Apparitions Can Be Deceiving: Ghosts and the Undead in Golden Age Spanish Drama

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Abstract

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Ghosts and the undead are uniquely capable of challenging the nature of truth and reality because they exist in an interstitial space between two extremes. A ghost is living and dead, present and absent, past and present, all simultaneously. As the ghost breaks down the binary states of being which are fundamental to the human experience, it challenges the purpose of such classifications. In Golden Age Spanish drama, an era which is fascinated by the concepts of *engaño* and *desengaño*, ghosts sometimes serve the function of obscuring the nature of objective reality and questioning humanity's ability to perceive it, if it exists. However, ghosts also serve a second, incompatible function, which is to reveal absolute truth. Ghosts and the undead of the Golden Age are often regarded as omniscient, since, by virtue of existing outside of the limits of life, they are imagined to be able to see all of time and space simultaneously. They are frequently called upon to reveal their knowledge to the living. These dual functions are too antithetical to be embodied by the same figure. The theater of the Golden Age therefore shifts from omniscient representations of ghosts to the representation of ghosts as yet another visual deception.

This study of the representations of the ghost in Golden Age Spanish theater examines how ghosts aid and reflect the epoch's conceptions of truth and our perceptions of reality and presence in both time and space. I argue that ghost figures are always destabilizing, even when they represent an absolute truth, as they consistently demonstrate the gaps in humanity's understanding of the world. Ghosts are born out of and also reflect Baroque society's growing uncertainty or insecurity regarding humanity's relationship to the world.

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Introduction

"The dead have no existence other than that which
the living imagine for them" – Jean Claude Schmitt

"Everything that falls upon the eye is apparition, a
sheet dropped over the world's true workings" –
Marilynn Robinson

In a 2017 *New Yorker* article, Kathryn Schulz encouraged the magazine's readers to rank the plausibility of a list of twenty supernatural creatures from most to least likely to exist. On her list she includes beings such as angels, demons, dragons, mermaids, the tooth fairy, vampires and ghosts, among others, and she takes care to remind us that none of these beings are real. They are all equally nonexistent, and yet some seem more likely to exist than others. Schulz is fascinated with the project of ranking these supernatural creatures, explaining: "What's odd about this exercise is that everyone knows that 'impossible' is an absolute condition." While it is true that possible and impossible are binary, *how* we categorize beings and occurrences into the opposing categories in not fixed. Schulz's article goes on to examine the lengths to which we will go to rank the so-called impossible on a spectrum of believability, countering the absoluteness of the impossible. While we may *think* or *want* "impossible" to entirely exclude any notion of "possible," the range of reactions to the ranking of believability that Schulz explores reveals the underlying truth: we allow the supernatural to "exist" in the interstitial space between the binary extremes.

Schulz cites Aristotle when she considers the overlap between plausibility and impossibility. In the *Poetics,* he expresses his disapproval of the use of the supernatural in literature and theater, but concedes that "Poetic needs make something plausible though impossible preferable to what is possible but implausible" (135). Aristotle's "plausible though impossible" is an early expression of Schulz's idea that possibility and impossibility are conceived of on a spectrum. This suggests the inevitable hybridity of all supernatural; it is not necessarily creature-hybridity, although that does apply to much of the supernatural imaginary, but rather a paradoxical coexistence of reality and unreality in the same figure. Each of the beasts Schulz cites contains features of the real – they must, in order to be conjurable in the imagination of a humanity that perceives reality – and is simultaneously of questionable reality.[1]

While Schulz looks at a wide variety of supernatural creatures, I will focus solely on the representations of ghosts: their believability, their presence, and their role in an understanding of humanity as characterized in Golden Age Spanish theater. The hybridity of ghosts lies not only

[1] This hybridity is conceptually similar to Sigmund Freud's uncanny, and although I do not cite Freud directly in this dissertation, his essay *The Uncanny* serves as a basis for many studies of ghosts that follow. Freud defines the uncanny, or the *unheimlich,* as a class of frightening that leads us back to the familiar. He explains how the uncanny might be applied to fiction; because the audience of a work of fiction understands the work with which they are interacting to be fantasy, the uncanny cannot be experienced in the same way that it can be in reality. If uncanny events are framed as normal within the context of the fictional world, the sense of the uncanny is not transferred to the audience. The uncanny can only be experienced outside the work of fiction if the author promises realism or if the character experiences the uncanny. An understanding of the uncanny underlies the appearances of ghosts, since ghosts often create a sense of uncanny by combining the familiarity of a human form–often a loved one—with the complete unknown that is death. Freud's description of an uncanny experience as a return of the repressed echoes the ghost's characterization as a return of the dead.

in their existence between real and unreal, but also that they necessarily hover between life and death while escaping a complete categorization as either of the two extremes. Jacques Derrida explored these contradictions inherent in the phenomenon in his 1993 text *Specters of Marx*. This work has been profoundly influential in the growing field of spectral studies, a field whose development Derrida's text catalyzed; nearly every piece of spectral theory or ghostly criticism has been founded on the concept of *hauntology* developed by Derrida in his original work. *Hauntology*, a portmanteau of "haunt" and "ontology," is employed to describe the paradoxical state of the ghost, whose existence creates contradictions of time and presence. The ghost must exist outside of humanity's linear construction of time, since it is a figure from the past that exists in the present and, furthermore, has a great impact on the future. A ghost must also be understood to be both present and absent simultaneously; a ghost is a presence that occupies a space of absence. This particular paradox has been beautifully described by Avery Gordon:

> If haunting describes how that which appears to be not there is often a seething presence, acting on and often meddling with taken-for-granted realities, the ghost is just the sign, or the empirical evidence if you like, that tells you a haunting is taking place… The ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way, of course. (8)

The ghost is evidence, then, of absence; it is a paradoxically extant demonstration of non-existence. This process of making present something or someone that is absent is what I understand as a haunting; it is the seething presence that Gordon speaks of. It is the looming of a ghost, or of a past or absence. As the ghost breaks down these binary states of being – presence and absence, past and present, real and not real – which are fundamental to the human

experience, it challenges the purpose of such classifications and the depth of humanity's understanding of the world.

Ghosts are an especially interesting site of cultural exploration due to their near universality. Jean-Claude Schmitt notes that "imagining death and the future of the dead in the hereafter has formed an essential part of the religious beliefs of all societies" (1). Schmitt argues that the beliefs of each society reflect the structures of the society itself, and therefore that the myth surrounding the dead beyond life and life beyond death reflect that culture's attitudes toward life and death themselves. Regarding the belief in ghosts in the Middle Ages, prior to the period that I will study in this dissertation, Schmitt carefully examines the significant role which high medieval Christianity played. Although there are scenes in the Bible itself that depict reanimation and life after death, the Church did not necessarily approve of or endorse belief in ghosts. Saint Augustine, for example, clearly rejected the possible existence of ghosts, explaining that that the appearance of a "ghost" is merely a spiritual image that maintains no connection to any dead person. A spiritual image, that is, an image perceived in the spiritual vision, is akin to an imagined picture. Augustine denies that a spiritual image may connect to the dead, using the example of a dream in which a friend's image appears; just as, he argues, that friend has no idea that he is being dreamed of, the dead would have no idea that they are being seen on earth (Schmitt 21). The ghost, therefore, is a product of the human mind.

This theory, however, is contradicted throughout the remainder of the Middle Ages, especially from the eleventh to fifteenth centuries, when autobiographical ghost stories rise to popularity. During this time, a common understanding of ghosts begins to emerge: they do not return from heaven or hell but rather, from purgatory, primarily so that they may benefit from prayers or alms from the living, and in return, they frequently provide prophecy to those who

interact with them. These definitions described by Schmitt continue into Golden Age Spain, in which literature and theater depict undead with similar functions.[2] At the core of this understanding of ghosts is their hybridity: ghosts return from purgatory because they are between life and death; they possess supernatural sight because they are both human and otherworldly. Their sight allows them to see everything that happens on earth as well as foresee the future and provide warnings or prophecies for the living.

This is a belief that continues into the Early Modern period and survives in Spain, despite the presence of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, which attempted to crack down on practitioners of witchcraft, magic, and other occult arts. Juan Blázquez Miguel, examining Inquisition records regarding witchcraft and superstition, explains the lack of records condemning believers in superstition by positing that the Inquisition could not condemn mere believers, as that would have meant the persecution of poor peasants whose only crime was ignorance. This assumes, of course, that believers in superstition did not take on the role of "teacher of doctrine and behavior," as Italian miller Menocchio did in the sixteenth century, leading to a series of Inquisitorial trials and, ultimately, his death (Ginzburg 5). And so, despite the Holy Office's repeated sentencing of witches or dismissal of other magics as false, superstition and belief in the supernatural, such as the appearance of ghosts, remained rampant.

[2] Gordon Hall Gerould traces the folk tale of the grateful dead, in which an unburied corpse benefits from the funeral rites arranged for him by a living person and, in return, offers him some sort of supernatural help. Similarly, Miguel de Cervantes's *Tragedia de la Numancia* and Juan de la Cueva's *La constancia de Arcelina*, both discussed in this dissertation, depict undead figures that prophesy, as do Lope de Vega's *El prodigioso príncipe transilvano* and several of the anecdotes shared in the third treatise of Antonio de Torquemada's *Jardin de flores curiosas*, among other works.

(Blázquez Miguel). Aline Hornaday, meanwhile, argues that the Church did not just ignore the superstitious belief in ghosts but in fact went so far as to support it tacitly. She states that, "The value of revenant stories for medieval clergymen lay in their use for creating self-understanding, clarifying and demonstrating the prescribed rules of moral behavior, and acting as tools for their hearers and readers to employ in constructing a viable self delimited from the revenant other" (Hornaday 89). Whether the Church ignored or supported belief in ghosts, it is clear that superstition was incredibly popular in the Middle Ages, and that popularity continued through the Early Modern period.

In Golden Age Spain, the issue of reality also comes to occupy the popular imagination. Playwrights, as well as other authors and artists of the time are deeply preoccupied with *engaño* and *desengaño*, or deception and disillusion. The world of Baroque Spain is portrayed as in a perpetual state of flux, forcing humanity into constant transit. José Antonio Maravall credits this sense of the continually changing world with producing what he calls the *topos* of the world upside-down. Maravall, who believes that the cultural production of the Baroque period reflects the contemporaneous society, argues that this trope reveals the presence of feelings of instability and uncertainty. He also suggests that implicit in any notion of an upside-down world is the existence of a right-side-up, or a logic and order of things. Left unresolved, however, is what this right-side-up might look like or how it might be defined. In fact, since in addition to being an era of changes the Baroque is also one of contrasts, in which different texts demonstrate contradictory experiences of the world, the purpose of determining a concrete reality or an indisputable truth is rather dubious. Instead, as Schulz suggests, reality and its opposite exist on a spectrum. The questions raised in the Golden Age are the same ones that surround the plausible impossibility of the supernatural; they are the same questions raised by the appearance of ghosts.

The Golden Age authors who write ghosts into their works indicate an interest in the Baroque way in which ghosts obscure reality by deconstructing vision and reality; however, the primary function of ghosts during this period is not to obscure reality but rather to reveal it. Ghosts and the undead of the Golden Age are often regarded as omniscient, since, by virtue of existing outside of the limits of life, they are imagined to be able to see all of time and space simultaneously. They are frequently called upon to reveal their knowledge to the living, summoned by magic and forced to make a prophecy, and in doing so they reinforce the idea that events are predetermined, and that the world is ordered, structured and under the control of a higher power.

And yet it would be paradoxical to believe, unquestioningly, an absolute truth revealed by a figure whose own relationship to reality is uncertain; indeed, these two functions operate separately. As a result, the ghost figures who appear in the Spanish Golden Age and prognosticate the future are only occasionally of questionable reality. Instead, they are most often undeniable presences, something which causes them all to violate the ghostly etiquette defined by L.L. Barrett, one of few scholars to have previously addressed the role of ghosts in Golden Age theater. Although Barrett does not explicitly lay out the rule of this etiquette, he does point out failures to comply in various works of the Golden Age. Through his identifications of the violations of etiquette, a definition can be formed: a ghost must appear at night, must be largely silent, and must be visible to the audience but to only one or two characters at a time. A ghost who appears to all characters on stage, who is fully visible and never questioned, is, according to Barrett, somehow not truly ghostly. Barrett therefore concludes that only Lope de Vega "creates the truly effective phantoms and corpses of the Golden Age drama" (*Supernatural in Comedias* 259), despite also crediting to Lope some

"unconvincing, even ridiculous" ghosts (*Supernatural in Comedias* 258). Few Golden Age ghosts meet Barrett's standards, and that is in large part because of their relationship to reality and truth. The ghosts that Barrett does deem effective, such as the *sombra* that appears in Lope's *El caballero de Olmedo* and the statue of Don Gonzalo in *El burlador de Sevilla,* in some way participate in ambiguity. Barrett's notion of ghostly etiquette is, however, prescriptive and not descriptive, and therefore intends to impose an external set of rules on these figures rather than examining them to determine the way in which they operate.

It will be useful now to unpack my working definition of the ghost, since it does not necessarily reflect contemporary popular culture's understanding of these figures. I understand a ghost to be a figure primarily defined by its relationship to life and death; it is a figure that is firmly planted between the two. A ghost must be past life and yet returned to life. Because I do not base my definition on the physical form of the figure, my understanding of the ghost encompasses a wide variety of embodiments. The figures that I refer to as ghosts in this dissertation are therefore a revived cadaver (*un cuerpo*), summoned souls (*almas*), shadows (*sombras*), and an animated tomb effigy (*el convidado de piedra*). The differing forms of the undead affect and inform their relationship to the natural, objective world, as their levels of physical presence vary. A ghost made of stone, for example, may be understood to be more objectively present than one referred to only as *una sombra*. Despite these differences, what unifies all of these figures is their relationship to both life and death. They are all in some way *un*dead, or *post*-death, while still retaining a connection to life through their continued appearance and action in the living world.

These ghosts in particular appear theatrically, which complicates their embodiment. They are not purely literary; instead, they must be visually representable on stage in some form.

Theater is a necessarily visual medium, which provides challenges for the representation of an unreal figure. The ghosts represented in the plays I examine all move and speak, necessitating their representation by a human actor. In fact, the vast majority of Golden Age theatrical ghosts are implied to have human (or mostly-human) bodies through descriptions in stage directions or through their speech and actions. To be played by a human actor imposes a human's physical body onto the ghost figure, thereby forcing its presence. Because ghosts are represented by a living human actor, they themselves become living and human, at least in the visual sphere. This allows for an entirely practical explanation of the physical representation of theatrical ghosts, since an actor's portrayal of the ghost would break any illusion of incorporeality. However, the Baroque element of theater, which is inherently dependent on artifice, complicates this understanding.

Theater lends itself perfectly to a preoccupation with the way things appear and the way they truly are. Theater is inherently built upon *engaño* or illusion, which is what leads William Eggington to state: "The Baroque is theater, and theater is Baroque" (39). He goes on to argue that theatrical characters are defined by their deceit, and that artifice is therefore their truth (51). Truth and artifice therefore become deeply connected and are no longer contradictory but rather exist in the same figure. The actor could represent a human, real or fictional, or a ghost, but the paradox would not change. While it could be argued that a ghost is more unreal than a fictional human character, the fact is that both are unreal. In theater in particular, both are artificial, characterized by their nonexistence outside of the theatrical sphere. For this reason, I do not believe that the theatrical embodiments of these figures define their corporeal state. In theater, everything is a representation. An actor may represent a person – either fictional or based on a

historical figure – and it is understood that the actor functions as merely a stand-in and is not the person itself. The same is true of theatrical ghosts.

When ghosts are objectively extant, their contradictions are enacted in other ways. Instead of playing solely with the limits of presence and absence, they unravel the linearity of time. As I have stated, the ghost is a figure of the past, since it is a once-living thing now dead, but it is simultaneously present. It is a return of someone that had already existed, and yet it is also a wholly new apparition and appears in a new form for the first time. In fact, each return or repetition of the ghost is also new and singular. In addition to implicating the past and the present in their appearances, the prognosticating ghosts that I analyze also necessarily draw the future into the present and past. Through their omniscience, by which they are understood to witness all of time and space simultaneously, they imply predetermination, since in order for them to witness future events, those events must have already happened. The future must be as concrete and immutable as the past, the very notion of which breaks down the understanding of time.

Theater, as a written work that is staged again and again, invokes many of the same issues of temporality as ghosts. Both Marvin Carlson and Alice Rayner examine the ghost in theater, arguing that theater is an inherently haunted art. Carlson ties both ghosts and theater to the notion of cultural memory; memory is a form of ghost, he argues, and the theater is an art that depends on memory and recognition by the audience. He calls theater a "simulacrum of the cultural and historical process itself," arguing that it has "always provided society with the most tangible records of its attempts to understand its own operations" (2). In doing so, theater revives history with every performance. The revival of historical events, or plays set in historical moments, or even repeated genres and tropes that Carlson declares to be particularly popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is a ghosting process. Genre, he argues, relies on

recognition by the audience, thereby relying on memory and ghosts. Theater is a form that tends to repeat genre and tropes, thereby marking it as haunted. The plays examined here are historical or folkloric, thereby invoking Carlson's notion of memory even though the plots and scripts may be original. This turns these plays into ghosts themselves, who bring about the return of a memory that has been absent. The ghosts within the stories are a way to address outright the issues of haunting already fore-fronted by the plays.

