in the expansion, there was a Portuguese tendency to view all peoples within the context of the global struggle between Christianity and Islam. More broadly, African, Asian, and Amerindian societies were expected to possess more or less familiar hierarchies, with grades of status from kings to the lowliest of commoners, as in Europe. In religious terms, the Portuguese categorized newly encountered peoples according to whether they professed Islam, Judaism, or some form of Christianity [...] In this way, they fitted into a medieval European view of the world. (288)

The architectural detail found in Don Gonzalo's depiction of Lisbon is religious in nature and mainly *commemorative*: the Convent of Belén (constructed in 1499 as a monument to India's discovery by Vasco de Gama); the Convent of Odivelas (the tomb of Don Dionís [1279-1325], the Portuguese King who encouraged poetry, commerce, and founded centers of higher learning [e.g., the University of Lisbon in 1290]); and the Royal Palace ("*edificio de Ulises*") with memories of Alfonso Enríquez (1112-1185), the founder of the Portuguese monarchy after defeating the Spaniards (1128), and routing the Moors in the Battle of Ourique (1139). Given that Tirso seemed to operate with the idea that history "repeats itself," the last two points might have been meant as a warning of possible conflicts emerging later between Portugal and Spain, as in fact they did in 1640, eight years before Tirso's death. Conversely, the architectural description suggests three other important historical registers: global imperial expansion (India/the Indies), the anti-Islamic wars of the *Reconquista*, and courtly "enlightenment" (King Don Dionís). Lastly,

¹⁴In his book *Sahagún and the Transition to Modernity*, Walden Brown argues that Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's *Florentine Codex* is the work of a medieval mind and not one in transition to modernity and to its view of culture as the work of mankind and not of God: "The discovery that the Nahuas were not at all talking about the same thing when they used superficially similar ideas threw a wrench into the medieval Euro-Christian system of unified meaning [...] Faced with this dilemma, Sahagún had three (hypothetical) choices: (1) do nothing; (2) accept that linguistic meaning is often contextually and arbitrarily determined, and hence not derivative of God, or (3) prove that Nahuatl and European languages share a semantic substratum. Sahagún chose the third option" (124). For a "modern" breakthrough, see *In Defense of the Indians*, by Bartolomé de las Casas (1474-1566), a Dominican and bishop of Guatemala who defended the rights of Native Americans in his famous debate against Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda in 1551 in front of Charles V and his son Philip (xx-xxi).

Ulisses's City ("*Ulisibona*") is described as a world emporium, with commodities landing in Lisbon on a daily basis ("*cada tarde a su ribera más de mil barcos cargados de mercancías diversas*").

As if to underline the strength of such a utopian model, one reads in *El Burlador* contrasting references to a corrupt Seville and to an incompetent administration in Naples. Such corruption and incompetence are made manifest through the simultaneous acts of Isabela's enjoyment by Don Juan while her father and his uncle, under the same roof, negotiate dark intrigues. Tirso's underworld metaphors ("Cuando los negros gigantes/ plegando funestos toldos/ ya del crepúsculo huyen," Act I, scene ix) only increase the significance of the moral pollution in the Neapolitan court. The opening scene thus begins with a deliberate economy of exposition through the theme of corruption--a traditional trope for the grave--in relation to a lady and an empire, both "tricked" under the cover of night or through the agency of a covered disguise (Don Juan for Duque Octavio). The initial acts of corruption, as a result, trigger a dramatic action where the *burlador's* debaucheries and sudden flight turn into metaphors of a kingdom's parasites and overall political mendacity. Adding to the theme of decay and nocturnal transactions of the powerful, Don Pedro's reference to the *antípodas* turns into a trope for a world upside down, compounded by the ambiguous association with the New World in the final dialogue between Catalinón and Don Gonzalo's statue (Act III, Scene xiii). With this vigorous beginning, propelled rhetorically more than by theatrical plot, Don Juan's flight is already heading towards his own fall and immolation.

Read in this manner, one realizes that the initial exposition of dramatic situation and character involves more than a woman's seduction. For example, the first scene begins with the cultural theme of a *spoken promise*, both in the sense of a betrothal pledge given as a *man's word* ("*de nuevo os juro de cumplir el dulce sí*") and as a metaphor for the sacramental church nuptial: *a woman's hand* ("*dame, duquesa, la mano*").¹⁵ The reversal of "cultural expectations" is attested by Isabela's discovery of the lover's secret: Don Juan has been playing Duque Octavio's role ("*yo engañé y gocé a Isabela...Fingí ser el duque Octavio*"), technically invalidating his betrothal pledge. In accordance with Don Juan's youthful "Cupid" role--acknowledged by the King of Naples and alluded to by Duque Octavio in a humorous situation with an obvious dramatic irony in Act I, Scene viii--the historical logic of the play compounds Don Juan's identity with features derived from Islamic Spain: as a man in disguise or a crypto-X ("*embozado*," "*un nombre sin hombre*," Act I, Scene i).¹⁶ Thus viewed, Duque Octavio's description of Seville in the second act

¹⁵For a detailed description of the Catholic rite of sacramental nuptials, see Ramón A. Gutiérrez. Regarding the symbolism of the ring and hand, Gutiérrez notes: "In medieval symbolism one wielded power and authority with the right hand and accepted subordination with the left. Thus, asking for the hand of a woman in marriage and marking it with a ring signified the transfer of tutelary rights over a female. These rights were also sexual, for one cannot avoid noting the symbolism of thrust and penetration associated with the gesture of slipping the ring from finger to finger, passing beyond the second joint only on the fourth finger where the ring finally rests" (267).