Alice Rayner, meanwhile, shows that theater, throughout its history, has proven and depended on the existence and reality of ghosts. She ties the theater to ghosts both in what she calls the act of ghosting—the notion that the actor "gives life" to a nonliving thing unmasks an unseen other and allows for the audience to encounter death—as well as through its repetition and doubling. She argues that each enactment of a play is a repetition that entails the imitation of a source material; each show is a singular event that represents a repetition or a return, just as each appearance of a ghost is both a new occurrence and a return of the past. With theater already populated by ghosts by its mere form, the presence of ghost characters becomes meta-spectral, or ghosts of ghosts. If the ghostly memory that Carson describes is in fact the memory of a ghost story, then the ghost haunts the text that haunts the audience.

A ghost is a figure once dead that has returned. A death is, in turn, inherently tied to absence both of and from life. A ghost therefore embodies its own absence. A ghost fills in the space left by a death, and yet it does so in a way that is incomplete, and which emphasizes the very absence it supposedly occupies. A ghost is not a living thing, and yet it is not dead either. For this reason, I rely on the idea of undeath, of a liminal space which is between life and death and which also follows both. After death, there is a potential undeath or return, which may

appear to temporarily reverse the act of dying. A preoccupation with ghosts is therefore reflective of a preoccupation with death and its definition.

By representing ghosts and the undead, Golden Age authors propose a mythology of life beyond death or an explanation as to what happens when a person dies. David R. Castillo examines the Baroque's fixation on death, undeath and the paraphernalia of the dead and argues that the roots of the philosophy of *desengaño* lie in the fear of dying. For him, the fear is not of death itself or of the dead, but rather of the loss of meaning that death entails if there is no coherent afterlife. Folklore and religion allow for continued existence beyond life;[3] the fear of death that Castillo describes comes out of a fear that all of that tradition is wrong, that indeed there is nothing after death. The undead can therefore be interpreted as an *engaño*; humanity covers the frightening nothingness on the other side of death with a ghostly mask. The ghost offers a perhaps comforting alternative to the frightening possibility of nothingness; instead, there is existence beyond life.

While the afterlife is shown to be meaningful and to have a significant effect on the living world, it is also shown to be grotesque and horrific. The reanimated bodies complain of the torturous pain they endure in the underworld, second only to the pain they experience from their revival. Their depiction does not soothe the fear of death; instead, as Castillo ultimately finds, the almost obsessive and often grotesque portrayal of death in Baroque literature demystifies death

[3] Schmitt argues that the increase in documented ghost stories that occurs in the middle ages but in the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries in particular is a result of a rising Christian emphasis on death and funeral rituals. This provoked what he calls a "banalization of tales of apparitions of the dead" (136), since the community of the living were increasingly familiarized with death and the dead through their religious rituals. In his argument, Schmitt indicates a long-standing notion of ghostly existence beyond death.

by disinterring the dead and bringing them out of the cemetery and back into society. Ghosts do the same; they attempt to provide an explanation for what happens to a person once their body has died. And despite the depiction of suffering, the dead are imbued with a significance beyond what can be found in life; they are granted omniscience that is unavailable to the living.

The omniscience of the ghosts is treated in different ways in different Golden Age plays, but always with an implication as to the predetermination of time and events. By accepting the ghost's particular brand of omniscience, in which all points of time are simultaneously observable, we accept that the future, just like the past, has already happened. The fact that the ghosts are able to witness and understand events that have not yet occurred on Earth indicates that they have been predetermined and that the linearity of time is a human illusion that does not apply to the nonhuman figures. By putting on display a point of view that humans do not have access to, the ghosts indicate that the human perception of the world is incomplete and inadequate, and that it does not adequately reflect the nature of existence.

I have selected five plays, published between 1585 and 1635, which each demonstrate an element of the depiction of Golden Age ghosts. Namely, these plays show ghosts who demonstrate their limitless access to knowledge, as well as those who obfuscate any notion of objective truth. Although common in the era, I have omitted any stories in which the ghosts are eventually proven to be false; that is, plays in which living men and women disguise themselves as a ghost in order to achieve a particular outcome.[4] In leaving such plays out of my analysis, I focus on ghosts as a metaphysical phenomenon, studying the implication they make in the

[4] Most notable amongst these stories are *El galán fantasma* and *La dama duende*, both written by Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

construction of reality. This project is divided into five chapters, each conducting a close reading one selected play and examining the ghost figure(s) who appear therein:

In the first chapter, I examine ghosts' contributions to the construction of history. To do so, I look to Miguel de Cervantes' *Tragedia de la Numancia* (1585), sometimes called *El cerco de la Numancia*. The play dramatizes the historical fall of the Celtiberian city of Numancia to a Roman siege and therefore already participates in raising the dead. The necromancy of the play is twofold: all the figures depicted in the historical play are long dead before its staging, and, more literally, within the walls of the doomed city a sorcerer reanimates a corpse. The Numancian *cuerpo* is brought back to tell the characters what the audience already knows: no Numancian will survive the siege. The entirety of the play serves to create a timeline of Spanish history and to situate its events within it; the corpse who tells the future (which is past to both the author and audience) therefore participates in this historiography. In doing so, he eternalizes the dead. He makes himself undead beyond the scene of his resurrection. He becomes an immortal ghost.

I continue my examination of omniscient and prophesizing undead in chapter two. In Juan de la Cueva's *La constancia de Arcelina* (1580), the dead are initially brought back to help a young man find the woman he loves, Arcelina, who has fled the city after killing her sister. A sorcerer raises Zoroaster from the dead, who tells Fulcino where to find Arcelina but simultaneously warns him that his pursuit will kill him. To prove his point, Zoroaster brings forward the *almas* of four other mythological figures who died due to their love. In doing so, Zoroaster implies a cyclical repetition of stories born out of our failure to learn from history and myth (and myth which is here presented as history). *Arcelina* is a largely unstudied play, since its plot and structure are sometimes chaotic and unconvincing, resulting in critical depreciation.

However, despite its faults, *Arcelina* provides an important example of ghostly influence and prophecy. Fulcino disregards the wisdom of the souls presented to him and dies as a result. The play therefore advocates for the disinterment of the dead, whether or not that be understood literally. Heeding the stories of the dead could have saved Fulcino, and so Cueva presents an argument for conversing with ghosts.

Cueva's *Comedia del príncipe tirano* (1581), which is the focus of my third chapter, initially appears to stray away from the depiction of ghosts as all-knowing. Its two *fantasmas*, both victims of the titular prince, at first raise questions about the relationship of vision to reality. The prince has murdered his older sister, to prevent her from inheriting before him, and the man who helped him bury her. When the two ghosts appear to the king, his advisors believe that he has gone mad. They do not believe that the ghosts are real, instead explaining his vision of shadows and a result of melancholy. However, these issues of reality and madness are quickly abandoned in favor of allowing the ghosts to manifest their omniscience. The ghosts must serve the purpose of unmasking the tyrannical nature of the prince so that the play may make its political point that birthright alone should not allow an unfit ruler to take the throne. In order to contribute to the play's didactic message, the ghosts must reveal the truth; however they cannot do so if they are not believed to be real. Cueva prioritizes their omniscience, but the ghosts' first appearance indicates the first blush of an interest in the potential for ambiguity that exists in the ghost.

In chapter four, I examine Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla* (1630) and the ghostly nature of the so-called Stone Guest who appears at the play's close. The Stone Guest is the tomb effigy of Don Gonzalo, a man whom Don Juan has murdered and the father of one of Don Juan's seduction victims. The statue is brought to life, or, perhaps more accurately, to

undeath, when Don Juan mockingly invites him to dinner and he follows through. The two dine together two nights, and on the second night the Stone Guest kills Don Juan with a supernatural fire. Don Gonzalo is a human man with a deeply human desire for vengeance against the man who dishonored his family and murdered him. The Stone Guest is a supernatural figure who claims to be an agent of God, carrying out God's will. Because these two coexist in the same undead figure, this figure performs both human and divine justices simultaneously when he ends Don Juan's life. His ghostly hybridity produces ambiguity; it is not clear whether Don Juan dies as a result of his own actions (as vengeance for killing Don Gonzalo) or as a result of God's predetermined grace. This ambiguity obscures man's role in his own destiny and control over his own life.

Finally, chapter five studies what is perhaps the most ambiguous ghost of the Golden Age dramatic canon. In Lope de Vega's *El caballero de Olmedo* (1620), the protagonist encounters a *sombra* that appears to be his own ghost before his death. However, the true nature of the figure is unclear. It is possible that it was sent to him as a warning, or that it is a figment of his own imagination produced by fear. The ghost does not speak, other than to say Don Alonso's name, which may be his own name, and therefore reveals nothing about his purpose. It is a far cry from the direct and verbal prophesies of this project's earlier chapters, but understood as an extant ghost, the figure still seems to serve some function of omen or prediction of Alonso's imminent death. However, due to the ghost's indefinite existence in an objective reality, it is possible that he only reflects Alonso's fear and melancholy, and therefore demonstrates no notion of predetermination or order. The *sombra* is exemplary in his ambiguity, revealing the potential of ghosts to obscure the truth and produce terror.

Ultimately, the ghost is an ontological phenomenon that reflect society's conceptions of truth, reality and presence in both time and space. In other words, a ghost is not only a return of a singular deceased person, but rather a reflection of societal preoccupations. Gordon reminds us:

> The ghost is not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life… The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening. (8)

Ghosts, then, are a form of knowledge or a mode of presenting knowledge, which restructures human understanding of the world. Ghostly figures provide a new perspective on truth, one that humans on their own do not have access to, thereby undercutting any hope humanity has of believing in an objective and perceivable reality. After all, if ghosts can perceive or act within realms of the world that we cannot see or understand, then we must recognize a fundamental fault in our experience of our surroundings. Furthermore, Gordon's treatment of the ghost as a sociological phenomenon, coupled with Maravall's insistence that Baroque literature reflects Baroque society, positions the Baroque ghost as an embodiment of Baroque anxieties. The ghosts of the Golden Age therefore reflect an epistemological fear that humanity cannot comprehend its own world by exhibiting the space between the human experience and metaphysical truth.

Chapter One: Haunted Historical Landscapes in *La Numancia*

A tomb opens and a veiled corpse stumbles out. He attempts to resist the pull of the sorcerer who calls him but is unable to; the sorcerer has wet the grave with black water from the Styx and the corpse must emerge as conjured. As the sorcerer calls him back into the light of sun—out of a land in which a good day is never seen—the corpse collapses as if dead again. The sorcerer sprinkles the body with water, now yellow, and flogs him until he writhes in agony and finally awakens. This violent scene of necromancy comes in the second act of *La Numancia*, written by Cervantes between 1581 and 1585. Set in the second century B.C.E. in the Celtiberian city of Numancia, which has been under Roman siege for years, Cervantes's play dramatizes the town's final days and the people's decision to commit mass suicide rather than be conquered. The sorcerer, Marquino, revives the body of a recently deceased Numancian citizen just as the second of four acts comes to a close, marking the middle point of the play's action. Marquino, like the rest of the town, is worried about Numancia's future and wants to ask the corpse to make a prophecy. In doing so, he draws death into Numancia, both literally and figuratively.

The action of *La Numancia* is grounded in history; the siege, the destruction, and even some of the characters—notably Cipión, Cayo Mario and Quinto Fabio on the Roman side and Teógenes on the Numancian side—are all portrayed quite accurately according to George Shivers's 1970 study. Unreal, however, is much of the second act, which begins with an attempted sacrifice of a ram to Pluto and ends with the act of necromancy described above. These scenes, which have often been left out of the critical canon of this play, are singled out by Shivers as some of the few pieces of the play with little basis in history. While Cervantes

attributes a hybrid of Greco-Roman paganism and Christianity to the Numancians, the reality, learned long after the publication of *La Numancia*, is that the majority of Celtiberian tribes burned their dead, making the practice of necromancy impossible (Shivers 7-8). The scene's purpose, therefore, is not to represent the events of history, as the rest of the scenes that take place within the dramatic sphere of the town do. Instead, we must consider Marquino's reanimation of the corpse as metaphorical as the appearances of allegorical figures that recur throughout the play.

While the corpse figure is not necessarily allegorical—as the figures of Spain, the Duero, War, Pestilence, Hunger and Fame are—he is a visceral representation of death made both present and animate. By forcing the corpse's soul back into his body and beating him into wakefulness, Marquino brings death into the forefront of the audience's consciousness. Cervantes carves out a space for death center stage, not only by animating the dead body drawn out of his tomb but through the representation of all Numancians, who died more than a millennium before the point at which Cervantes is writing. In fact, Marquino's act of necromancy creates a microcosm of the play itself; both Cervantes and Marquino re-center the dead among the living and, by doing so, they bring history into the present. The necromancy in *La Numancia* is as symbolic as it is literal and, through its representation, obligates the audience to confront the dead and enter into a dialogue with them, thereby questioning death's role in the construction and remembrance of history.

An understanding of necromancy that depends on the existence of the corpse fits only with the narrowest definition of the term. Understood literally, an act of necromancy returns life to a dead body, traditionally so that the reanimated figure may comment on the lives and futures of those who awaken him. By broadening this definition and understanding necromancy as *any*

reawakening of the dead, a reimagining or representation of historical events and figures can be considered necromantic. While Cervantes does not literally bring any dead person back to life, by writing a historical play and having actors embody long-dead characters, whether they be historical or fictitious members of a historical society, he creates a type of living dead. His greater act of necromancy is modeled in miniature by the necromancy on stage.

The act of necromancy carried out within the city of Numancia returns the soul to a body that has been destroyed by hunger. The corpse that returns is a grotesque representation of the suffering of a body under siege. When he finally emerges from his tomb, a difficult process in and of itself, he is described by a stage direction as, "el CUERPO AMORTAJADO, con un rostro de muerto, y va saliendo poco a poco, y, en saliendo, déjase caer en el tablado" (Cervantes 77). Further, it is only after Marquino's abuse of him that the corpse awakens to speak, and he begins his discourse by asking Marquino to cease this violent treatment. This body, in its unquestionably physical representation, creates a frightening spectacle of death. The theatrical medium demands a visual element, but the gruesomeness of this figure heightens the pageantry. Additionally, the physical representation of the excruciating pain of death brings the dead into the theater and places them among the living. The reanimated and suffering body reminds all who witness it of their inevitable fate.

For the Numancians, the death that the corpse represents is omnipresent. He is an anonymous citizen who died of hunger, but nothing more is known of his life or his past. Marquino chooses the corpse based only on his cause of death, since he needs a whole and uninjured body — "organizado todo y en su asiento" (Cervantes 73) — on which to work his magic. Death by hunger, on top of its practical explanation within the text, helps to define the corpse as the exemplar of a body under siege. The body has already died of hunger while the rest

of Numancia approaches the same end; the entire population of Numancia is starving. Many of the living citizens reference their hunger throughout the third and fourth acts of the play in particular, growing hungrier and more desperate as time advances. They are characters so close to death—and so destined to die—that Emilie Bergmann calls them "living corpses" (87). The revived body, a literal living corpse, becomes a representation of any Numancian citizen, an embodied symbol of the starvation and death that awaits the whole town. Furthermore, he serves as a reminder that death is already present in Numancia.

The town of Numancia is, for all intents and purposes, already destroyed by the end of the first act. As happens in any historical narrative, both the author and the public know how the story will end, meaning that from the beginning of the play the public is aware of the fact that no Numancian will survive. And, for any reader or spectator unfamiliar with the history of the Celtiberian town, at the end of the first act allegorical representations of Spain and the River Duero appear to foretell the destruction of Numancia and the "future" of the Spanish Empire. The stage has already been set for the audience by a dialogue between the Roman general Scipión and his men, who reject a treaty brought before them by Numancian ambassadors. Spain then appears as a woman wearing a crown made of towers and carrying a castle in her hand. She asks for heaven's help to save Numancia; she is worried that the city will fall and is afraid to become a slave to foreign nations. The River Duero appears to respond to her fears, predicting the future and, in doing so, constructing a linear and event-based record of history.

While the opening dialogue of Roman soldiers firmly grounds the play in its historical moment, the appearance of the allegorical figures distorts that notion of historicity. The spectator discovers that the play is not a mere representation of historical events but rather an experiment performed on our understanding of the structure of time. First these allegorical characters and

later the revived corpse exist outside of our conception of time and are thereby able to provide a wider perspective of history. For the undead character, this perspective is provided by his time on the "other side"; by virtue of having existed beyond the moment of death, the corpse is able to witness all of space and time simultaneously. This function of the ghost is repeated throughout the theater of seventeenth century Spain; it is widely accepted that those who have died become omniscient, as if their separation from the world provides them with a much broader view of it.

The allegorical figures have this same wide view, which not only matches that of the corpse but also that of the author and public. The timeline constructed by the discourse of the Duero begins with the downfall of Numancia, which the public is about to witness, and leads them to the play's contemporary moment, passing through significant historical events as he advances. He assures Spain that, despite her current state and her imminent conquer, she will rise again. He tells her of the arrival of the Goths, Attila's defeat of the Romans, the Catholic Monarchs, and, finally, Felipe II, the king at the time of the play's writing. In fact, this speech is so rooted in history that it has been used to date the composition of the play; Alfredo Hermenegildo notes: "debió de componerse entre junio de 1581, fecha de la anexación de Portugal por Felipe II y a la que se hace alusión en ella, y marzo de 1585, en que se firma el contrato con Porres" (10).

This piece of the Duero's discourse indicates that the history that he is constructing, and that the play will continue to construct, is based in true and recorded events. It is also a narrative of the past that is understood by its most immediate audience—the figure of Spain— as moving from the present towards the future in an order that we might understand as chronological. Simultaneously, in order for the Duero to tell the future of Numancia—to predict the city's fall to the Romans and Spain's eventual return to glory—the future must already be decided. Certainly

not an uncommon idea at the time, this conception of the future supports a reverse chronology wherein the future is the point of origin that determines the events of the past. It also allows for the interpretation of the future as already existing and simultaneous to the past and present, at least for figures who are positioned in such a way that they can see them all at once.

The obfuscation of the structures of time is a trait that the allegorical figures and the corpse share. In fact, it has often been noted that any ghost, or, in this case, undead figure, questions traditional concepts of time by existing in both the past and the present simultaneously. When the corpse makes a prophecy of the future to the Numancians who revive him, he blends not only past and present but also future, complicating their notion of time. When the play *La Numancia* is represented on stage, the past is once again drawn into the present, but the future is left untouched. Neither the corpse nor the Duero speak to anything beyond the moment of the play's composition, which undercuts the Duero's omniscience and reinforces the audience's linear concept of time, at least as pertains to the unknowable future. If the Duero cannot see beyond the moment of the play's writing, it I because the author could not. It is, of course, not omniscience offered by the Duero. While the characters are unaware of that, the audience cannot be. And as stagings of *La Numancia* continue into the 21st century, this fact only becomes more glaring.

Any staging of the play, however, does question the separation of past from present. More than any other medium, theater has the capability to bring history into the present by representing it with and among the living. According to Freddie Rokem, "The theater, by performing history, is… redoing something which has already been done in the past, creating a secondary elaboration of this historical event" (6). Essentially, a performance of historical events creates a past that is interior to the present, or that is represented *within* the present. It is a

recreation of the past, though Rokem reminds us that, "It is obviously never the event itself we see on stage" (6). The past's appearance in the present can never be the past event itself but rather is a distorted *re*interpretation or *re*appearance of history raised from the dead.

Rokem is one of many theorists who recognize a ghostly dimension to theatrical performance. Carlson's interpretation of ghosting in theater is based in the idea of repetition that is mentioned by Rokem. As he describes it, "Ghosting presents the identical thing that they have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context" (7). The appearance of any ghostly or undead figure is necessarily a *return*, since that figure previously existed as a living being (thus the oft-cited French term 'revenant', or 'one who returns'). Both Carlson and Rokem tap into this idea of return and repetition when identifying the ghostly element of theater. For Rokem, repetition comes from recreating historical event in theater. Carlson, on the other hand, focuses on the repetition of familiar, though not necessarily historical, stories and even on the repetition born out of multiple performances of the same play or actors and sets which are used in multiple different plays. Both Rokem and Carlson use the metaphor of the ghost to refer to a return of something from the past, particularly the dead. The necromantic resurrection that we witness in *La Numancia* references the same phenomenon that they do. Within the world of the play, it is the return of a figure who emerges from the past, whose appearance is both a new and repeated event (repeated because he has been present before, prior to his death, and new because it is his first *re*appearance). For the public, the resurrection is of the town of Numancia. For even a first-time viewer of the play, what they witness on stage is a return of history and repetition of either previous performances or the written script itself.

Not only does *La Numancia* emerge from a tradition of repetition and resurrections, but it also ensures the continuation of that tradition. What is at stake in the fight between the Romans

and the Numancians is not merely a city won or lost, or even life and death. Instead, their struggle becomes a fight for remembrance and acknowledges the essential fact that what is now present will, at some point in the future, be recognized as history. In the first scene of allegorical dialogue, the River Duero's speech sets up the idea that, observed from a point of present, what to us appears to be the past was at one time the future. The converse is recognized by the appearance of the last allegorical figure, Fame, who appears in the final scene of the play. Fame appears to the Romans as they observe the ruin of Numancia following the mass suicide; she promises to spread the news of the bravery of the Numancian citizens across the earth, an act that is accomplished by the existence of the play itself.

The play creates and perpetuates fame through necromancy; show after show, the historical town of Numancia is not only reanimated but also given eternal life. In the introduction to their edition of the text, Hymen Alpern, Leonard Mades and José Martel make note of the story's surviving impact both before and after the composition of Cervantes's play:

> Though completely destroyed, their city has remained a symbol of Spanish valor and patriotism. In the Middle Ages it served as a reminder to Spaniards of Celtiberian heroism. At the siege of Zaragoza in the War of Independence General Palafox, the city's defender, ordered the performance of Cervantes' play as a means of rousing the Spaniards to the defense of their liberty against Napoleon's troops. In the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, the play was again performed with a view to rallying Spaniards. In 1882, the site of the city's ruins, along the Duero near the present-day city of Garray, was declared a national monument. Besides Cervantes, several others have written plays on the defense of the city, some of them as late as the 19th century (2).

Each time the play is reenacted, the characters and the town of Numancia are brought back to life, or back into the sphere of the living, but through the written text of the play and the memorialization of the events and the ruins, the story also finds some sort of immortality.

Theater's unique existence as text and performance, according to Alice Rayner, is what makes it an exceptional venue for historiography: "If dramatic texts count as the discursive element in writing that is severed from past and present, then the repetitions of performance constitute a kind of living memorial in which the ghosts of history are reanimated" (33). The content of *La Numancia* is so steeped in time and history that its composition can be narrowed down to a four-year window based on the dialogue alone; *Numancia'*s text is not entirely divorced from past and present but rather exists in a physical format that can pass through time in a way that performance cannot. Performance is a limited appearance, though repetitive; this alone creates both death and undying memory, as a performance ends only to come back again the following night or in future productions. The source material provides a body to be revived in new contexts and with new understanding borne of differences in historical and geographical setting, allowing the original document to provide a singular commentary on the present of its necromancers.

Much of the criticism and debate surrounding *La Numancia* is related to perceptions of the play's commentary on the epoch in which it was created. Many critics see the play as a very patriotic work that applauds the greatness of the Spanish Empire; because the village of Numancia is tied, through a historical timeline narrated by the apparition of the river Duero, to Cervantes's contemporary Spanish Empire, the play becomes a sort of founding narrative for Spain. The glorification of the Numancians and their collective suicide is thereby, in this reading of the play, a glorification of Spain. However, others argue that the play demonstrates an anti-

imperialist sentiment because Spain, at the time of the play's writing, more closely parallels the Roman aggressors than the Numancian citizens. By positioning the Numancians as the heroes and reminding his audience of the eventual fall of the once-great Roman Empire (and the inevitable fall of any empire), Cervantes critiques Spain not as it appears in his play, as the Numancians, but rather as it is at the moment that he writes. He invokes Spain in two distinct historical moments, thereby conjuring two ghosts.

This debate about the political point of view of *La Numancia* is rooted in notions of history. Willard King goes as far as to point out that "two epochs of Spain… fight against each other in *Numancia* – a primitive, idealized Spain waging a just war in defense of liberty against Cervantes' contemporary imperial Spain…, fighting less easily justifiable wars of aggression in the New World and of repression in Flanders" (216). This battle between two Spains – each belonging to a different historical epoch – creates a theoretical fold in the very timeline that the play consciously constructs by explicitly linking the historical Numancians to the contemporary Spaniards. The timeline, which is introduced by the River Duero, depends on a linear and sequential understanding of events which separate the past from the present with temporal distance while it establishes the connections and parallels between present and past. The public who views the play may then confront the parallels between their contemporary moment and each of the two Spains represented, allowing for the patriotic interpretation of Spain as Numancia or the critical interpretation of Spain as the Roman Empire. This simultaneity of interpretation complicates the apparition. Spain appears as a specter on stage, surely, a its history is represented as if it were present, but that ghost cannot be easily understood.

Later iterations of *La Numancia* take on new meanings. Notably, Rafael Alberti will adapt and update the play in 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, writing in his introduction to

the work that, "Los soldados de nuestro Ejército Popular, los heroicos ciudadanos y defensores de Madrid que la presencien, sabrán apreciar, estoy seguro, lo que esta representación significa, lo que tiene de transcendente e histórica" (7). He finds in *La Numancia*, a play at that point over 350 years old, echoes of the conflict in which he is currently living and recognizes the previous "biografía revolucionaria" (8) of Cervantes's play. Alberti's text is a reinterpretation of Cervantes's in which he makes many changes, including the elimination of the necromancy and the updating of the Duero's historical speech to reach the new present; he explains these changes as an aid in adapting the play to the modern political and historical context. However, even in a case in which the text remains untouched, its reiteration in a new context will alter its interpretation. Each time the play is revived (in the dramatic sense), new ghosts are created; an act of necromancy is performed with each new staging.

The content and format of the story itself, not only the repetition of its performances, also constitutes a kind of necromancy. While several critics focus on the historicism and accuracy of *La Numancia*—notably Shivers, who declares the play to be "un magnífico documento histórico y patriótico" (1)—theorists such as Rokem and Rayner seek to distinguish historical theater from historical discourse itself. Rayner argues that theater's material representation of history makes it a more real representation of the past than a historical document, which "maintains the fiction of historical truth" (71) that the fictionalized theatrical representations eschew. Theater's materiality is also what lends itself, in her view, to ghostliness; she bases her notion of the "ghosting" element of theater on the actor, who "embodies and gives life to a nonliving thing and essentially erases the difference between the living and the dead to produce an uncanny spectacle in which the animate and inanimate coalesce" (xv). Giving life to the nonliving, which Rayner

leaves open-ended enough to apply to both figures who have died and fictional figures who never truly existed, is the epitome of ghostliness or necromancy.

For Rokem, performances of history are more able to engage in discourses and debates about the past, particularly ones that center around collective identities, such as, in this case, the national identity of Spain, than historiographic writings. Similar to Rayner's argument, Rokem focuses on the actors who provide a material dimension to theater; the fact that history is being represented by living actors heightens the theater's ability to revive the past as an active part of the present. Rokem goes so far as to argue that, "the actor performing a historical figure on stage in a sense also becomes a witness of the historical event. As a witness the actor does not necessarily have to strive toward complete neutrality or objectivity in order to make it possible for spectators… to become secondary witnesses, to understand and, in particular, to form an opinion about the forces which have shaped the accidents of history" (9). History is revived not only because of the figures represent the nonliving, as Rayner argues, but also because the events are brought back into a living discourse through their representation and repetition.

This turns Cervantes's text into a sort of perpetual and permanent necromancy, thus granting eternal life to Numancia and its townspeople. It is not only necromancy in the moment that Cervantes revives the events to write about them, but also in every moment that the play is staged. Rokem points out that performing history creates "a double or even triple time register" (19) made up of the time of the events and the time the play was written, and, in several of the cases mentioned by Alpert, Mades and Martel or in any modern iteration of the play, the time that it is performed. "The notion of performing history," Rokem says, "is based on strengthening or reinforcing the dialectics between [the three times]" (19). In other words, the play bridges the gaps between the different epochs invoked in the same way that the reanimated corpse brings the

past into the present and speaks towards the future. Each staging of the play is a new necromancy which draws another point of time into the dialogue. *La Numancia* remains alive as long as it is brought back to life; Cervantes's act of necromancy is in the composition of the play, but as it is a theatrical work it falls into Carlson's ghostly repetition, haunting again, or rising again from its tomb, for each new performance.

Frederick de Armas takes a step back from the theatricality of *La Numancia* and examines its necromancy from the point of view of its text. Just as Carlson focuses on the ghostliness of an encounter with a story that is familiar but that is repeated in a new context, de Armas identifies the necromancy of *La Numancia* in its literary antecedents, which he identifies as Lucan's *Pharsalia* and Virgil's *Aeneid*. The parallels between ancient text and *La Numancia*, he argues, invite the reader or spectator to "establish a series of parallels between ancient and modern histories" (de Armas 254). De Armas postulates that the scene of necromancy within the play serves as a metaphor for his revival of the classical tradition and goes on to call the play itself an "exercise in archaeology, bringing back from ruin and oblivion the city of Numancia" (254). However, he also clarifies that the play does not merely serve as a resurrection, but rather as a commentary or response to the ruins that it unearths. This is, of course, a vital function of the revived body in *La Numancia* and throughout the theater of seventeenth century Spain: the corpse is revived to communicate his prophecy and to influence the lives of the Numancians.

The critical canon of *La Numancia* focuses on the allegorical figures' ability to comment on past, present, and future much more than on the corpse's. It has been noted that the allegorical figures function as a vehicle for Cervantes' own thoughts and opinions (Hermenegildo), as moral figures (Peraita), and, perhaps most importantly, as the thread that ties the Celtiberian town on stage to Spain at the time of the play's composition (Bergmann; Peraita; Ryjik; Vivar). Despite

the fact that the corpse figure serves the same function, he has largely been ignored. Francisco Ruiz Ramón points out that the allegorical figures appear on stage only when no human characters are present, with the exception of the apparition of Fame who briefly addresses the Roman army. He argues that the allegorical figures, "no destruyen la verosimilitud del drama porque no intervienen en el desarrollo de la trama al mismo nivel de los demás personajes, alterándola o modificándola sino que se mantienen por encima del 'mundo histórico' de romanos y numantinos, como fuerzas superiores y trascendentes con función de símbolos" (131). The figures of Spain, the Duero, Hunger, War, Pestilence and, for the most part, Fame are prevented from directly influencing the action of the play in any way and instead only influence the audience.

This is where the reanimated corpse's function differs from that of the allegorical figures; he is revived by Numancians and speaks directly to them. Not only that, but he himself is a Numancian. The only detail that the audience learns about his life—that he died of starvation—does not individualize him but rather turns him into a representation of any Numancian, since hunger is rampant and all Numancians are slowly starving to death. The lack of detail or individuality is not unique to the corpse but rather is representative of the characters that Cervantes represents in this play. Hermenegildo notes that the generic and symbolic characters with which Cervantes populates his version of Numancia add, "una dimensión más general, más universal, al hecho teatral. Los numantinos dan al espectador un resumen vivo, una muestra exacta, de algunas de las inquietudes que asaltan al hombre cercado, a los grupos humanos oprimidos" (35). By representing this 'living summary', Cervantes is able to represent a historical truth even as he strays from documented historical fact. The young lovers, the mother and child, or the father and family of Cervantes's drama are not historical figures in the same

way as General Scipión, but their existence makes the representation of history more real. The formation of the Numancian collective refocuses the narrative from a few central protagonists—though there are certainly some characters who carry more narrative weight than others—to draw the many peripheral characters towards center stage. Bergmann describes this effect as "static" (93) because the purpose of these members of the collective is not plot driven but rather symbolic. They create the atmosphere that allows the audience to feel that the past is present in the theater.

The corpse's presence in the collective is a representation of the future of all Numancians, who are doomed to die. The audience is aware of this fact from the opening conversation between the Duero and España; however, the Numancians themselves are aware of their imminent death when the corpse is revived to tell them. His physical body not only represents death in the town of Numancia, but his prophecy also makes their impending death an inescapable reality for the Numancians who interact with him. The majority of his influence is on Marquino, to whom he says:

> No llevarán romanos la victoria
> De la fuerte Numancia, ni ella menos
> Tendrá del enemigo triunfo o gloria,
> Amigos y enemigos siendo buenos;
> No entiendas que de paz habrá memoria,
> Que rabia alberga en sus contrarios senos:
> El amigo cuchillo, el homicida
> De Numancia será, y será su vida (79).

Although the wording is vague and Marquino is unable to understand exactly what Numancia's end will look like, it is clear that his city will not survive the siege. The fact that this information is given directly to a living citizen of Numancia has a domino effect in the city; Marquino and the two young men who are eavesdropping are obligated to confront the news of their own death. Marquino's reaction is to throw himself into the tomb with the corpse; it is the first of many Numancian suicides and it is catalyzed by the necromantic return of the corpse.

The corpse's prediction is not universally accepted as truth, with one of the young men who overhears the prophecy, Leoncio, claiming: "que poco cuidan los muertos / de lo que a los vivos toca" (Cervantes 80). Leoncio views life and death as opposites without space for overlap; this is a view contrary to the portrayal of ghosts and undead figures, who blur the boundary between the two states. The difference between life and death is often defined by the cohesion of body and soul during life and their separation during death, but it can also be defined by time and space. Death comes at the end of life, at least in a linear understanding of time. The separation of the living from the dead is thereby also temporal; life progresses in days and years and eventually, after the moment of death, the soul is moved into a new temporal sphere.

Milvio, who believes in the prophecy of the cadaver, appears to envision the ghost as a vehicle that draws the future into the present. When Leoncio tells him not to believe everything the ghost says, Milvio responds: "Nunca Marquino hiciera / desatino tan estraño / si nuestro futuro daño / como presente no viera" (Cervantes 80). The nonsensical act that Milvio refers to here is Marquino's apparent suicide in the corpse's tomb. He never would have done this, Milvio argues, if he had not seen the future as if it were present. Marquino is able to see this future because of the corpse figure, who is reanimated on stage to convey it. The future, therefore, is symbolized in the body brought back to life. He is at once past, since he is separated temporally

from his own life, present, since he is temporarily alive and on stage, and future, since he not only sees what will happen to Numancia but also becomes the representation of it in the mind of Marquino and the Numancian people.