¹⁶For the meaning of "crypto-X" and a discussion of "borders" (i.e., as political frontiers, limits to understanding, death, etc.), see Jacques Derrida. Reflecting on the fate of Spain's Jewish

accentuates the Islamic fashion in women's clothes ("*un manto tapado, un brío, donde un puro sol se esconde*"), underlining, as a consequence, the notion of *concealment*, central as a metaphor of ethnic Spain (e.g., Marranos and Moriscos). When Don Juan leaves Aminta and returns to Seville, his *concealed* place of residence acquires a symbolic connotation: he is to live in the Concealed Street ("*en la calle oculta*," Act III, Scene xi). On an institutional level, one could argue that Don Juan represents patriarchy's cultural contradictions.¹⁷ However, in addition to his "institutional" representation of crisis, Don Juan symbolizes a conjugal antinomy: Spain's Catholic notion of the idealized Christian family, founded on the Holy Family model, stands in stark contrast to the Muslim harem.¹⁸

Lastly, in terms of dramatic structure, the opening scene proves to be symmetrical to the play's conclusion, where Don Gonzalo de Ulloa tests Don Juan's *word* and asks for his *hand*, requests that correspond to the overall theme of *El Burlador*, namely: society's reconstitution through the sacramental church nuptials that close the play, a ceremony parodied through the figure of the inverted wedding as Don Juan submits to unexpected "underworld" nuptials with Don Gonzalo. Under closer scrutiny, the play's initial exposition reveals an already polluted world either because of faulty judgment (Isabella), concealed/secret identity (Don Juan), or the sinister imperial and emporium dealings between the King of Naples (at the time ruled by Spain) and Don Juan's uncle, Don Pedro Tenorio. As if to stress the trickster-quality of the court, Tirso paints a portrait of Don Pedro who, in his attempt to protect his nephew, deploys his *industria* (i.e., his cunning) to lie to both King and Octavio regarding the agent of Isabela's seduction. One can well visualize the audience's response when listening to Don Pedro as he explains to the King of Naples the seducer's escape.

The dramatic action of the first act includes references to important commercial ports in the Spanish Empire (Naples, Seville, Lisbon), beginning with Don Juan in Naples, his flight and shipwreck in the Catalan coast (Tarragona), followed then by an interpolation in the play recounting Don Gonzalo's return to Seville with a report from Portugal regarding exchanges of colonial territories, and concluding, as a first act, back in

conversos, Derrida writes: "To that which lives without having a name, we will give an added name: Marrano...the crypto-Judaic, and of the crypto-X in general....Let us figuratively call Marrano anyone who remains faithful to a secret that he has not chosen, in the very place where he lives, in the home of the inhabitant or of the occupant, in the home of the first or of the second *arrivant*, in the very place where he stays without saying no but without identifying himself as belonging to" (77, 81).

¹⁷The central contradiction of Spanish/Mexican patriarchy is described by Gutiérrez as follows: "Men of honor enforced female purity in mother, wife, daughters, and sisters, and protected it from assault. Concurrently, though, men enhanced their honor through the conquest of another man's woman. It was precisely in this contradiction that positioning in the virtue hierarchy occurred. Precedence was determined by how these two imperatives, female sexual protection within the family and sexual conquest over other women, were reconciled" (213).

¹⁸Regarding the attempts of the Spanish monarchy to impose control on the populace and its revolts, see Maravall's discussion of the Crown's closing of theaters, imposition of sexual abstinence, and the closure of brothels, "no public women" (37).

Tarragona with Don Juan again in flight and with Tisbea *on fire*. As a result, the first act produces a trinity of cities--Naples/Lisbon/Seville--with an obvious imperial center on Tirso's chosen capital, Lisbon or the mythical *Ulisibona* (hence the play's "Ulysses" theme, linked to war, a search for home, and conjugal honor). According to Don Gonzalo (Act I, Scene xiv), Lisbon " *pudiera honrar a España / y aun enseñar a tenerla*" ("Could bring honor to Spain/ and even teach her how to acquire it").¹⁹