Marquino's suicide is also worth examining. After the corpse returns to his grave, promising one last time that his prophecy will come true, Marquino declares: "¡Oh tristes signos! ¡Signos desdichados! / ¡Si esto ha de suceder del pueblo amigo, / primero que mirar tan desventura, / mi vida acabe en esta sepultura!" (Cervantes 79). Once Marquino is made aware of Numancia's fate, he throws himself into the grave with the body and presumably dies there, since he is not heard from for the rest of the play. Because he knows that he cannot possibly escape the siege alive, he decides to end his life early instead of waiting to see the city's downfall; this is essentially the same choice that the entire town makes when they decide that a mass suicide is preferable to a Roman attack and takeover. This decision essentially moves their moment of death forward in time to the moment that they know they will die. It also turns the prophecy into a self-fulfilling one; by accepting the prophecy of the dead man, they provoke its completion.

The future's predetermination and the fact that, for the audience, it is actually the past, puts the characters into a dual state; the Numancians are simultaneously living and dead, not unlike the reanimated corpse. This idea is embodied in particular by a young woman, Lira. While the citizens begin to burn all their belongings and destroy their city, her betrothed, Morandro, promises to sneak into the roman camp and steal bread for her to keep her alive, swearing that while he lives she will not die of hunger. She argues that food is now useless to her: "Que, aunque puedas alargar / Mi muerte por algún día, / Esta hambre que porfía / En fin nos ha de acabar" (Cervantes 95). Lira does not appear to care *when* she will die, since it is inevitable, and

not just in the way that all death is inevitable but rather that it is now a part of her near future. She essentially sees herself as already dead while still living. Her point of view is adopted by all Numancians in the decision to commit suicide; they kill themselves because, for all intents and purposes, they are already dead.

In the Numancian decision to destroy themselves we can interpret an acceptance of death. Understood as not only an inevitability in the distant way that it is inevitable for all living beings but rather as their immediate future, death loses its element of fear. By choosing to die, the Numancians indicate that they are not afraid to do so, or at least that it is the least frightening of the few options that remain for them. Through the on-stage debates, we see their reasoning. They know that they have no hope of survival; while the men are prepared to charge the Roman camp and die in battle, the women urge them not to, fearing for what will become of them and the children when the men have all been killed. Instead, a decision is reached to burn the town and everything in it, then kill the women and children before the men kill themselves. Their justification for this is clear; it will prevent the Romans the glory of victory and keep them from capturing an entire town for slaves. Essentially, the Romans are robbed of future fame, which is instead deferred to the Numancian people. The villagers are the ones who will live on, eternally, through their fame and glory. In other words, by not fearing death, they are able to avoid that which they truly fear: the oblivion that potentially lies on the other side.

The depiction of existence beyond death in *La Numancia* is complex; the reanimated corpse paints a bleak picture which is later contradicted by Fame in the play's final scene. Not only is the corpse difficult to pull from his tomb, but with his opening verses he compares the pain of his reanimation to his suffering on the other side. The afterlife, he says, is bad enough without Marquino aggravating his misfortune. For the corpse, there is no escape from pain.

Before death he was starving, once dead he suffers in the underworld, and even in the life he finds after death—a resurrection that he knows to be temporary—he is abused. His agonizing state is a testament to anxieties about and a fascination with death; Castillo examines the Baroque preoccupation with grotesque depictions of death to show that the fears of the time were not of death itself, which is instead examined in gruesome detail, but rather of what lies beyond death.[5] The corpse's representation of his misery is a manifestation of that fear and also a confirmation of the worst possibility. He foretells Numancia's future by prophesizing its downfall and with the implication that the suffering they are currently living will never end, even in death.

After eavesdropping on Marquino's conversation with the corpse, Morandro and Leoncio go to tell the town what they have discovered and presumably their conveyance of the news catalyzes the town's decision to destroy itself. The scenes of mass muder-suicide are frenetic and heartbreaking. A starving child asks his mother why he cannot eat as they carry their belongings to the bonfire; Marandro dies as he attempts to steal food for Lira; a woman runs across stage pursued by a Numancian soldier who will kill her to spare her from Roman capture; Teógenes enters and exits with his family, only to reenter alone and with two bloody swords in hand, having killed them all. However, they all remind themselves, each other, and the audience before their deaths that this is the only choice they feel they have; Teógenes's wife responds when her husband explains that he will put his family out of their misery: "Si pudiésemos / escaparnos, señor, por otra vía, / ¡el cielo sabe si me holgaría! / Mas, pues no puede ser, según yo veo / y está ya la muerte tan cercana, / lleva de nuestras vidas tú el trofeo, / y no la espada pérfida romana"

[5] Castillo posits, more specifically, that the Baroque fear is that there is nothing beyond death. This, he continues, is the root of the philosophy of *desengaño*: colorful deceptions cover the true face of the world.

(Cervantes 115). Despite the repeated reminder that the Numancians are sacrificing themselves in pursuit of a moral victory, the representation of the killings themselves is demoralizing, with the explanations of the Numancian motivation coming almost as an afterthought to the destruction and despair.

Hunger, War and Pestilence also take the stage to observe the havoc they have wreaked, congratulating each other on the part that each has played, and carry the focus away from the potential triumph of Numancia. Instead they draw attention to "los suspiros que saliendo / van de mil tristes lastimados pechos" and "la voz y lamentable estruendo / de bellas damas a quien, ya deshechos / los tiernos miembros en ceniza y fuego, / no valen padre, amigo, amor, ni ruego" (Cervantes 113). In this moment, the deaths of the Numancians lack glory and instead are painted as irredeemable horror. The fact that the three allegorical characters claim responsibility for the deaths also weakens the sense of Numancian agency; while their suicide indicates their acceptance of death, the personifications of Hunger, War and Pestilence undercut that by reminding the audience that the Numancians would have died and Numancia would have been destroyed no matter their decision.

However, with Numancia's final suicide, the pain of death, and, in some ways, death itself, is undone. Bariato, a young Numancian man, has escaped the destruction and remains in a high tower when the Romans enter the ruined city. Cipión, the Roman general, asks the boy for the keys to the city, but rather than hand them over and accept Numancia's defeat, Bariato fulfills the wishes of the town and throws himself from the tower. Cipión's reaction is one of amazement and defeat: "¡Oh nunca vi tan memorable hazaña, / niño de anciano y valeroso pecho, / que no sólo a Numancia, mas a España / has adquirido gloria en este hecho! / Con tu viva virtud y heroica, estraña / queda muerto y perdido mi derecho" (Cervantes 126). The fact

that Cipión recognizes his own death (or the death of his cause, at least) in the Numancian suicide reframes the entire event. Bariato, through his death, has actually managed to avoid true death and instead kills his enemy.

Joaquin Casalduero calls "muerte-vida" the primary theme of the play, and goes on to state that the Numancians open a path to life through death (75). This is achieved with fame; by committing suicide, the Numancians find eternal life in fame and, through fame, the retelling of their story in theater. Essentially, their immortality is accomplished by necromancy. As de Armas explains in his article "The Necromancy of Imitation: Lucan and Cervantes's *La Numancia*," Marquino's act of necromancy may provide a model for the audience of *La Numancia* to interpret the play itself. Through Marquino's actions, he urges us to revive the dead and to speak to them, or to let them speak to us. This begs the question, though, if the corpse's revival is so horrific and brings nothing but pain, why do it? The anxiety portrayed in the corpse's state of torture is resolved by the play's end. Fame prioritizes the dignity and honor in the death of Numancia over the fact of death itself, whose tragedy is hardly mentioned. The fact that her speech ends the play also prioritizes her within the narrative. Her statement that in Numancia we find, "La fuerza no vencida, el valor tanto, / digno de en prosa y verso celebrarse" (Cervantes 127) bridges the events of the play to the creation and perpetuation of Cervantes' play and other literature based on the story. By transferring her power to the play itself, she makes clear the fact that in the play resides the immortality of the Numancian people. With that, she also consigns the corpse to fame and immortality; his death is both undone and made eternal.

The reanimation of the dead within a text that essentially serves to unearth the dead and consign them to a record of history recognizes the role of all the dead in historiography. The dead return to resolve unfinished business and to write themselves into a narrative that risks

forgetting them. By participating in the story of *La Numancia*, the dead participate in the construction of history. The reanimated corpse's participation in the narrative of the play is involuntary (because he is summoned by force), temporary (because he knows he will die again), and painful (because he suffers for the time that he is alive); the same is true for the Numancians represented on stage. They are brought back by Cervantes, directors and actors to suffer for an evening before dying again, only to be reawakened for future performances. In the text and in the repetition, this necromancy becomes immortality. By embracing death and allowing it this position in art, we can attempt to undo it. While the act of necromancy is brutal and tragic, be it the image of the abused corpse, the town in flames, or the men who murder their mothers and children, the communion between the living and the dead has an important role in our understanding of history and the contemporary world. The memorialization of history and of death in theater make both history and the dead perpetually present.

Chapter Two: Mythic Returns in *La constancia de Arcelina*

A ghost brings the past into the present not as a memory, but as a form of presence. Ghosts are inherently tied to memory, however, and their presence is in fact an embodiment of history and through it, story.[6] A ghost is memory manifested, brought into the consciousness of those who see it. The ghost returns to bring back into the front of the mind a story that was previously told and perhaps forgotten. In the case of *La constancia de Arcelina*, written by Juan de la Cueva in 1579, the ghosts are mythological figures whose appearances evoke the memory of their well-known stories. Four mythic figures are raised from the dead to show the protagonist the dangers of love by reminding him what has happened to these four characters as a result of their own love stories. Their reanimation for this purpose proves the exemplarity and moral authority that Cueva ascribes to them. Mythology is shown to contain valuable lessons and a universal truth despite its fictional nature. Furthermore, the didacticism of the play — and the death of the protagonist who ignores the lessons of the ghosts — warns against neglecting these stories and their relevance in human lives. The reanimation of the mythic *almas* paints classical mythology as a haunting force in Golden Age Spain which needed to be revived and with which contemporary citizens needed to engage.

[6] Here I distinguish history from story with the understanding that "history" encompasses both personal and societal narratives of past events, while "story" references fictional narrative and myths. However, as I problematize the construction or reality versus imagination, I must also understand that there is an overlap between true and fictional narratives, and therefore between history and story.

Cueva frequently undertakes this engagement with the classical past in his plays. In examining Cueva's body of work, Richard F. Glenn and José Cebrián have each divided his dramas into several different categories based on their themes. Glenn names three distinct groups while Cebrián names four; the two agree upon a classification of plays about classical antiquity, which includes *La muerte de Áyax Telamón*, *La libertad de Roma por Mucio Cévola* and *La muerte de Virginia y Apio Claudio*, and historic-legendary plays, which address Spain's own history and legend,[7] including such works as *Los siete infantes de Lara* and *La muerte del rey don Sancho*. Glenn's final category — novelesque plays — is divided in two by Cebrián, who names contemporary and fantastic plays as separate groups. Glenn and Cebrián assign *La constancia de Arcelina* to the novelesque and fantastic groups, respectively.

The demarcation of an entire category of plays based on classical plots demonstrates Cueva's interest, but perhaps even more telling is the pervasiveness of classical influence in his novelesque plays. Edwin Morby acknowledges direct plot influences from such authors as Ovid, Livy, and Virgil, calling Cueva's borrowing, "a part of his general effort to raise the level of drama and enlarge its scope" (384). The notion that borrowing classical plots is meant to elevate Spanish drama ascribes, on Cueva's behalf, great value to classical works. Morby continues beyond Cueva's direct retelling of classical plots, examining Cueva's plays for Senecan influence in character archetypes, structures, and themes. In *Arcelina* in particular, he identifies the magician Orbante, who will eventually raise the dead, as a Senecan figure. He recognizes the entire scene of resurrection, on which I will focus the majority of my analysis, as being influenced by Seneca's *Oedipus.* The penetrating impact of the classical antiquity on Cueva's

[7] Cueva has been recognized as the first Spanish playwright to address these Spanish themes in theater (Crawford 161; Matas Caballero 242), and so he is most widely recognized for the works in this category.

work demonstrates the haunting effect of myth and legend even before the apparition of the mythical ghosts.

La contancia de Arcelina has been largely neglected by critics, outside of its classification as a novelesque or fantastic play. In fact, the plot and structure of *Arcelina* are often regarded with disdain; the play has been called "un tanto simplista" (Matas Caballero 258), "incoherent" (Barrett, "Supernatural in Juan de la Cueva" 63), "extravagant," and "absurd… [violating] every law of probability" (Crawford 168). Many studies of the author all but ignore *La constancia de Arcelina*, pausing only to explain why it will not be explored in more depth. While *Arcelina*'s overarching plot certainly has its weaknesses and faults of logic, its categorical hybridity and its use of ghosts are of interest to me. Plays about classical mythology are not uncommon, both in Cueva's oeuvre and outside of it, nor is it uncommon for such plays to raise the dead. What *Arcelina* offers, though, is the reanimation of the classical dead outside of their own mythology. The figures appear in a story protagonized by an original character; a story that does not center around their deeds or their mythic life, but in which their stories are used to further the plot of another character.

The sorcery that raises the dead in *Arcelina* contains echoes of what we have seen in *La Numancia* but the figures themselves are markedly different. In each scene, the dead are called into the room by an incantation, and they surface reluctantly, complaining of the pain of their existence in the underworld as well as the agony of the return. As is also the case in *La Numancia*, in *Arcelina* the necromancer raises the dead for the express purpose of hearing their prophecy. The princess Arcelina has run away from the palace after murdering her sister out of jealousy. Fulcino, who has long been quietly in love with Arcelina, wishes to chase after her so that they might finally be together. To locate her, he enlists the help of the magician Orbante,

who raises the dead to ask them where Arcelina has gone. Cueva's interest in and even reverence for classical mythology is made explicit by the fact that each of the six figures who Orbante calls up from the underworld are in some way connected to the classical tradition. First is the fury Tisiphone, who is associated with punishments for the crime of murder and is mentioned in such texts as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Tisiphone is sent to fetch Zoroaster, the second figure to appear, and while he is not fully rooted in Greco-Roman myth or history, Orbante justifies his summoning by explaining to Fulcino that Zoroaster was the first to practice magic, a notion first claimed by Pliny the Elder in his *Natural History*, and thus will best be able to serve their purpose. The four remaining souls, Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido, are each associated with a specific element of their famous mythology that Zoroaster narrates as he presents them to his audience.

Zoroaster, like the Numancian corpse, is brought into the world of the living because he is omniscient and able to prophesy the future. When Orbante asks him to relay, "en voz alta, verdadera / Y cierta relacion de lo que quiero" (Cueva 34), Zoroaster promises to answer any question truthfully, however he includes the caveat: "si alcançare yo a sabello" (Cueva 34). His warning is a sign of weakness, an implication that there are truths beyond his reach. While he indicates some level uncertainty, Zoroaster ultimately provides every piece of information he is asked for. He first summarizes the events of the first act of the play that have led to Arcelina's disappearance, then warns Fulcino of his imminent death before reluctantly revealing Arcelina's location. In this long discourse, Zoroaster demonstrates his absolute knowledge of past, present and future. However, when Zoroaster begins to make a prediction for Fulcino's future, the way he communicates undergoes a dramatic shift: he raises the remaining ghosts to illustrate his point.

The portion of Zoroaster's long speech in which he reveals Fulcino's future is less fact-based than his recounting of the past is. When he speaks about the past, he narrates an ordered sequence of events and consequences. However, when he begins to talk about the future, his discourse shifts away from being held together by a cohesive narrative thread. He sends Tisiphone to bring him Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido before he reveals Fulcino's future. He chooses these four souls to show Fulcino what has happened to others in situations similar to his, but since he has not yet explained to Fulcino or the audience what that situation is, the apparitions are decontextualized from their own mythic narratives. Zoroaster prioritizes the stories of mythology ahead of the timeline of events that he knows will transpire. He introduces the future through fiction, thereby separating it from truth. It is easier, then, for Fulcino to later disregard this specific portion of Zoroaster's prophecy, because he does not associate it with the same absolute truth as the rest of the discourse. And so, despite the fact that the mythic figures appear to represent some kind of truth, it is here separated from Zoroaster's factual, historical truth and therefore appears to be *less true*.

Furthermore, when Zoroaster calls the four souls into the room, he creates a spectacle that emphasizes the presence of artifice or *engaño* in the apparitions. The raising of the dead becomes a play within the play, with Fulcino and Orbante as the audience and Zoroaster as the playwright, drawing forth the characters who will best illustrate his didactic purpose. Taking the place of actors (playing theatrical versions of themselves), the souls come to represent artifice itself. Zoroaster (and, behind the curtain, Cueva) manufactures the curated appearance and select narration of the figures. In the theatrical element of their role, they become false and inherently untrustworthy; their theatricality (even within the already theatrical realm of play) indicates to the internal public that they may not portray a literal truth or reality, just as the external public is

aware that the play they are watching is a work of fiction. Zoroaster and the four souls he brings back do not reveal what will happen, but rather depict a facsimile. The truth that the ghosts enact, then, is a poetic truth, not a literal one. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle acknowledges: "poetry is more philosophical and more elevated than history, since poetry relates more of the universal, while history relates particulars" (59). While the ghosts are telling their own personal stories, they are not historical figures; they do not depict what has actually occurred, but "the kinds of things that might occur" (Aristotle 59). Much like mythology itself, these figures endeavor to reveal to Fulcino a poetic truth about his own life and future; that is, they show him the sort of fate that could befall him.

In the play-within-the-play, Zoroaster becomes the playwright within the text. His omniscience parallels Cueva's absolute knowledge of the events of the play. Not only that, but Zoroaster exerts the control of an author; he chooses which four souls will appear in order to make the clearest point possible. He narrates their stories as they appear on stage, selecting the elements that best demonstrate his argument that love is dangerous. First is Achilles, whose love for Polyxena led to his death.[8] Next is Aegisthus, whose affair with Clytemnestra brought about

[8] In this telling of the events at Troy, sourced from Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phyrigian's accounts, Achilles falls in love with Polyxena, daughter of Priam, King of Troy. Her mother then uses Polyxena as a lure, telling Achilles that if he meets her at midnight at the temple of Apollo he may bargain for the hand of Polyxena. When Achilles approaches the temple he is killed, thereby placing the onus of his death on his love for Polyxena. While this story contradicts Homer's version, Dictys and Dares claim to predate him and to have been present at Troy, implying that any point on which Homer disagrees with their accounts, Homer is in the wrong. It was not until the 18th century that Dictys and Dares were proven to be forgers (Frazer 7).

his murder at the hands of his step-son Orestes.[9] Third, Zoroaster tells Fulcino of Iphis, a shepherd who loved a princess, Anaxarete, but his love was unrequited and almost entirely ignored, which led him to hang himself. [10] Finally, Fulcino hears of Dido, whose love for Teucer led her to commit suicide by impaling herself on his sword.[11]

In narrating each story with minimal detail in four lines each, Zoroaster creates and transmits a very particular narrative regarding the mythology based solely on the point that he wishes to convey. This is most evident in the story of Achilles, since the mythology attached to his character is particularly expansive and varied. Zoroaster, and Cueva along with him, chooses

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[9] In his summary of the events in the House of Atreus, Zoroaster leaves out details that are described in Homer's *Odyssey*, such as Aegisthus' plot to murder Clytemnestra's husband and Orestes' father, Agamemnon. The story is narrated in several pieces throughout *The Odyssey*, and interestingly one of the most detailed narrations is from the ghost of Agamemnon, speaking to Odysseus in the underworld. When Agamemnon appears as a ghost, he is painted as the victim and Aegisthus as the aggressor, while in *Arcelina* Aegisthus' role changes. In each case, the *ghost* is positioned as the victim of an unjust murder, which points to the ghost's role as a repairer of the historical narrative; a victim returns from the dead to ensure that their voice and experience is made known and recorded.

[10] The story of Iphis and Anaxarete is told by Ovid in *Metamorphoses* (Book XIV, lines 100-773). At the end of Ovid's tale, Anaxarete looks coldly out the window at Iphis's funeral procession and is turned to stone. Her marble statue is, according to Ovid, preserved at Salamis with an inscription reminding her to put aside her pride and "yield to [her] lover" (Ovid 362). This ending of the story is not referenced by Zoroaster in *La constancia de Arcelina;* instead he centers only on Iphis's suicide resulting from his unrequited love.

[11] The story that Zoroaster tells here is essentially the story of Dido's death as related in Virgil's *Aeneid*, perhaps the most eminent account of Dido's life and death, with the notable exception that instead of Aeneas, Zoroaster substitutes the name *Teucer*, who, according to Virgil's epic, met Dido after leaving the battle of Troy, "searching for new realms" (1.741). There are no references, in Virgil or anywhere else I have found, to any romantic relationship between Dido and Teucer.

one particular piece of myth told about Achilles in which love caused his downfall. Achilles' relationship to Polyxena is hinted at by several authors, such as Ovid, but is only made explicit in Dictys and Dares and is entirely absent in many more. When Zoroaster tells a story like this, familiar but somewhat altered, he evokes a sense of both recognition and strangeness. His public knows Achilles, and they may know Dictys and Dares's accounts or others influenced by them and thereby be familiar with the love story of Achilles and Polyxena. Conversely, they might be familiar with stories of Achilles in which Polyxena does not even play a minor role. Zoroaster's particular telling of the myth will contain some known elements and perhaps some changes, or some twists. The same occurs with his summary of Dido's death; the story is familiar, but with one name changed (perhaps in error, Teucer is substituted where Aeneas should be).

Zoroaster's altered recycling of familiar material allows him to focus intensively on the elements of the story that are most important to him. He does not have to explain who Aegisthus and Clytemnestra are or how they came to have an affair, since that is knowledge he can expect his audience to already have. Instead, he can minimize his explanation to four lines which do little more than give the basic facts: Aegisthus and Clytemnestra were involved in a "lascivo juego" (Cueva 36) and Orestes, Aegisthus's son-in-law, killed him. Zoroaster eliminates motives and backstories and makes his purpose incredibly pointed: love caused Aegisthus's death. By reducing the stories to their most basic, minimal plot, Zoroaster (and Cueva) emphasizes their exemplarity over their singularity. The individuality of the character and story are eliminated in favor of barebones elements that allow for the story's universality. The mythic characters become symbols rather than individuals. Their exemplarity reiterates the collective importance of their stories and their message; because they are exemplars, their lessons are meant to be learned by *all*, not just the characters themselves.

Additionally, Zoroaster's editing of the myths he presents encourages the audience to focus on *how* the recycled material is used, rather than *what* is used.[12] Since the figures and their stories are familiar, the audience is instead free to take notice of the way in which those figures and stories relate to their new environment. The details of the stories themselves only matter in the context of Fulcino's life and take up very little narrative space of their own; for example, Aegisthus's motivations and actions do not matter to Cueva's narrative outside of the way in which they might influence Fulcino's motivations and actions. By depicting this type of relationship between mythic plots and his own characters, Cueva reiterates the fundamental purpose of exemplary narratives; these stories must speak directly to the lives of individuals. By showing myth alongside non-mythological stories, by removing these figures from their own tales and instead positioning them as ghostly figures in the lives of his protagonists, Cueva indicates an important element of the classical tradition in early modern life: mythology matters because of the way humanity interacts with it.

The ghosts in *Arcelina* show the cyclical repetition of their own exemplary narratives. Fulcino is meant to learn from the stories of the ghost because their lives, despite being different from his in nearly every way, contain of kernel of applicable truth. The notion that he can learn from them insists upon their own universality, at least in the eyes of Zoroaster. Zoroaster calls upon the ghosts and urges Fulcino to listen to their stories, to recall what he knows of their lives, and to alter his own path as a result. He does this because he sees a connection between

[12] The classification of these repetitions as "recycled" comes from Carlson, who recognizes both recycled characters and recycled plots as two different types of theatrical haunting. He argues that recycled material and its relationship to the memories of the audience is in large part responsible for "the richness and density" (4) of the haunting of theater.

Fulcino's situation and those of the mythic figures, and presumably this relatability is not limited to the life of Fulcino. In fact, following the parallel that I have indicated exists between Zoroaster and Cueva – in which Zoroaster is the author within the text – I find a similar parallel between the ghosts who appear in *Arcelina* and mythology broadly understood. The souls of Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido are representatives of the genre of classical myth; Fulcino represents the early modern human; the souls communicate with Fulcino in the way that all mythology has the potential to communicate with humanity. As Zoroaster intends for Fulcino to learn from the figures, Cueva urges his audience to learn from mythological tales.

That stories so ancient retain relevance to modern lives indicates a cyclical repetition of the past, be it real or fictitious. As time spirals forward, it periodically loops back on itself. Modern humans repeat the stories and the stories and mistakes of the ancient and the exemplary, but each repetition is new and somehow unique. In a period when the world is quick to change, this idea provides something akin to stability; there is the potential for familiarity and redundancy even as humanity's understanding of the world rapidly evolves. The present is therefore inherently haunted by the past. This haunting, based on repetition and return, recalls Rokem and Carlson's descriptions of theatrical haunting. Rokem focuses on the repetition inherent in staging a play with historical themes; here, the retelling of mythic stories creates this feeling of return. Meanwhile, Carlson's notion of theatrical haunting is more centered on the repetition that characterizes theatrical stagings; each performance is haunted by previous productions and performances. In the haunted theater described by Rokem and Carlson, *Arcelina* provides a double-layered haunting. The characters within the play are haunted by the ghostly mythic figures; so too is the audience.

When Fulcino disregards the warning given by Zoroaster, he ignores the relevance of mythology to his own life and undermines its exemplarity. Paradoxically, Fulcino insists that he believes in Zoroaster's omniscience, but finds it unbelievable that his prediction will come true. Despite hearing the prophecy and even seeing the physical ghosts present in the room, Fulcino cannot, or chooses not to, internalize their message. He makes no mention at all of the mythological figures, ignoring their appearance and their potential importance altogether. Instead, he objects to one particularity in the ghost's premonition: that he will die because he will be unknown or unrecognized. Fulcino finds this end improbable, stating:

> ¡Alma de Zoroastes! bien entiendo
> Que m' avras dicho la verdad en todo,
> Y seguro de ti en lo que pretendo,
> Seguire en todo tu discreto modo;
> Mas decir que m' aguarda fin horrendo
> Por ser desconocido, no acomodo
> Tu profecía, porque no es creydo
> Que muera yo por ser desconocido (Cueva 37)

Fulcino's contradictory reaction to Zoroaster's prophecy serves as a warning to the audience. He is reluctant to confront his own mortality: he only questions the portion of Zoroaster's speech that gives him bad news. This is, of course, a risky reaction to exemplary stories, which, Cueva seems to insist, must be taken seriously and never forgotten.

In fact, Fulcino is largely uninterested in Zoroaster's prophecy of the future; he asked for Orbante's help in reviving a spirit in order to find Arcelina, and that is the only information he is interested in learning. Zoroaster, who has sworn to tell the complete truth, immediately urges

Fulcino to forget his mission and his love for Arcelina, but since he also supplies the information that Fulcino desires, that is what the latter fixates on. Fulcino, in fact, fails to address or mention the appearance of the four mythological ghosts and the lesson that Zoroaster attempts to impress upon him through their reanimation. This is certainly a failing of the text, as it undercuts the purpose of reviving the figures at all, but Fulcino's disregard for the ghosts' didacticism also opens a space for a lesson for Cueva's audience. Fulcino dies because he chooses to ignore the ghosts' part in Zoroaster's omniscient revelation, and in doing so he becomes a cautionary tale against the neglect of the morals of exemplary stories and the classical tradition.

Fulcino dies just as much because he listens to Zoroaster as because he does not. Zoroaster locates Arcelina on a mountainside, and Fulcino uses that information to begin his search. Since he dies in pursuit of her, his knowledge of her location is directly connected to his death. Fulcino, whose arc within the text shares some common ground with the classical tragedy and tragic hero, has made the fatal mistake of seeking out omniscient prophecy and then selectively ignoring the information provided to him. As he travels through the mountains, he is compelled to swap clothes with a stranger who is escaping an enemy; because he does, he is later killed by said enemy, mistaken for a man who he is not. He dies precisely as Zoroaster said he would, as a result of being unknown. As Fulcino dies, he takes full responsibility for his downfall:

> Ya se qu' eres sin culpa de mi daño,
> Que mis pecados son los que m' an muerto,
> Y assi no culpo en este caso estraño
> A nadie, sino a mi, de mi fin cierto" (Cueva 53).

The sins to which Fulcino refers, the error he made that has led to what he also calls a punishment "del cielo" (Cueva 52), appears to be doing what Zoroaster had warned him not to do. His mistake was to follow after Arcelina, a woman he loves. In and of itself, this should not be a mortal fault, but because he ignored the words of Zoroaster and the lessons of the ghostly apparitions to do so, he understands his death as a punishment for "haziendo burla… al que me avisava" (Cueva 53). His assumption of the blame for his own death implies a lesson for his audience. It is, in part, the same lesson that Zoroaster attempted to impress upon Fulcino in the resurrection of the mythic figures: love is not worth risking one's life. However, Fulcino's death has an additional lesson, which is that it is dangerous to ignore the lessons of mythology and the dead.

As he dies, Fulcino indicates that a new truth is being revealed to him as a result of his death. He tells his killer: "Yo muero ya, ya veo el desengaño / Ya la luz de mis ojos se á cubierto" (Cueva 53). In his death he finds *desengaño*; in fact, death is, as Castillo has proposed, the ultimate desengaño. Death as *desengaño* implies that all of life contains some element of *engaño*, which is uncovered after death. This certainly fits with the notion of the dead as omniscient figures who have access to knowledge of past, present, and future. The discourse of the undead in the world of the living, then, is an attempt at *desengaño*, or of a revelation of the same truth that they have access to. In this case, Zoroaster makes every effort to impress upon Fulcino his foreknowledge of the future, but he is ignored. Fulcino stubbornly continues in his deceived state.

While the play as a whole is not a completely didactic one, Fulcino's story provides several points of instruction. We see the didacticism at work in Fulcino's death: if he had been wise enough to listen to the dead, he could have lived, and so the audience learns that they too

must pay attention to the voices of the past. Because the dead here are mythological, a correlating emphasis on the import of myth and story arises from Fulcino's death. As described in Aristotle's notion of poetic truth, these mythic stories are even more profound or philosophical than historical ones, and so too are the lessons they provide. The dead – that is, the past – must be heeded, but so must poetry and fiction.

The thought of classical literature haunting early modern lives is hardly unique to Cueva or *La constancia de Arcelina*. Authors are often said to live on through their writing. Due to its physical nature and reproducibility, text tends to outlive its source. In fact, one of the fundamental differences between speech and writing is that writing allows for the absence of either author or reader. Writing, in fact, transmits a presence across time and space in much the same way that a ghost does. The author of a text may be absent, but their words live on as a physical embodiment of their once-presence. Similarly, the ghost is a present or semi-present representation of an absence made by death. Theater in particular, since it is written and performed, is haunted by text. Carlson explains, "All theatrical cultures have recognized, in some form or another, this ghostly finality, this sense of something coming back in the theater, and so the relationship between theater and cultural memory is deep and complex" (2). Theater (and text, upon which theater is based) is an inherently haunting creation. A literary (textual) ghost who appears in the theater is therefore exponentially haunting, as the ghost shows literature haunting the theater haunting the audience.

However, despite this similarity in function between ghost and text, Zoroaster chooses to revive actual figures and not merely reference their texts. In doing so, he implies that the apparitions are somehow more real than text, or that their physical presence is more impactful than the stories of their lives, despite the fact that, since they do not speak, there is no

demonstrable need for them to return to the world of the living and the space of the theater. Barrett blames their silence for what he perceives as their ineffectiveness; in his estimation, because one soul, Zoroaster, speaks for 160 lines while the others are silent, "It is like a master of ceremonies presenting numbers in a floor show!" ("Supernatural in Juan de la Cueva" 167). While Barrett is correct to point out that the figures' inactivity renders them comparable to set dressing, I argue that the importance of their visibility, albeit inert, outweighs this weakness. Physical and visible presence is a fundamental aspect of theater that differentiates it from other media. When reading the text of a play, it is easy to focus on dialogue and speeches, as they are the elements we have access to, especially for a text such as *Arcelina* which is infrequently, if ever, staged. However, it is important not to devalue physical presence in theatrical works.

Zoroaster seems to believe that by bringing out visual representations of the disasters caused by love, he can better convince Fulcino of the danger he is in. He believes that if Fulcino sees the consequences with his own eyes, he is more likely to follow Zoroaster's advice: "escucha y mira atento, / Que yo quiero que *veas por tus ojos* / De amor el premio, el fin y los despojos" (Cueva 35, emphasis mine). This emphasis on visibility is repeated throughout the scene of reanimation. The issue of the visibility of souls or ghosts is often quite complex, and in fact is considered to be another of the contradictions inherent in the ghost figure. Ghosts are both visible and invisible at the same time, since they are both present and absent at the same time. In the case of theater, however, when ghosts are embodied on stage by actors, they become necessarily visible and earthly. In some cases, the visibility of the ghost is used as evidence of their existence in an objective reality as opposed to in the imagination of a single character, thereby placing the question of the visibility of ghosts in the conflict of *engaño* and *desengaño*

that dominates the Golden Age.[13] The four souls whom Zoroaster and Tisiphone bring onstage are not merely visible but are in fact *only* visible, since they are engaged with by no other sense. Although they are described as *almas*, which to a modern mind may imply a lack of body, these figures are unambiguously physically present; one of the play's few stage directions is used to indicate: "*Parecen las almas*" (Cueva 36).[14]

A ghost's presence is often dynamic. In fact, I have said that the essential function of a ghost is to bring the past into the present as a "living" entity, and while ghosts cannot be understood as living in the strictest sense, they should display some signs of life. The figure of the Numancian, for example, while not actually alive, is able to move, speak, and, more importantly, react. He responds to the prompts of those who have revived him and speaks directly to them, creating a bridge of communication from his omniscient point of view to their limited, human one. The only ghost who matches him in *Arcelina* is Zoroaster, while the others are all stationary and static. Their strange semi-presence mimics written text, which, as I have stated, has ghostly functions but is not animated in the way that a true ghostly presence is. Like text, the mythic ghosts of *Arcelina* do not interact dynamically with their surroundings. Nevertheless, they haunt; they linger in the present and allow themselves to be seen and interpreted, brought alive again by humanity's perception of them. It is perhaps for this reason

[13] Chapter three of this project, which examines Juan de la Cueva's *El príncipe tirano*, will delve further into the issue of the visibility of the ghost as evidence of its existence or nonexistence.