It would be tempting to judge *El Burlador's* Portuguese utopia as a mere distraction from what might be considered the *telos* of the play's dramatic action, namely: Don Juan's sexual exploits. Nonetheless, on closer examination one realizes Tirso's keen political vision and its application while visiting Portugal to his plausible decision to rewrite his 1616 Don Juan play, *¿Tan largo me lo fiáis?*, where one observes that the dialogue between Don Gonzalo de Ulloa and Alfonso XI does not make the detailed references to Lisbon, simply because in 1616 Tirso was on his way from Seville to Santo Domingo and would not be in "Ulisibona" until the years 1619-1620. Why did Tirso give Lisbon so much importance? Reading Fernand Braudel, one has a glimpse of Tirso's political imagination:

At the height of Spain's *political* domination of Europe, Philip II conquered Portugal in 1580, and elected residence, with his government, in Lisbon for a period of almost three years. Lisbon thus gained immeasurably. Looking out over the ocean, this was an ideal place from which to rule the world. Backed up by the king and the presence of the government, the Iberian fleet drove the French out of the Azores in 1583, hanging all prisoners from the yard-arms of the ships. So to leave Lisbon in 1582 meant leaving a position from which the empire's entire economy could be controlled, and imprisoning the might of Spain in Madrid, the landlocked heart of Castile--a fateful mistake. (1992: 32)

In stark contrast to the utopian projection of Lisbon in the first act, Don Juan's Seville is morally sketched in the second act through the memories of past seductions--Inés,

¹⁹In our attempt to reconstruct the historical impression held by Tirso of both Naples and Seville, it is revealing to note that in the year 1613, according to Braudel, "more crimes, thefts and murders were committed in Naples than in any other region of Italy" (1976: 752). Regarding Seville, Braudel describes it as the equivalent of Don Gonzalo's anti-Lisbon: "Into Seville streamed the hungry crowd of emigrants to America, impoverished gentlemen hoping to restore their family fortunes, soldiers seeking adventure, young men of no property hoping to make good, and along with them the dregs of Spanish society, branded thieves, bandits, tramps all hoping to find some lucrative activity overseas, debtors fleeing pressing creditors and husbands fleeing nagging wives. To all of them, the Indies represented the promised land" (740). Recreating the Seville that Tirso visited for the first time in 1616, Blanca de los Ríos states: "La Sevilla histórica era como enorme palimpsesto donde, sobre el polvo de una civilización, alzabase otra y otra; sobre el solar de un templo visigótico se construía una mezquita, y sobre los vestigios de una mezquita o de un palacio moro edificabase una iglesia o un monasterio cristiano [...] de cuatro sinagogas de que los Reyes Católicos despojaron a los judíos de Sevilla se hicieron las iglesias de Santa María la Blanca, Santa Cruz, San Bartolomé (el nuevo) y el convento de la Madre de Dios. Sobre las ruinas de la gran Aljama se alzó la excelsa Catedral," Vol. II: 523.

Constanza, Teodora, and Julia--all described by the Marqués de la Mota as being diseased or confined ("*lampiña de frente y ceja*"; "*se escapó del mal francés por un río de sudores*", etc.; Act II, Scene vi). On the other hand, Don Gonzalo's palace in Seville is located on the Street of the Serpent (la calle de la Sierpe), with a retinue of one thousand Eves in his possession ("*que en aqueste amargo valle con bocados solicitan mil Evas*"; Act II, Scene xiii). With such biblical parody on *origins*--the serpent, the hungry Eves, the venereal diseases, etc.--the overall impression of the second act enforces the vision or nightmare of a polluted Paradise. This impression is confirmed when consulting the original Don Juan play, *¿Tan largo me lo fiáis?*, where Don Gonzalo is referred to as Adam: "*en la calle de la Sierpe, donde ves a Adán vuelto en portugués, que en aqueste amargo valle...*" (Act II, Scene xi). Although Don Juan's sexual excesses dim next to Don Gonzalo's "one-thousand Eves," their correlation with a history of Error tacitly points to their fated common grave.

As symbolic opposites of the cunning Don Pedro and of the hyperbolic sexual transgressors represented by Don Gonzalo and Don Juan, Duque Octavio and the Marqués de la Mota are consistently portrayed as cuckold and fools. Duque Octavio appears as a *Capricornio*--with an obvious association with a male goat and the Spanish vernacular for cuckold; similarly, the Marqués de la Mota is metamorphosed into a bull, that is to say, a man with horns (another image for a cuckold). When asked by Catalinón "*¿echaste la capa al toro?*," Don Juan responds: "*No, el toro me echó la capa*" (Act II, Scene xiii), meaning that de la Mota dishonored himself. Conversely, according to Don Diego Tenorio, his son Don Juan is popularly known in the city as the *Héctor de Sevilla*, understood according to the Greek significance of the name--"holding fast," hence a good rider and *domador de yeguas* (tamer of mares). Honoring his appellation, Don Juan flees at the closing of Act I in Tisbea's *yegua*, allowing his audience yet another occasion for situational irony and punning.