[14] There are no further indications as to how exactly the ghosts present themselves, and so the original staging is unknown. It is reasonable to believe that a part of the motivation for the ghosts' inclusion in the play was as a visual trick to please and impress the audience rather than plot-based, especially as Barrett points out that these ghosts are not essential to the action of the play.

that the warning represented by these ghosts goes unheeded. Fulcino's disregard for their presence closely mirrors an ignorance or disdain for written text that Cueva seems to warn against.

Because the figures are not active themselves, their appearance relies on the reactions of those who witness them. They depend on the memory of the public to create a dynamic connection to the present human world, rather than offering the connection themselves. Although Zoroaster provides a brief summary of the pieces of their narratives that he wants the audience to focus on, the public's memories of having heard or seen these stories before plumb the much deeper wells of mythology associated with these figures. Here the connection of ghosts to memory must be insisted upon: a memory is a piece of the past brought into the present, but each recollection is new and slightly altered. With his "floor show" of identifiable souls, Cueva presents memorable characters in a slightly altered way so that their return is both singular and repeated – just as theater, and just as ghosts. These ghosts are therefore a haunting force themselves, as all ghosts are and must be, but because their appearance calls upon the memory of their publics (both internal and external to the play), they also invoke the metaphorical haunting of the past that is always latently present in the minds of humanity.

I have said that these ghosts represent the haunting past, but they are not, strictly speaking, historical figures. Instead they are fictional and mythic, but the haunting processes are similar, especially since the ghosts of *Arcelina* are representative of classical antiquity and the literature of the past. Ghosts of the past often return to fill in gaps in the historical narrative, to reveal a secret that they died knowing or to complete some unfinished business.[15] These

[15] The ghost who returns in Cueva's *El príncipe tirano* is a good example of a ghost who returns to reveal a secret and therefore complete a timeline of events that contained gaps of unknown events.

mythological ghosts also return to contribute their stories to a larger narrative of the past, but their stories are not past but rather fiction. The treatment of the ghosts in *Arcelina* represents a blurring of the distinction between historical and mythical, as the proposed purpose of the ghosts that Orbante summons is identical to the function of the Numancian body, who is represented as historical and real. The Numancian's authority resides, in part, in his undead omniscience, but also in his physical reality. He is a corpse undoubtedly present and undoubtedly real, having lived and died in Numancia. Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido are not real in the same way that the Numancian body is, but Zoroaster, and by extension Cueva, ascribe to them a *moral* authority that is the basis of their exemplarity. Cueva imbues the classical tradition with an incredible power by imitating its structures and plots but also by positioning its characters as a model to learn from. By drawing the classical past out to haunt the audience, he forces his public to dialogue with the dead by means of literature.

Cueva wants his society to enter into a literary relationship with the past. Literature acts as a mediating force between the contemporary human and the people of the past, creating a literary understanding of history. Cueva's use of mythic guides through the lessons of the classical period obscures the boundary between fact and fiction. History and myth become intertwined in such a way that they cannot be entirely separated from one another, thereby breaking down the opposition of the definitions of real and unreal. As happens again and again in the literature of the Golden Age in Spain, *engaño* is elevated to the level of truth, and the value of truth in itself is called into question.

The souls that Zoroaster calls forth must be heeded both because they are mythological and because they are ghosts. Cueva leans heavily on haunting repetitions in *Arcelina*: recycled characters, familiar plot points, and returns from the dead. Theater is a medium already

concerned with "the retelling of stories already told, the reenactments of events already enacted, [and] the reexperience of emotions already experienced" (Carlson 3), and through his representation of ghosts, Cueva augments this focus. He makes the haunting literal, creating a scene (albeit a relatively minor one) that depicts in a microcosm the role of classical antiquity in modern lives. What's more, through the ghosts' reanimation and (limited) communication, he suggests that humanity relives the cycles of the past. We repeat, perhaps endlessly, new versions of the same mistakes made by those who came before us.

Cueva proposes communication with the dead as a way to alter the repetitions of history. By listening to the stories and myths of those who have died and heeding their prophesies of the future, our mistakes may be avoided. Fulcino's story arc is, then, a cautionary tale. He is presented with numerous ghosts and the chance to learn from their stories, and still he refuses to listen to them. His death, which he understands to be absolutely his responsibility and a direct result of having ignored Zoroaster and his parade of souls, serves as a warning. Through Fulcino, Cueva advocates for the opposite of his behavior. Instead of flouting the lessons of history and mythology, humanity must actively seek them out and engage with them. We must dialogue with the dead, or with literary characters, both of whom will guide us tuhrough a new understanding of history, in order to imitate and improve upon their actions.

Cueva grants these literary figures the same weight as is given to historical ghosts. It does not matter that these figures are mythological, and therefore not as tangibly "real" to the humans to whom they appear as the Numancian corpse is. Furthermore, unlike in *La Numancia*, in *Arcelina* each of the souls is named, and each name is tied to a rich backstory and literary history. In fact, the figures' names and backstories could not be more important to their appearances. Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido are brought back specifically because of the

stories implied by their figures and briefly narrated by Zoroaster. Even Zoroaster and Tisiphone are purposefully selected mythological figures, rather than fictitious characters created specifically for their appearance here. By using these recognizable figures, Cueva ensures that his story is not only haunted by the author but also by mythology and the authors associated with those myths. Not only that, but he also ensures a *repeated* reanimation of their ghosts and his own. A textual ghost appears not just once, but each time that the text is interacted with; a *theatrical* textual ghost is also embodied each time that the play is staged.

Chapter Three: Ghostly Visions in *El príncipe tirano*

While the ghosts represented in chapters one and two have demonstrated an omniscience that functions within a structure of order and reason typical of the Renaissance, the ghosts who await in the remaining chapters will demonstrate a shift towards uncertainty and chaos. In seventeenth-century Spanish drama, representations of ghosts either occupy a space of paradox or of omniscience. The paradoxical ghost challenges the binarism of truth and falsehood by existing in the interstitial space between the two extremes, as Derrida's refers to with the term *hauntology*. The omniscient ghost, however, by virtue of having passed on into the afterlife (however it may be imagined) are able to see all of time and space at once, and are continually called upon by the living to reveal secrets of the past or prophesies for the future. The ghost that challenges the nature of truth and the one who reveals it are fundamentally incompatible; the ghosts who reveal truth are trusted completely by the living, while those who obscure it could never be. Juan de la Cueva's *La comedia del príncipe tirano*, first staged in 1580 and published in 1581, however, appears to represent ghosts who serve both functions.

When the ghosts of *El príncipe tirano* first appear, they force the audience and other characters to question their perceptions of reality; do the ghosts exist, or are those who witness them experiencing melancholic visions? However, these questions of reality are ultimately dropped and the ghosts reveal crucial secrets regarding their deaths, shifting promptly towards a representation of ghosts who uncover and therefore reinforce notions of truth. Although they each exist within the span of the play, these two purposes of the ghost are contradictory and represent a shift rather than a coexistence; the obfuscation of reality is abandoned in favor of the

revelation of truth in order to serve the political purpose of the play, which depicts the dangers of allowing an unfit ruler to ascend to the throne. The representation of both ghostly functions within this play, however, demonstrates the beginnings of a transformation in the treatment of the supernatural and, more specifically, of the relationship of figures such as ghosts and the undead to humanity's understanding of reality.

Juan de la Cueva's comedy is, in fact, part one of a two-part story and is followed by *La tragedia del príncipe tirano,* first staged in 1580 alongside its counterpart (both were first published in 1581). Both parts are classified as novelesque plays by Glenn (97) and as fantastic plays by Cebrián (125), the same categorizations that each makes for *La constancia de Arcelina*. Of the two parts to the narrative, the comedy appears to be called such based solely on the fact that the tyrant prince, Licimaco, does not die at the end, while he does at the close of the tragedy. Extant criticism of this pair of plays has placed a much greater emphasis on the tragedy than the comedy; it has also agreed that the work's main purpose is its political argument. Anthony Watson's *Juan de la Cueva and the Portuguese Succession* provides the most thorough investigation of the political message of the play[16], which claims that, "Cueva seeks to persuade his audience that even if a man is the rightful heir to a throne he should not be allowed to don the

[16]Watson examines several of Cueva's works in relation to the Spanish political climate and monarch of the era in order to show that Cueva disapproved of Philip II Portuguese policy. He draws a parallel between *El príncipe tirano,* which deals with a matter of succession, and Philip's succession to the throne of Portugal after the death of his nephew Sebastian, the true heir, at Alcazar-Kebir. Some suspected and even suggested that Philip had purposefully put Sebastian in harm's way in order to take the throne of Portugal, which leads Watson to argue that while "Licimaco is certainly not to be regarded as a portrait of Philip II…, it seems not unlikely that Licimaco's murder of his sister in order to become king had its origin in the accusations levelled against Philip by his enemies" (127).

mantle of power if he has shown himself unfit to rule" (125). Licimaco proves himself unfit when, driven by jealousy and goaded by a Fury in disguise, he murders the rightful heir. And yet, at the end of the first play, his father pardons him for his crimes and abdicates the throne out of grief, leaving Licimaco to become king before the second installment. The pardon is justified as ensuring the future of the state; since its first heir has been killed, the second heir must be protected. The "Machiavellian arguments" (Watson 130) which allow the tyrant prince to become king lead to disaster; the tragedy depicts the prince's spiral into sadistic violence and closes with his murder at the hands of two female subjects he intended to abuse and assault.

The few analyses of the role of the supernatural figures in the play essentially divorce them from the political argument; Barrett's study of the ghosts determines that they are, in fact, not essential to the plot of the play and are therefore inefficient and ill-used. I argue, however, that the king's disregard of the truths revealed by the ghost does not nullify their importance to the political argument; instead, the ghosts' role in the construction of an accurate historical and political timeline changes the implications of the king's decision to abdicate in favor of his murderous son by altering our understanding of what the king knows when making that decision. Because the ghosts ensure that the king, as well as all of his advisors, are entirely aware of the prince's murderous nature, the decision to pardon him and allow him access to power is not one made out of ignorance, but rather out of political expediency. The king and his grandees prioritize the future of the country and the royal lineage above justice (although the king does so reluctantly), and the appearance of the ghosts and the information that they share is fundamental in establishing the willfulness of their decision.

Although only the second part of the series is classified by the author as tragic, both have often been recognized for their elements of terror and horror[17] (but always with more attention paid to the tragedy). Barrett calls the tragedy Cueva's "most repulsive play" ("Supernatural in Juan de la Cueva" 151), which, according to David Burton, is primarily due to the abundance of Senecan elements, such as long monologues, the appearance of supernatural figures, omens, and horrifying sensationalism employed within the text (97)[18]. While the tragedy, the second part of the story, is certainly *more* violent and horrific than the comedy, the first part of the tyrant prince's story contains the same Senecan elements, listed above, that lead critics to identify the horror of the second part. The first two acts in particular are shrouded with death and the occult. Act I sees Prince Licimaco, the younger son of the king of the ancient kingdom of Colchis, viciously murder his sister out of jealousy after he has been influenced by a Fury, Alecto, in disguise as his maid. As he kills the princess, the three Fates share the stage and cut the thread of

[17] In my assessment of this scene as terrorific, I rely on the Gothic understanding of the difference between terror and horror, which claims: "The difference between Terror and Horror is the difference between an awful apprehension and a sickening realization… Terror thus creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world" (Varma 30). These definitions of terror and horror in particular interest me due to the way in which they implicate vision; terror occurs before whatever frightening experience is *perceived*, be it seen, heard, or otherwise experienced.

[18] Many other critics have noted the use of Senecan elements in the plays of Juan de la Cueva. Notably, Antonio López-Fonseca lists those elements as: "retórica efectista, frecuente uso de monólogos ya al principio de la pieza, el propio contenido de los monólogos, que va desde las efusiones filosóficas a las excursiones líricas, la trascendencia de lo sobrenatural y la magi, las pasiones desenfrenadas, venganzas, horrores, crímenes y cruel derramamiento de sangre" (292-293). Meanwhile, Edwin Morby notes the sensationalism of Cueva's works, especially in the two plays of *El príncipe tirano*, which he also notes bear a close resemblance to Seneca's *Theyestes* "in the atmosphere of horror, in the figure of the bold tyrant and in the gloomy garden where the murders are done" (388).

her life as it ends. The prince then turns on the grandee who helped him commit the murder, killing him as well and burying both his victims in the garden. In Act II, both the prince and his father are pursued by the ghosts of these two murdered characters. It is into this atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that the ghosts first emerge, which contributes to the uncertainty with which they are initially regarded.

When the king's haunting is initially brought up, it is not believed to be real. The disappearance of his daughter, which has not yet been explained as a murder, has caused him great distress, and his grandees believe that he is going mad. A page describes the king's recent odd behavior to Calcedio, a grandee: the previous night, the monarch had asked that all lights but one be removed from his room, had refused all food, and had sent away all but two pages. Then, in the night, the king jumped from bed with a scream only to collapse on the floor. Calcedio asks the page what had put the king into such a state and the page replies:

> ¡Si lo vieras, Calcedio, estando en esto
> Como el rostro y los ojos se tapava
> Y temblado á nosotros se bolvia,
> Diziendonos que estigias sombras via! (Cueva 155).

The behavior that the page describes sounds uncannily like melancholy[19], with the king's grief causing visions and near-madness; this is especially evident when coupled with the page's confession that the king is suffering from great pain, anxiety, and sadness. Moreover, he reports on the king's behavior as if it is indeed madness; his words imply that not only is it unusual, but

[19] Robert Burton, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, lists the following symptoms "in the mind" of melancholy "over all the body": "Fearful, sad, solitary, hate light, averse from company, fearful dreams, etc." (129).

perhaps unjustified. In other words, it appears unbelievable to him—and, as we will see, to those with whom he is speaking—that the king might be reacting to true presences.

Because the audience's initial exposure to the king's haunting is mediated and not direct, reported by the page instead of depicted on stage, a space is created for uncertainty. The king tells the page he sees ghosts, and the page tells Calcedio and, by extension, the audience. We are therefore separated from the event itself; any details of what exactly the king has seen are lacking, which creates the absence of truth. In this absence, the page and Calcedio can comment on what they believe to be the truth with no objective, provable reality to invalidate their theories. In fact, Calcedio dismisses the visions as nothing more than illusions—or delusions—of the king's grief-stricken mind:

> El gran dolor que le aquexava tanto,
> Essas fantasmas le trayria delante,
> Y su congoxa y aspero quebranto
> Harian un efecto semejante;
> Y juntas las especies, un espanto
> Le formarian y seria bastante
> Que ver pudiesse semejantes cosas,
> Siendo ilusiones todas mentirosas (Cueva 155-156).

While Calcedio does not deny that the king may have seen something, or at least that he may have thought he saw something, he classifies it as a deceitful illusion or as a trick of the mind. In doing so, he creates a rift between vision and reality. The king may *believe* he is seeing shadowy figures before him, but they do not exist for anyone else (or, in reality). The fact that the audience is simultaneously presented with the information that the king is seeing ghosts and the

opinion that they do not exist creates a sense of doubt for the observer; if the events are uncertain even within the fictional world of the play, then they will appear even more fantastical to the external audience.

The ghost is presented into an environment of profound and unsettling uncertainty. When the king enters, shortly after Calcedio's dismissal of the existence of his ghosts, he appears to be actively pursued by them, asking aloud, "¿Qu' es esto cielo? ¿puede ser possible? / Que a mis ojos tal cosa vea visible?" (Cueva 156). However, Calcedio responds by asking the king what troubles him, indicating that he cannot see whatever the king does. This flummoxes the king further, as it is difficult for him to understand that something so clear to his eye is not perceivable to Calcedio. Essentially, these combating views of what lies before them in the room creates two different realities. Fernando Rodríguez de la Flor argues that in the Baroque era, "la realidad no es aquello que es percibido, sino precisamente aquello que la percepción crea" (3). If perception creates reality, then the king's reality includes the ghosts, while Calcedio's does not. In the case of a visual deception, *desengaño* would be able to prove that one perception is faulty, allowing for the men to return to an existence in which there is only one objective reality, but until that moment comes, they live in a state of uncertainty that causes anxiety, tension, and even terror.

The uncertainty surrounding the true existence of the ghosts extends to the audience or reader of the play. Because this play, like most from the Golden Age, lacks any stage directions or indications of character entrances and exits, a reader must grapple with absolute uncertainty regarding the ghosts' physical presence. While there is an abundance of contextual clues that indicate that the *characters* either see the figures or that they have disappeared from sight, there is no way of determining if the *audience* should see them or not. Even once the ghosts have been

determined to exist in a common plane of reality and not just in the king's mind, the fact of their actual presence is left unclear. For example, after the ghost of the princess first speaks, the king begs, "No huyays sombras, aguardá un momento" (Cueva 157), which implies to the reader that the ghosts are attempting to leave. Through these textual clues, a careful reader may determine points at which the ghosts enter or exit the scene. However, in terms of staging, it is possible that the king's lines of dialogue are intended to substitute for the appearance of a physical ghost by verbally indicating the exit of the ghosts because they have no physical form. Even though each figure speaks, without explicit direction we cannot be sure if there is a visual component to their existence or if, perhaps, they are merely voices from offstage. Further, even in the case that a visual component exists, we must question whether or not it is human. An actor might stand in representation of the ghost, but so might a prop. Without any explicit directions, this decision is left to directors and will have varied in different stagings of the play. Not only is the ghost itself a contradiction of presence, but these two figures in particular are as vaguely present as possible, even once they have been shown to exist outside the king's imagination.

In either case—whether the ghosts are present onstage or not—the public is forced to confront several paradoxes of being that call into question the nature of presence itself. If the ghosts are never visibly present onstage, then we must consider what it means to acknowledge the presence of something not visible, especially as they are proven to be real and are even able to speak and communicate. The public must confront the uncanniness of an absence where we expect some amount of presence; this is, in many ways, a fundamental concern of the ghost. These invisible ghosts constitute a presence that can only be sensed first by a vague and ominous

emotion and later by sound, but not by sight. The sense of sight is thereby made untrustworthy, because it does not reveal to the naked eye something that we know exists[20].

If, however, the ghost figures do appear onstage and are embodied by an actor, then we must reconcile that living, human body with the undead figure that it is meant to represent. Rayner, in the introduction to her study on the phenomenon of ghosts in theater, says:

> The greatest mystery of theatrical ghosting is not that the ghosts are disembodied spirits from some ineffable realm, heaven or hell, and hence imaginary. The mystery, rather, is that they are fully embodied and material but are unrecognized without a certain mode of attention, a certain line of sight that can perceive the mysterious thing that is distinct from, yet embodied by, the theatrical object. There. Not there (xvii).

Confronted with the depiction of a ghost onstage, the public must observe a living human actor and understand him to be both less than living and less than fully present. José Antonio Maravall argues that "las difundidas prácticas –muy especialmente en el arte—del «engaño a los ojos», no pretenden hacernos creer que eso que vemos preparado por una hábil manipulación del artista sea la realidad verdadera de las cosas, sino movernos a aceptar que el mundo que tomamos como real es no menos aparente" (401). Essentially, the audience is not meant to understand a

[20] Enrique García Santo-Tomás writes that with technological developments which enhance sight, by which objects not previously observable to the human eye becomes visible, the idea of vision as a reliable way of perceiving existence is degraded. If previously invisible objects can be made visible by new optical inventions, who is to say what other unseen entities might be revealed? Furthermore, that which we perceive, be it by feeling or sound or even an illusory vision, but which may not be objectively "real," such as the king's ghosts in the mind of Calcedio, might, at any point, be proven to truly exist. García Santo-Tomás asks: "¿cuándo es que los objetos percibidos pasan de ser cuestión de fe o pilares de una tradición a entidades reales?" (302).

theatrical ghost but is, rather, aware that there is an actor or prop *representing* a ghost. The fact, then, that something fully present represents something less-than-present, or that someone living represents someone less-than-living, is not directly contradictory. Instead, the space between the *actor* and *what the actor represents*, which exists in any dramatic work, is a reminder of the difference that always exists between reality and appearances.

The ghosts therefore raise unavoidable uncertainty through their semi-presence. In the time between the page's announcement that the king is seeing ghosts and the first evidence of a ghost on stage, the audience does not have a clear, objective reality to cling to. Instead, the spectators are presented with two opposing possibilities: first, that there truly are shadows pursuing the king, and second, that the king is losing his mind. The ghosts cause both those who witness them and those who do not to question whether their vision accurately reflects reality; the king must confront the possibility that he is envisioning things that do not exist, while Calcedio and the rest must confront the possibility that there a figures in the room who they are unable to perceive. This unsettling uncertainty, while profound, is brief. The characters' attitudes towards the ghosts quickly shift, so that even before they are fully physically present, they begin to be regarded not only as wholly real, but also omniscient and representative of an absolute truth.

The duality of the ghosts is quickly reduced to a singularity, as Calcedio is easily convinced that the king is speaking in earnest and not out of madness. In the space of a single scene, Calcedio's belief evolves from asking of the king's supposed madness: "¿este fin se deve / A nuestro justo rey? ¿trance tan fuerte / Le tenia el injusto y cruel hado?" (Cueva 156) to very suddenly assuring the king that there are grandees in the kingdom who will be able to reveal the identities of the two ghosts. Shortly after, the prince appears, saying that he too is being

terrorized by two shadows, and Calcedio includes himself in the haunting when he addresses the ghosts directly as "Sombras que *nos* seguis" (Cueva 157, emphasis mine). The rapid shift in Calcedio's opinion on the reality of the ghosts goes unaddressed; his initial incredulity is abandoned and never brought up again. Once Calcedio acknowledges the existence of the ghosts, they are regarded as inarguable presences who have been removed from a space of uncertainty and placed, instead, entirely in the realm of truth. Cueva creates an ambience of apprehension and dubious reality, but he does not permit it to last, allowing instead for Calcedio to accept the king's story when, only moments before, he had questioned his mental stability.

The questions surrounding the ghost figures cease to be whether or not they are real and shift instead to why they have (re)appeared. The identities of the figures are regarded as central to any understanding of their motivations; the king believes that discovering who they are will aid in unveiling what they want. Additionally, he believes that in order to divest himself of the hauntings, he must help them accomplish whatever it is that they have returned to do. This belief represents an incredibly common understanding of ghosts, namely, that they return due to unfinished business and will be able to rest once they have finished it. In order, then, for the king to make his visions disappear, he will have to uncover their identities and, through them, their purpose. To that end, both he and Calcedio address the ghosts directly to ask what they need in order to move on. The motivations for the ghosts' appearance will, in turn, reveal the role that the ghosts play within the text.

The ghost of the princess indicates that her return is motivated by the unfinished business of her death;[21] although she later states that she has not returned for revenge, she does tell the

[21] Interestingly, although the princess has been identified by the written text, as her speech is identified by the character name "Alma de la Princesa," the characters and the theatrical audience still have no indication as to who

king that in order to end her suffering and that of the other ghostly soul, he will need to punish the one closest to him. Once this person is punished, the ghost promises, her anguish and the king's sleeplessness will end. The ghost needs the living to listen to her, but more than that, she needs them to act according to the information that she shares with them. Despite her claims that she does not seek vengeance against the one who killed her, she indicates that some form of justice must occur in order for the haunting to end. In this way, the ghost becomes a figure who will restore order to the living world. Through her revelations, she will ensure that the structures of justice are upheld (or, at the very least, she will attempt to do so).

The living must allow the ghost to speak in order to correct their understanding of reality, which is limited by their human perspective. No living character, besides the prince, was present in the garden when he murdered the princess and the grandee, and thus no living character is fully aware of what happened. There is a gap in their historical narrative. To converse with a ghost is to allow for that gap to be filled by their words and their histories; Avery Gordon calls a ghost story: "a story about what happens when we admit the ghost—that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present—into the making of worldly relations and into the making of our accounts of the world" (24). It is a story in which the living allow their understandings of their lives and experiences to be altered by those who are missing. When the living open up the space for this conversation, we recognize

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she is. In fact, because the king gives no hint that he has recognized his own daughter, a figure whose face he should know well, we know that the figure remains less than fully recognizable. Whether that extends to the audience is left ambiguous; *if* the ghost is represented by an actress, that actress *may* be the same as the actress who played the princess before her death, in which case the audience would *likely* recognize her, but uncertainty regarding the ghosts' identities, and therefore also their purpose, still pervades the text deeply, even after they have first spoken.

and acknowledge that there are absences in our understanding of the world. The ghosts represent that missing piece—they are an absence made present—but in this capacity they must also represent something true. In fact, what is missing is in essence some form of truth or some element of reality. In this case, the absent truth is that the prince murdered his sister, and the ghost who comes back is the only figure able to share that information.

The ghost's initial dialogue, however, is incredibly vague and no real truth is shared explicitly, and so the conjuring of the figures is proposed as a way of eliminating all doubt. The prince, who understands that the ghost has accused him, deflects blame and convinces his father that the ghost must have been referring to Merope and her husband Gracildo. However, Calcedio remains skeptical. Because the crime being punished is so serious, Calcedio suggests that the king find absolute certainty before having the suspects executed. When the king asks how they will find the truth in "un caso tan dudoso" (Cueva 159), Calcedio proposes the conjuration, naming a grandee, Cratilo, who has the power to summon the spirits by magic. The scene of conjuration that follows echoes those of *La constancia de Arcelina* and *La Numancia*; Cratilo peppers his incantation with references to classical mythology and to the underworld and orders the ghosts to express "la verdad pura" (Cueva 162). Where they originally manifested uncertainty, the ghosts are now called upon to embody an absolute truth, which is inaccessible to the living human characters on stage. Paradoxically, both the *engaño*—the cause of the confusion—and the proposed *desengaño*—the solution or clarification—are rooted in the figure of the ghost. The ghosts first represent the artifice that prevents an objective or shared reality, but the drastic shift in their role and treatment allows for them to also represent the truth that they had initially obscured.

The notion of a conjuration also implies that the ghosts are not yet fully present or have not yet reached their maximum potential presence. Derrida, who has thoroughly addressed the issue of conjuring a spirit, understands conjuration as both "the magical incantation destined to *evoke*, to bring forth with the voice, to *convoke* a charm or a spirit. Conjuration says in sum the appeal that causes to come forth *with the voice* and thus is makes come, by definition, what is *not there* at the present moment of the appeal" (50) and "the magical exorcism that, on the contrary, tends to expulse the evil spirit which would have been called up or convoked" (58). Cratilo's incantation is therefore tasked with bringing the ghosts forth *into* presence and expelling them *away*. At some point, then, the characters are no longer concerned with whether or not the ghosts are present. Instead, they accept their presence and look to banish it. Moreover, this acceptance of the ghostly presence is not merely incidental but rather a fundamental step towards its expulsion.

When the ghosts speak, they reiterate that their new role is to tell the truth and to reveal information previously undiscovered. First, the princess explains to her father who she is and what has happened to her; she explains that her brother became jealous of her impending wedding and inheritance of the crown and decided to kill her in order to take her place. She insists that she does not want vengeance, but rather only to be given a proper burial so that she may rest. Trasildoro, who speaks after the ghost of the princess has already left the scene, apparently content at having made her plea for burial, seeks only to reveal the truth of his death and Eliodora's. In fact, it is what he is specifically called upon to do; in the moments before he is conjured, both the king and Cratilo repeat their desire to uncover the truth, saying "¡La verdad yo la sabre!" (Cueva 164) and "Dime la verdad en todo" (Cueva 165). Trasildoro makes no mention of burial, or even of justice or vengeance, although by insisting on the prince's responsibility for

the princess's murder he contributes to the king's desire to see Licimaco punished. His focus is entirely on recounting the events of the princess's death and he specifically *replaces* the false belief of the living with the truth:

> Assi te aviso, alto rey,
> Que Merope y su marido
> En el caso sucedido
> Son libres por justa ley.
> Lo qu' en esto son culpados,
> Solo el Principe y yo fuymos
> Los que la maldad hezimos,
> No los qu' estan condenados. (Cueva 166)

By not only revealing the truth but also uncovering the lie (Merope's guilt) that was first proposed by the prince, Trasilodoro's ghost exposes both the limitations of the living's knowledge of the princess's death and the prince's devious manipulation of his father. Prince Licimaco is unveiled as a well-hidden tyrant who, without the intervention of the undead, would have been successful in his criminal scheming.

This offer of information and truth is precisely what characterizes the role the ghosts play in the political argument of the play. Their revelations directly affect the political moves that follow; in fact, the aftermath of their appearances occupies the remaining two acts of the play. The ghosts have effectively accomplished their goal of revealing the truth, and now their role is reduced to the issue of what the king will do with the information they have provided. The appearance of Eliodora in particular demonstrates the fundamental problem that now faces the realm; her appearance as a ghost signifies the death of the country's heir, and the story she tells

of her death indicates that the prince, the only remaining heir, should not be allowed to inherit. That is, at least, the king's interpretation; he has Licimaco immediately arrested as a direct result of the ghosts' testimony.

The prince attempts to maintain his freedom by casting doubt on the word of the ghosts, but the king rejects the notion that the figures could have been deceitful. When the king indicates that he intends to enact justice, the prince implores his father not to believe "una fantasma mentirosa" (Cueva 167). The king, however, firmly believes in the signs that have been sent to him:

> ¡Traydor! Si el cielo mesmo da señales
> De tu inhumanidad, si el cielo aspira
> Mi justicia, y si el cielo y celestiales
> Piden vengança de tu estigia ira
> ¿Será justo que digan los mortales
> Que no ay justicia en mi[...?] (Cueva 167)

The king's staunch belief that the supernatural figures represent some sort of fate or higher power that has a plan for his life reinforces the role of the ghost as a figure of certainty and truth. The ghosts, as well as the play's other supernatural figures like the Fates and Alecto the Fury, are not figures who obscure truth or force the living to question their perceptions of reality, but rather ones who are omniscient beyond what humanity could possibly know. When they share wisdom, the king believes that he must mind their warnings.

This belief is also in line with the appearances of the play's other supernatural figures, as well as those who appear in the corresponding tragedy. The ghosts are prefaced first by the fury Alecto, who intervenes to stoke the fires of the prince's anger and jealousy and ultimately

instigates his crime of homicide, and then by the three Fates, who create a mythos of death that insists upon inevitability and permanence. Similar to the ghosts, Alecto's appearance initially seems to raise the issue of *engaño*, since she disguises herself as the prince and prince's maid Merope. In this form, she first takes advantage of the prince's trust in order to convince him to murder his sister, then takes advantage of the princess's trust in order to lure her into the garden to be killed. This initial appearance of Alecto represents a deceitful conceit of reality, in which perception cannot be trusted to reflect truth. Ultimately, however, any questions that she raises are subordinated in relation to the function that she serves in the plot. Because the *desengaño* never occurs and Alecto is never officially revealed to have participated in the crime, all that remains of her as the plot advances is the ripple effect of the actions she encourages. She ensures that the murder takes place and that the prince himself is the one to kill the princess. Her role in the crime suggests that the murders are required by some otherworldly power, that they are fated to occur, and that it was always meant to be the prince who perpetrated them.

Similarly, the Fates, who appear on stage before Eliodora's death to prepare the thread of her life so that they may cut it at the right moment, fortify the notion of predestination through their role. Although Lachesis suggests that it might be possible to allow the princess to live, thereby subverting the predetermined reality, Clotho insists that it is not:

> Cumplido el curso fatal
> ¿No ves tu qu' es imposible?
> Y que volver no es posible
> Lo qu' es orden natural.
> Si con todo su poder,
> Iupiter hazer quisiese

Quel dia de ayer volviese

Atras, no lo pudo hazer. (Cueva 142)

Once death has been decided—though even before it has occurred—it becomes both inescapable and irrevocable. This is a conceit of death, however, which is complicated by the existence of ghosts. Ghosts are precisely the figures who *can* and *do* return from beyond the moment of death. In doing so, they not only (temporarily) undo death itself but also, in a way, turn back time by bringing the past back into the present through their reappearance, something that Clotho deems impossible for even Jupiter to accomplish. However, despite the fact that ghosts are able to return to the world of the living after they have died and are able to function as semi-living figures, in that they are able appear and communicate, ultimately, they disappear at the end of act II and do not reappear in the remainder of the play or its sequel. Fate wins in the end. Although Eliodora and Trasildoro, by appearing as ghosts, exist in an interstitial space between life and death, they do eventually die, though perhaps not in the exact moment that Atropos cuts the thread. Once again, the play chooses the representation of fate and predetermination over the uncertainty embodied by the ghost.

Before the Fates exit the action, they leave one final reminder of their far-reaching power. After the murder has occurred and Alecto has fled back to the underworld, the Fates also decide it is their time to go. Atropos announces: "El estambre aparejemos / Para quel principe muera" (Cueva 148). The prince will not die until the end of the sequel, and yet the Fates announce it—and their role in it—in the first act of Part I. By parting with this revelation, the Fates highlight the continuing influence that they will have in the lives of the characters, despite the fact that they will not return to the stage. They remind the public that they are behind every death that occurs, and therefore that every death is predetermined and certain. When the king later states his

faith in the supernatural as a representation of the will of a higher power, he unknowingly reinforces what the Fates have already shown; there is a force present in the lives of the living which is not only omniscient but also omnipotent. The ghosts, like Alecto and the Fates, become representatives of this force, and their role in the lives of the living must correspond to that responsibility. In other words, the ghosts' communications with the living must function to reveal their overarching knowledge and to reinforce their supernatural control of the living.

The king, however, is convinced by his grandees to ignore the word of the ghosts. To do so goes against his instincts, which tell him that the higher power represented by the ghosts wants for him to enact justice. His advisors warn him that to disinherit the prince would drastically weaken the realm, as it would end the royal line. Although it is reluctantly done, the king's pardon of the prince is a decision made with full knowledge of the prince's homicidal anger and with an absolute understanding of the stakes. The results of the prince's tendency towards violence have been given a name and a voice.