In its rhetorical construction, *El Burlador* combines the language of myth (e.g., Homer, Virgil), and of legend (Spanish folklore). In relation to the former, the play contains symmetrical genealogies of mythical "instigators" of love, represented by Cupid himself, then by Ulysses, Aeneas, and Jason, all connected, as seducers, to ephemeral or suicidal loves (Psyche, Circe, Dido, Medea). Thus constructed, Don Juan's shipwreck in the Catalonian coast is framed within a Greco-Roman horizon: a Narcissus-like Tisbea meets Don Juan, a second Aeneas just risen from violent Mediterranean waters. But the language of myth at this point suggests an imminent punishment (Tisbea's, for her Narcissus-like inability to love and, secondly, for being--through a deliberate synecdoche--an extension of a the empire's corruption ["*porque en tirano imperio vivo, de amor señora*," Act I, Scene x]). The dramatic irony of Tisbea's soliloquy produces the anticipation of a lover (Don Juan) who shall abandon the Tarragonian Queen Dido. With an obvious play on perspectives and meanings, Catalinón emerges from the sea believing Don Juan to be dead ("*¡Maldito sea Jasón...! Muerto está, no hay quien lo crea*," Act I, Scene xi). In Catalinón's language, Tirso's audience probably interpreted the passage at two levels: first of all, what Catalinón anticipated ("Maldito sea," i.e., Don Juan's damnation), and what the informed audience expected: Don Juan will abandon Tisbea, glimpsed in the association with Aeneas and Jason.

To explain the sudden entrance of the supernatural through the language of folklore in the third act, one realizes that in addition to its popular religious appeal (a Law above and beyond the Crown), it must somehow disclose a *perversion* in Don Juan's genealogical line. It is no coincidence that Don Juan reveals such past in the third act, where he boasts of a "heroic lineage" with origins in the thirteenth century, when Ferdinand III (1217-1252) resolved the dynastic wars in Castile and defeated the Moors, taking possession of Córdoba (1236), and Seville (1248) in Don Juan's words:

*Yo soy noble caballero
cabeza de la familia
de los Tenorios antiguos,
ganadores de Sevilla.*
(Act III, Scene viii)

[I am a noble gentleman,
head of the ancient Tenorio family,
conquerors of Seville.]

The occasion is clearly far from being "heroic" for, instead of feats in the battlefield, Don Juan is about to embark on yet another (and in the play, his fourth) "conquest": Aminta. It would appear then that the supernatural has a dramatic entrance through four cultural "doors," first by the transgression of a *broken promise* (as a spoken word, expressive of manliness and honor); secondly, through the popular theme of the young seducer as a *calavera* (a "skull"), that is to say, a licentious man; third, by repeated warnings ("lo pagaréis con la muerte," Act I, by Catalinón); and fourth, by way of the motif of the *convidado de piedra*, with its obvious inversion of the Eucharist, the "remembrance" of Christ, and the hope of resurrection: as such, a negation of a true communion with God. But the broken pledge, the warnings, the *calavera* symbolism, and the eucharistic parody, suggest one of Don Juan's defining features: a physical beauty that "conceals" its own corruption. An illustration of this "whited sepulcher" is found in *El Aquiles* (1611-1612), where Tirso identifies the moral corruption hidden under handsome features:

*Quien te oye cantar se admira,
y de tus costumbres locas
asombrado se retira.
Debajo de tal belleza,
¿es posible que se esconda
tan cruel naturaleza?*
(Act I, Scene vi)

[Those who hear you sing feel admiration
But for your mad manners,
Departs astonished.
Underneath such fairness,
Is it possible that a cruel nature hides itself?]

The notions of duplicity and mistaken identity, and of reality and appearances, are thematic constants in Tirso's plays, often creating humorous scenes (e.g., Achilles, dressed as a woman and courted by Lisandro), but undoubtedly related to Tirso's idea of wordly life and its illusions. As if to insure the doctrinal impact of the play, the role of trickster is thrown in sharp relief in this and many other scenes, suggesting in Don Juan a double role: he is both the expression of an imperial "disease" as well as a scapegoat who must somehow cleanse society and, through his death, be the occasion of a communal healing. This reading possibility will account for the "double ending" of *El Burlador*, first with Don Juan's damnation, and the second with the weddings that close the play (but with brides who are no longer virgins), emblematic of society's reconstitution.

Although one can only speculate about the cognitive union between Tirso de Molina, *El Burlador*, and the play's audience, one can well imagine a multi-layered cultural understanding or time-bound "literacy" that would allow for the communication of irony and satire, thus creating an organic continuum between author, play, and audience. In our reading, the analysis of *El Burlador* must turn on a simultaneous act that operates through the trope of *marriage*, both in its spiritual sense (communion), as well as in its worldly meaning (the founding of cities). As anti-founder or trickster, Don Juan fully expresses Tirso's satire of his times: Aminta's judgment of Don Juan, consequently, must have fallen on attentive popular ears: "*La desvergüenza en España se ha hecho caballería*" (Act III, Scene iv).

One must point as well to Tirso's dramatic principle of "twinning" or *gemelism*,²⁰ a technique of structural parallelisms found throughout *El Burlador* that generates doubles between Don Juan/Duque Octavio (both "exiled" in Act I); Duque Octavio/Marqués de la Mota (as victims of Don Juan's transgressions); Lisbon/Seville (both defined as "*octava maravilla*," with the former as the true marvel, the latter as the inversion or parody); and the horizontal and vertical parallelisms in *El Burlador*, producing two sets of female "doubles," one with Isabela/Ana, the other through Tisbea/Aminta. The first are courtly and represent *colonial* extensions of the Spanish Empire (Naples, Lisbon); the latter symbolize Spain's peasant countryside and seashore. The courtly "doubles" are guilty, both by act (pre-nuptial conjugal rights), or by association (administrative corruption); the countryside/seashore deceived women receive their punishment because of a sentimental fault (Tisbea's narcissism), or due to a transgression (Aminta's sacramental vows to Batricio). The realization that somehow these four women receive a *deserved punishment* for their "errors" through Don Juan's agency transforms *El Burlador* into a play with the pedagogical and critical purpose to "warn" the female audience through *negative* examples (e.g., Don Juan), and to question arranged marriages or pre-nuptial sexual consumation, proposing instead sacramental marriages based on the full consent

²⁰I am borrowing this term from Blanca de los Ríos, who recognizes Tirso's "doubling" as *gemelismo*: "Aunque Tirso supo como nadie diversificar situaciones idénticas, la coincidencia, el gemelismo de estas escenas parece sincronismo"; in *Obras dramáticas completas*, op. cit., Vol. I, 1894.

of the groom and the bride, thus enforcing the new marriage laws originating in the Council of Trent.²¹

With this Tridentine emphasis on nuptials, our rereading of *El Burlador's* double ending acquires a strange inversion in the *macabre wedding* between Don Gonzalo and Don Juan. It all makes sense, however, when one observes that Don Juan's damnation is portrayed through the overdetermined themes of *a man's word* and *giving one's hand*, pledges which have accumulated as of the beginning of the play in Don Juan's ledger of debits. The analogy or parallelism between Don Juan's damnation in Act III, and Tisbea's condition in Act I, is inevitable because of its obvious symmetry: to Tisbea's "*¡Amor, clemencia, que se abrasa el alma!*" (Act I, Scene xviii), Don Juan expresses the equivalent phrase (not to a remembered love, but to Don Gonzalo): "*¡Que me abraso! No me abrases con tu fuego...¡Que me abraso, no me aprietes!*" (Act III, Scene xx). As if to test the audience's memory and power of textual recall, one is told that Don Juan shares with Tisbea a "*tálamo de nuestro fuego*" (Act I, Scene xvi; i.e., a nuptial bed of "conjoined fire"), whereas with Don Gonzalo there will be a sharing of the same sepulcher in hell, hence an analogous eternal bed of fire. Lastly, Count-Duke Olivares held, among many others, the titles of Comendador de Alcántara and Comendador de Víboras, therefore appearing as the political "twin" of Don Gonzalo through a shared title (reading Calatrava/Alcántara as an implied anagram) and home address: Calle de la Sierpe/Víboras.²²

Brought to light under the blaze of hell, Don Gonzalo and Don Juan--the first, a hyperbolic and "deviant" Adam, seducer of one-thousand Eves; the second, popularly known as "the Hector of Seville"--become strange bedfellows, allowing Tirso's satire on seventeenth-century Spain one last punch: the "twin" grave is later to be transferred to Madrid ("*para memoria más grande*", Act III, Scene xxvi), thus relocating a crypt symbolic of seductive *erring*, corruption, and courtly intrigue to the capital of the Spanish Empire. Tirso's satiric plays must have been "read" closely, for the punishment was swift: in 1625, Tirso was confined in a Madrid monastery, and within a year, he was banished to Salamanca.²³

III

Although not my primary intent, I have taken Tirso's paternity of *El Burlador* as certain by following a method of cross-referencing and ideological consistency in Tirso's plays that reveal stylistic "mannerisms" and similar thematic patterns. An unexpected illustration is found in the dramatic structure of Tirso's farce *El Aquiles* (1612), which

²¹See Ramón A. Gutiérrez (242). The spirit of Tirso's critique of arranged marriages has one of its most eloquent expressions in yet another "anachronism": in the lips of Achilles; see *El Aquiles*, Act II, Scene viii.

²²For a complete list of the titles held by Count-Duke Olivares, see Ruth Lee Kennedy (205). Regarding punishments to those who insulted or questioned the integrity of the Count-Duke Olivares, see Maravall (41).

²³See Blanca de los Ríos, Vol. I: 1905.

foreshadows *El Burlador's* in its initial situation of concealed identities (Ulysses feigning madness, and Achilles' transvestism); in the importance of a *man's word* (Ulysses's pledge to embark against Troy), and (3) the theme of the "man with horns" (through a reference to the Minoan Bull). In addition, Ulysses' utopian description of Ithaca becomes a logical antecedent of *El Burlador's* Lisbon, with the emphasis on imperial economic power ("*Toda el Asia me tributa*," Act III, Scene ii), and with Asian pearls and spices as metaphors of Hapsburg global expansionism ("*Donde se cifra el Oriente en grandezas y riquezas*," Act I, Scene v). Such colonial themes become identifiable topoi in the context of Tirso's plays, revealing through both style and repeated dramatic situations Tirso's paternity of *El Burlador*. On the other hand, Tirso's generic shift from farce (*El Aquiles*) to satire (*El Burlador*) would be explained by the rising political criticism of Tirso's theatrical production after his visit to the New World and Portugal, and which, according to Tirsian scholarship, corresponds to his *teatro de oposición*.

One final consideration of the proposed analytical framework for a reading of *El Burlador* must allow us to confront the structural limits of Tirso de Molina's political discourse. In retrospect, it is clear that, although aware of the empire's historical crisis, Tirso's theocratic vision was, in a manner of speaking, blind to the future, confined as it was to a system of historical analogies (thirteenth-century Castile, the Spanish *Reconquista*, Homer's Greeks, etc.), and to intertextual citations whose operations were inspired by the religious militancy of Tirso's Spain. Moreover, in spite of his ecumenical approach to history, Tirso's notion of "totality" was founded on principles of *exclusion* precisely in a historical juncture when Spain counted under its dominion many of the world's cultures in several continents. Don Juan's aristocratic disdain towards superstition, and his "enlightened" response to the supernatural fear felt by the common man ("*el temor y temer muertos es más villano temor*," Act III, Scene xv) is not, in Tirso's play, a modern feature to be embraced: it is a defiance that must be punished. Tirso's Counter-Reformation and *Reconquista* politics proved to be symptoms of Spain's imperial decline and of its inability to join other European powers in opening paths toward modernity and the Enlightenment. In the New World, fray Bartolomé de Las Casas presented in 1551 a courageous defense of native peoples--their first legal defense in front of the Spanish Crown--asking that they be considered as being "full fellow human beings, possessing valid traditions, and rights" (*In Defense of the Indians*, xiii). An emerging sense of human rights would be possible as an ideal in Spain and in Latin America only after the French Revolution. Spain's inner contradictions in light of Tirso de Molina's plays have been insightfully reasoned by Anthony Cascardi:

Economically, Spain was being drawn into a global economy whose sustaining principle was that of free exchange and whose preferred mode of production was capitalism. Socially, the caste basis of medieval Spain was being severely eroded by the legal elimination of the Jews (1492), the expulsion of the Moriscos (ca. 1609), and the consolidation of power in the hands of the Christians. If one were to detail all the significant features of this transformation, it would become apparent that the *comedia* as a genre is projected precisely along that axis defined by the respective features of "traditional" and "modern" societies: on the one hand, a culture in which interpersonal relations are determined by kinship ties and bloodlines [...] on the other hand, a culture

in which the categories that determine personal worth are based largely on the standards of possessive individualism. (151)

The provisional critique of Tirso's utopian text as found in *El Burlador* must, therefore, begin by questioning the foundations of his idea of historical totality.²⁴ Having identified the structural borders of Tirso's political ideology, one must return to the center of his cognitive world where one finds the strength of his *internal critique* of Spain. In *El Burlador*, the interweaving of discourses--Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, Islamic, and *mnemonic*--are situated in an implicit hierarchy so as to suggest the victory of Christian memory/communion over its "heretic" counterpart. Tirso's idea of totality, consequently, would be *Catholic* in the sense that it is a history of a religious Truth. If one grants, therefore, that Troy appears in *El Burlador* as a grand trope for seduction (Paris-Helen), deception (the Trojan Horse), and war (Agamemnon-Menelaos versus Priam's sons), the correlation allows for the possibility of understanding Tirso's views regarding Spain's problematics of the *same* (e.g., its relation to Portugal) as opposed to its problematics of *difference* (its Moriscos, Jews, and a pagan past).

One could propose in turn that Homer's *Iliad* was meant as a "subtext" of *El Burlador*, particularly if one takes into account Don Juan's "wandering" itinerary presented through a narrative of seductions, a military genealogy, and acts of cunning. The Homeric significance of the "subtext" in connection to *El Burlador* would be revealed both in the notion of ransom, war, and funeral rites. For instance, in the *Iliad*, one has a text which begins with the theme of a woman's abduction (with two agents, Agamemnon and Achilles), and a *ransom denied* (Agamemnon towards Khryseis's father), concluding with a *ransom accepted* (Achilles' gallant response to Priam regarding Hector's body). Thus interpreted, *El Burlador* would seem to "condemn" the continuum established by a genealogy of "pagan" seducers culminating in Don Juan, who under this light would represent a history of Error. The fact that Tirso was a Mercedarian friar who believed in the Order's principle of *ransom*, produces a significant dimension in Don Juan's death.²⁵ Incidentally, would Tirso be suggesting a "historical repetition" of two oppositions, on the one hand the legendary conflict between European Greeks and Asian Greeks and, on the other, Spain/Portugal? If one recalls that both Portugal and Catalonia revolted in 1640 (with the former achieving its independence in 1668 from the Spanish Empire), Tirso de Molina might have had more than just *decorative* or "literary" purposes in embedding Greco-Roman mythology in *El Burlador*. I will propose another possible authorial intent, and one that does not discard the

²⁴Questioning this same idea, Américo Castro writes: "Roma funcionó como un conjunto humano latino-helénico-oriental en tanto que pueblo de dimensiones universales. De ahí que me parezca incomprensible, o infantil, la pregunta de quienes (a veces de buena fe) desearían saber *qué* es propiamente *lo español*, una vez descartado el enojoso pegadizo de los moros y los judíos" (189).

²⁵According to Oscar Mandel, "The members of this order, founded in 1223 during the Crusades, were pledged to offer their own persons as hostages to redeem Christians captured by the Moslems--but this was not the kind of sacrifice likely to be demanded of monks in the age of Philip III" (37).

previous ones but, on the contrary, appropriates them and raises them to another level. Lynette R. Muir's *Love and Conflict in Medieval Drama* includes information on a Dutch play titled *Hertoge Karle, a spel van sinne* which "links Troy with a modern conflict and leaders." Muir states that the play was written to celebrate the birth of Charles I (1500-1558), the first Hapsburg emperor in Spain's history, better known as Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. Of interest for now is to note that if Octavian-Augustus had his Virgil to connect him to Aeneas, the Hapsburg infant had a Dutch playwright to claim Charles as a future Spanish emperor with a Flemish birth and, ultimately, of Trojan origins. Muir summarizes as follows:

The play starts with a complaint by Venus of the condition of the world under the rule of Mars and Vulcan, then Prometheus and Cupid announce the news of the birth of Charles, the offspring of Jupiter's son Philip the Fair [...] and the Paladijnne Joanna la Loca (queen of Castile). From these he has inherited both divine and warrior qualities and he himself is the light of grace [...] To find out more about the paragon who has received all these qualities they go to *Het Ylyon van Troyen* (the citadel of Troy) where they meet Ylus and Ganimedes who explain the significance of the gifts. (Hummelen adds a note here that *Ylyon of Troy* signifies Brussels). (146)

The anonymous author of this play was right in portraying Brussels as the new Troy: according to Braudel, from the port of Antwerp more gold and silver flowed to the coffers of Charles V than from the New World (1992: 31); in addition, the nascent modern economy—on a truly global scale after the Portuguese and Spanish entry into Asian ports—had abandoned Venice in favor of a new financial center emerging in Antwerp, thus bypassing Lisbon and the entire Iberian peninsula (1992: 143). It's worth noting, however, that this play could not have been written or staged in 1500 to celebrate the birth of Charles I of Spain: first of all, Juana goes mad after the death of Philip the Fair in 1506, and Charles will not inherit the throne until 1517. Nonetheless, two interrelated points are pertinent: one is the Trojan lineage that this play gives to Charles I of Spain with a Flemish second home (thus Charles as the "double" of Aeneas in his voyage and resettlement in Spain as the founder of a new Rome). Secondly, Philip the Handsome (or "the Fair") is well-known in history as a seducer and philanderer, richly evoked and satirized in Tirso's *El Burlador* as the "real" Don Juan, representing in Tirso's time a "heretic" Dutch nation at war with Spain. Let us recall that the Dutch War of independence from Spain (1568-1648) was raging while Tirso wrote *comedias*, with memories of Catholic churches looted, images defaced, and saintly sculptures destroyed by a growing Protestant sentiment in the Spanish Netherlands, leading to Dutch independence precisely in the year of Tirso's death. The classical past in its *seducer's* (Trojan) modality was thus erased by Tirso, portraying the Spanish Hapsburgs not as descendants of ancient Trojan blood, but as rooted deeply in Spanish soil and rising, much like the river Tagus, from the *entrañas* (entrails) of the Visigothic Spain associated with the *Reconquista*. This would explain why Tirso refers to the King of Spain (Philip III) as Alfonso XI. As such, Tirso was Philip's Virgil, and his Spanish *Aeneid* lives in his dramatic masterpieces, above all in the wandering and seductive Don Juan. Viewed from modern forms of nationalism, Tirso was constructing the literary and ideological

foundation for Spain as a *nation* (as of 1492), and as an *empire* (after the Columbian enterprise of exploration and conquest of lands across the world), a conceptualization that was fated to become one more history of error. Writing about Spain's peak as an imperial power, Maravall describes the contradictory anti-foreign and prenationalist sentiment in Spain:

[W]ith the seventeenth-century prenationalism, with the uninterrupted and general system of international wars, with the greed of mercantilism and perhaps the advantages of seeking someone to blame for all the misfortunes that were being suffered, the foreigner came to be—except in individual cases—an undesirable figure. (276)

In conclusion, the levels of interpretation in *El Burlador* correspond to the stratified audiences of Tirso's time, with an aristocratic level containing the political "marriage" of the Catholic world (with emphasis on Portugal and Spain); the popular, in the play's concluding marriages; and the theocratic in the "marriage" between Church and Crown. The double conclusion of *El Burlador* would seem to be neutralized or telescoped under a subtle intertextual system, already suggested in Don Juan's immolation on a *Martes* (i.e., Tuesday), considered an "unlucky" day for marriages and journeys—and in fact Don Juan journeys to hell, and "marries" Don Gonzalo as an indication of the "justice" awaiting seducers. As the *Hector of Seville*, and—according to the logic of the play—as *domador de yeguas*, Don Juan dies an un-Homeric death, creating a parodic parallel with Hector's funeral (e.g., the smoking pyre, the white bones, the golden urn), therefore tacitly joining the conclusions of *El Burlador* and the *Iliad*. But the concluding funeral/dinner symmetry between the *Iliad* and *El Burlador*, more than a historical parallel, represents the resolution of a historical contradiction found in Tirso's utopian dramaturgy, drawing a virtual demarcation in human history between "paganism" and Catholicism, or between Error and Truth.

Tirso de Molina can be studied as a dramatist whose writings were a symptom of a nascent nationalism in the heart of Europe after the Columbian enterprise, and of an emerging sentiment among nation-states facing new historical opportunities for imperial expansion on a global scale. One could agree with Tirso that history repeats itself, therefore that our age's globalization and the conflicts between the East and the West—religious, economic, and political—would be better understood if one were to look back to a history of errors, and to the missed opportunities in inter-cultural encounters, summed up as a political and moral legacy that has generated centuries of thought on the question of human rights. This legacy was shaped and launched by the first Western globalization: namely, the one spearheaded in the sixteenth century by Portugal and Spain, so lucidly and eloquently portrayed by Tirso de Molina in *El Burlador de Sevilla*.

References

- Alborg, Luis. 1980. *Historia de la literatura española*, Tomo IV. Madrid: Editorial Gredos.
 Boyle, Nicholas. "Introduction." 2000. *J.W. von Goethe: Selected Works*. New York: Everyman's Library.

- Fernand Braudel, Fernand. 1992. *The Perspective of the World: Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century*, Vol. III. Trans. Siân Reynolds. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- . 1976. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. 2, trans. Siân Reynolds. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.
- Brown, Walden. 2000. *Sahagún and the Transition to Modernity*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Cascardi, Anthony J. 1988. "Don Juan and the Discourse of Modernism." *Tirso's Don Juan: The Metamorphosis of a Theme*. Ed. Joseph M. Sola-Solé and G. E. Gingras. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Castiglione, Baldassare. 1976. *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. George Bull. Maryland: Penguin Books.
- Castro, Américo. 1982. *La realidad histórica de España*. México: Editorial Porrúa.
- Cortázar, Julio. 1966. *Hopscotch*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1993. *Aporias* Trans. Thomas Dutoit. California: Stanford University Press.
- Disney, Anthony. 2007. "Portuguese Expansion, 1400-1800: Encounters, Negotiations, and Interactions." *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*. Ed. Francisco Bethencourt and Diogo Ramada Curto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gutiérrez, Ramón A. 1991. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Kennedy, Ruth Lee. 1974. *Studies in Tirso, I: The Dramatist and his Competitors, 1620-1626*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.
- Las Casas, Bartolomé de. 1992. *In Defense of the Indians*. Trans. Stafford Poole. DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press.
- Louayene, Atef. 2013. "Pathologies of Moorishness: Al-Andalus, Narrative, and 'World Humanism.'" *Journal of East-West Thought*. No. 1, Vol. 3 (Spring).
- Mandel, Oscar. 1986. *The Theatre of Don Juan: A Collection of Plays and Views, 1630-1963*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Maravall, José Antonio. 1986. *Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure*. Trans. Terry Cochran. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Mazower, Mark. 2012. *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* New York: The Penguin Press.
- Molina, Tirso de. 1962. "El Burlador de Sevilla y Convidado de Piedra." *Obras dramáticas completas*. Ed. Blanca de los Ríos. Vol. II. Madrid: Aguilar.
- . 1946. *Obras dramáticas completas*. Ed. Blanca de los Ríos. Vol. I. Madrid: Aguilar.
- Muir, Lynnette R. 2007. *Love and Conflict in Medieval Drama: The Plays and their Legacy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sáinz de Robles, Federico Carlos. 1973. *Ensayo de un diccionario de la literatura: escritores españoles e hispanoamericanos*. Tomo II. Aguilar: Madrid.
- Singer, Armand E. 1988. "The Present State of Don Juan Studies." *Tirso's Don Juan: The Metamorphoses of a Theme*. Ed. Joseph M. Sola-Solé and G. E. Gingras. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Watkins, John. 1995. *The Specter of Dido*. New Haven: Yale University Press.