Because the king allows himself to be dissuaded from acting on the ghosts' revelations, and in doing so turns his back on the truth, their communications are made in vain. Barrett argues that the specters initially appear to be essential to the plot, since they impart information that only they know, but that their purpose is undercut by the king's pardon of Licimaco:

> Cueva ruins his own devices by causing the old king to reconsider his sentence of the prince, thus destroying the true value of the ghosts' information… In short, Cueva's ghosts seem to owe their existence more to the author's love of the spectacular than to any real need for them in the plot. ("Supernatural in Juan de la Cueva" 167)

Although Barrett is entirely unimpressed by Cueva's depiction of haunting, the fact that the king is persuaded to disregard the lessons of the ghosts should not be considered to altogether nullify

their appearance. In fact, the king's eventual disregard of the ghosts serves to amplify their importance rather than to diminish it; if we understand, as Watson does, that the political purpose of the play is to demonstrate the dangers of allowing an unfit ruler to have access to power, then the revelation that Prince Licimaco is unfit to rule is paramount to that message. Without the information provided by the ghosts, the prince's inheritance is an unfortunate accident rather than a calculated political choice; the king's abdication in favor of the prince at the close of the comedy would have been a choice made of ignorance instead of an informed and yet imprudent action. The ghosts present the king with a moral dilemma: to uphold justice for his daughter by executing his son, thereby leaving his realm without an heir, or to save his son and abandon his principles of honesty and righteousness.

Gordon advocates for communication with ghosts both to help them move on and because "paying attention to ghosts can, among other things, radically change how we know and what we know" (27). In this case, the ghosts change what the king knows about his daughter's disappearance and death, and also what he understands about his son's nature. The ghosts of Eliodora and Trasildoro are not only the visible evidence of the prince's criminal misdeeds and unsuitability for the throne, but the information that they provide to the king and his companions forces the king into the conscious decision to pardon Licimaco's fratricide in order to protect the status of the state. The grandees who convince the king not to act on their information do so not because they doubt the ghosts' revelations but rather because the truth that was uncovered is politically inconvenient. The prince himself writes a plea to his father from his prison in which he recognizes that his crimes do not deserve a pardon but begs for one anyway; in doing so, he admits to the murder but argues that the protection of the throne is more important than justice. Essentially, in the first half of the comedy, a truth is established: Licimaco is an unfit ruler. This

fact is the basis of everything that follows, both in the remaining acts of the comedy as well as in the tragedy, and it is established by the ghosts. In the second half of the comedy and in the tragedy, the truth is ignored and the dangers of doing so are exhibited. The political message of the play – that an unfit ruler, despite any monarchical claim he has to the throne, should not be allowed to rule – could alternately be posited in terms of truth: an established truth should never be ignored, however politically inconvenient it might be. The ghosts are essential to the establishment of this truth and are therefore essential to the political message of the play.

In the tragedy that follows, the play's political thesis is carried to its logical conclusion: the prince, who has declined into unprecedented violence and cruelty against even the allies who supported his bid for the throne, is murdered by two of his female victims. Ultimately, his rule is untenable. As a ruler, he is exactly the tyrannical monster that his aggressive murders in the comedy suggest he will become. Moreover, in the first two acts of the tragedy, figures of fate intervene once again to portend the prince's destruction. Preceding the coronation is the entrance of a mute into a scene with the king, prince, Calcedio and Gracildo. Because the figure does not speak, his actions are narrated by those around him. Calcedio announces that he carries a book in one hand and a sickle in the other, then the prince explains that he begins to tear the book and shout. Next, Gracildo narrates as the mute lifts his head and slices his own throat with the sickle, dying on stage. Although the king notes that something strange is in the atmosphere, saying, "El cielo brama con frequencia horrible, / La tierra treme monstruosamente" (Cueva 222), not much attention is paid by the other characters on stage. They have the body removed and proceed with the coronation without sparing any time for critical thought regarding the event, which is later identified as an omen. After Licimaco is crowned king, a second, even more foreboding figure appears: the "Figura del Reyno." The figure is pierced through by a sword. Unlike the mute, the

Kingdom speaks at length and explains that the sword through his chest due to the decision to let Licimaco ascend to power. He then goes on to explain the appearance of the mute, who tore the book to symbolize the violation of law that comes with the prince's rule and cut his throat to show that the head of all the wrongdoings in the kingdom, the prince, would fall (Cueva 232). These figures highlight they play's return to the notion of fate and predestination as a core principle. Both the actions of the mute and the words of the Kingdom are prophetic and signal towards the prince's downfall. These far-seeing figures are the continuation of the Fury and the Fates from the comedy; Alecto and the Fates ensure the murder of Eliodora, which begins the long process towards the prince's downfall as foretold by the mute and the figure of the kingdom. These fated occurrences, the touchstones of the plot, reinforce the political message that drives the play and the reliance of that message on truth and an unquestionable historical reality.

Had the king or any of the grandees acted on the information provided to them by the ghosts in the comedy, the cruelty of the prince in the tragedy would have been blocked (even before the apparition of the Kingdom, the prince has reportedly had two pages killed for minor offenses and in grotesque ways). This pair of plays therefore surely makes the argument that truth and morality must be prioritized over political gains, but the comedy in particular also advocates for the conjuring of and communication with ghosts—or the past—as a vehicle for discovering that truth. The ghosts are a vital piece of understanding historical reality. This function cannot coexist with a ghost who is of dubious reality; in order to be regarded as omniscient and telling an absolute truth, the ghost must be wholly believed and therefore cannot exist in a space of uncertainty. Although Cueva begins to explore the possible challenges to the nature of reality that the ghosts' contradictions allow for, he ultimately chooses to represent the

ghosts as absolute truth because it is what will best serve his political purpose. The king and grandees must confront the truth of who the prince is and what he's done, as revealed to them by the ghosts of the very people he has victimized, and then they must choose to endorse the prince's rise to the throne anyway. In doing this, they believe that they are protecting the monarchy and the state but are in essence proving the point that Cueva aims to make: morality and justice are more important than politics.

The ghosts' brief deviation from absolute truth must therefore be abandoned to support the plot's advancement in line with the desires and predictions of the Fury, the Fates and the supernatural figures from the tragedy. Of all the supernatural figures represented, the ghosts come closest to breaking down the binary of truth and falsehood through their representation, but ultimately Cueva could not reconcile that with the overarching role of supernatural truth-tellers. Through the scenes of tension before the conjuration of the ghosts of Eliodora and Trasildoro, however, he raises a line of inquiry which is never fully resolved, only abandoned. The questions Cueva raises suggest that his use of these figures tends towards one in which supernatural occurrences are not necessarily meant to be taken at face value, though Cueva's supernatural never quite reaches that potential. Still, he takes the first steps towards interrogating the nature of the real only to find that he cannot deconstruct reality at the same time that he stages his political argument. The early and tenuous connection of the ghosts to visibility and reality, however, opens doors for further exploration into this complex relationship. Although Cueva does not take up this debate, other authors of his era will. His work depicts an important intermediary step, a transition from an acceptance of truth towards an uncertain world in which there is, perhaps, no such thing.

Chapter Four: The Stone Ghost in *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*

A ghost exists in an interstitial space between life and death. It is a figure who connects the past to the present by representing a person now gone as if they were still present. A ghost embodies its own absence. *El convidado de piedra*, the tomb effigy made animate and invited to dinner in the final act of *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra*, must therefore be considered a ghostly figure. The statue is of Don Gonzalo, a man who Don Juan, the titular *burlador*, kills in Act II. After Don Juan's mocking encounter with the inanimate effigy, the statue comes "alive" and seeks out Don Juan in order to mete out a punishment for the latter's sins and misbehavior throughout the length of the play. In fact, he is the only character able to punish Don Juan's famous sins of seduction,[22] ultimately killing the protagonist and consigning him to hell by enveloping him in a consuming flame, precisely because of the ghost's occupation of the space between the realm of the living and the realm of the dead. The Stone Guest, who is both human and otherworldly, enacts both a deeply human and undeniably divine punishment when he ends Don Juan's life.

[22] Whether the term "seduction" is appropriate in the four cases outlined in the play is a matter of some debate. Don Juan himself uses the term "burlar," acknowledging that the women are deceived or tricked into consenting. This has led some critics to label the encounters as rapes; Daniel Baldellou Monclús has written more extensively on the topic, while Frank Casa, Gemma Gómez Rubio, Giuseppi di Stefano and Stacey L. Parker Aronson have all called the encounters rapes, *violaciones* or *estupros*. I will on occasion use the term "seduce" or "seduction" to describe Don Juan's *burlas*, but in doing so I continue to acknowledge the complexity of applying that term to this play.

The battling elements of Don Juan's death scene —such as the supernatural figure with his seemingly magic flame and the base humanity of vengeance for personal affronts— contribute to the critical discussion of the role of free will and divine control in the lives of men, a theological debate that occupied the turn of the 16th century in Spain.[23] While the human elements of Don Juan's death suggest that he is suffering the natural consequences of his freely-willed actions, the supernatural elements suggest that his downfall has been predetermined by God. The Stone Guest demonstrates divine control by intervening supernaturally on behalf of God and taking salvation out of Don Juan's hands, while simultaneously demonstrating through his personal connection to Don Juan that Don Juan has caused his own demise.

The Protestant Reformation and the Catholic response to it created a space for the *de auxiliis* controversy, which Alfred J. Freddoso calls "one of the most tumultuous intramural doctrinal disputes in Catholic intellectual history" (vii). The dispute revolved around the question of free will when posed against the doctrines of divine providence, grace, and foreknowledge. The essential question, put simply, was if man had the free will to choose divine grace or if divine providence protected only some, with an understanding that others were destined to fall out of God's grace. Although there were several points of view on the reconciliation of free will and divine control, the two that dominated the discourse were represented by Luis de Molina, a Jesuit who championed man's freedom to make the choices that would lead to his salvation, and Domingo Báñez, a Dominican who believed in a Thomist ideology wherein salvation is out of the control of man and that any who is destined to receive grace can never drift from God. Near

[23] While this debate is by no means limited to the Golden Age nor does it emerge for the first time during this period, it became a point of particular interest to many theologians and the focus of a series of debates that contribute to the much longer Christian consideration of an individual's free will.

the end of the 16th centuty, the *Congregatio de Auxiliis* was commissioned by Pope Clement VIII to settle the controversy. Despite decades of reports, debates, and conferences held in the presence of Clement VIII and Paul V, an agreement on the reconciliation of free will and divine grace was never reached; rather, the debates were put to an end in 1607 with no true solution (Astrain).

El burlador de Sevilla, published in the decades following the *Congregatio de Auxiliis*,[24] touches on many of the same questions that arose in those debates. To situate the play in the context of the controversy, a Thomist reading would understand that Don Juan is already consigned to hell before the opening of the play, while in a Molinist interpretation, Don Juan condemns himself by repeatedly making the decision to sin. Much like the debates of the *de auxiliis* controversy, this play does not conclude that either doctrinal interpretation is correct but rather allows for both interpretations simultaneously.

The role of free will and divine grace in this play have long fascinated critics, perhaps because, in the words of Charles Presburg, "What one detects in the theology informing *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* is the desire to avoid opting for one side or the other in the Thomist–Molinist debate" (237). By remaining ambiguous, the play has sparked contradictory arguments in a long critical dialogue. The issue of the Thomist–Molinist debate has, of course, been studied extensively and primarily in relation to the figure of Don Juan himself, the protagonist. Far less frequently examined, however, is the role of the Stone Guest in the debate. Although he occupies less space in the text than Don Juan, Don Gonzalo's role is fundamental, as is reflected in his too-often overlooked representation in the play's title. While

[24] Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez dates the play between 1616–1625.

Don Juan's death is the major event that defines the play's perspective on the *de auxiliis* controversy, Don Gonzalo, as the operating agent of that death, is a key contributor. His presence and his actions create the space for conflicting interpretations of free will and predetermination and position him as an essential figure in the understanding of the play's theology.

The Stone Guest's status as a ghost is critical to an understanding of his role, precisely because it is his undead state that allows him to operate within both natural and supernatural realms of justice. Even before it is animated, the tomb effigy functions as a bridge from life to death by representing the body of the dead in the world of the living. This overlapping of life and death allows the statue, once made sentient, to be defined as a ghost, albeit an unusual one. It is crucial to recognize the contradictory status – alive and dead – that is inherent in ghosts and is also undisputable in the Stone Guest, because it is precisely his existence in the interstitial space of ghosts that allows him to function in the way that he does. His dual role in Don Juan's death, as both a revenge-seeking human victim and as the embodiment of the hand of God, positions him on each opposing side of the Thomist–Molinist debate simultaneously. He is a figure who is therefore essential to a complete understanding of the way in which this play tackles the debate; the Stone Guest's role in the discourse forces the question of whether or not man can determine his own destiny.

Tirso's ghost represents a *contradiction* of identity rather than an ambiguity; that is, his identity is not unknown (instead, it is fundamental to his character), but he is two figures at once: Don Gonzalo and the Stone Guest. Don Gonzalo is a living man with personal connections to the human world, while the Stone Guest is a supernatural agent of God. These dual identities afford him dual purposes: his identity as Don Gonzalo, a victim of Don Juan, indicates that his purpose is personal and revenge-driven, while his acknowledgement of his divine role suggests that Don

Juan's death has been predetermined by forces beyond humanity's control. The various forces at play in Don Juan's death scene lead Presburg to conclude: "The facile, yet accurate, answer is that the natural and supernatural spheres of justice are made to converge in the persona of Don Juan" (235). The same can be said of Don Gonzalo, who becomes something of a foil to Don Juan in their final scenes together. While Don Juan suffers the results of the convergence of dual justices, Don Gonzalo imparts them. He is, in fact, the most appropriate character to do so precisely because of his ghostly status. Since the ghost exists in interstitial spaces, in this case, between the world of the living and the world of the dead, it is allowed some limited access to each extreme. Don Gonzalo is therefore able to function as a representative of the living world and the otherworld simultaneously. This position is unique to him and these two opposing worlds could not coexist in any character other than a ghost or undead figure.

Tirso's story of Don Juan is, like many Golden Age plays, not an entirely original creation. The character of Don Juan and the tale of his transgressions have a firm background in folklore, as has been explored by Francisco Fernández-Turienzo, Ramón Menéndez-Pidal, Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Víctor Said Armesto and others. The action of the play's denouement and the figure of the Stone Guest are likewise rooted in folklore and ballads.[25] *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* represents a synthesis of several different folkloric

[25] Menéndez-Pidal describes a rich history of folklore surrounding the mocking invitation of a skull, rather than a statue, which gives way to diverse endings. He encounters tales in England, France, Portugal, Germany, Denmark and Italy and describes endings in which the mocking young man is killed, in which he is carried by the deceased into another world and returned to Earth thousands of years later, in which he enjoys a raucous banquet with ghosts, and in which he escapes the world of the dead thanks to religious rituals or relics (106-107)

plots—the Don Juan tale and the tale of the Stone Guest— combined into a single play.[26] By weaving the tale of a *burlador* seducer and supernatural punishment of a transgressor, Tirso creates a new narrative that uniquely allows for his exploration of consequence and salvation.

In Tirso's version, the legendary Don Juan moves from city to city, seducing young women with the promise of marriage only to leave them dishonored. He is pushed to murder when Don Gonzalo, the father of his third victim, confronts him about his crimes. He kills Don Gonzalo and moves on, unrepentant. His actions disrupt societal order as well as religious morality, leaving space for both the human (societal) and supernatural (religious) resolutions that we see unfold in the final act of the play. As Don Juan and his servant Catalinón pass through a graveyard in Act IV, they come across Don Gonzalo's tomb. Don Juan tugs the statue's beard and mockingly invites him to dinner. What was meant to be nothing more than a joke at the expense of the dead man, however, becomes something much more sinister when the statue arrives at Don Juan's home. At the end of their meal, the Stone Guest reciprocates the invitation and Don Juan, fearing that he will be regarded as a coward if he does not follow through, visits Don Gonzalo's tomb the following night to dine with the Stone Guest. At the end of their second meal together, the Stone Guest accomplishes what the human system of justice could not; he punishes Don Juan for his crimes by offering his hand. When Don Juan takes it, he is consumed in a supernatural fire that burns him from within. Both in life and after, Don Gonzalo functions as an antithesis to Don Juan. He imposes order on Don Juan's chaos, albeit only successfully

[26] Although it does not originate the myth, Fernández-Turienzo argues that *El burlador de Sevilla* elevates the tale to the status of legend, since, as he says, "El drama, no la leyenda ni la estatua, es lo que alcanzó valor y significado trascendente por obra de su autor" (274). It is Tirso's version, haunted and influenced by the previous folkloric versions of its plot, that will go on to influence future Don Juan tales.

after his life has ended. What is more, each of the men reciprocates the other's actions; Don Juan kills Don Gonzalo and is later killed by him; he invites the Stone Guest to dinner and is later invited by him. Their juxtaposition and conflictive relationship, which are echoed in the dichotomies of sin versus morality and chaos versus order that the figures represent, are the foundation of the play's resolution; in the climactic moments, Don Gonzalo resolves all the chaos caused by Don Juan on Earth as well as the moral conflict of his actions.

The scene in which Don Juan dies addresses both the human and the divine in turn. Don Gonzalo mentions both God's influence and Don Juan's free will just after Don Juan begins to burn alive:

> Este es poco
> para el fuego que buscaste.
> Las maravillas de Dios
> son, Don Juan, investigables,
> y así quiere que tus culpas
> a manos de un muerto pagues;
> y así pagas de esta suerte,
> […….]
> Esta es justicia de Dios,
> quien tal hace, que tal pague. (Tirso 147[27])

The Stone Guest first indicates that Don Juan, through his actions, has caused his own downfall. Further, Don Gonzalo's use of the verb "buscar" suggests that not only did Don Juan bring about his death but that he intentionally sought out the damning fire by participating, actively and

[27] All textual quotes are taken from W.F. Hunter's edition of Tirso's text.

knowingly, in destructive behavior. This idea is reiterated when he reminds Don Juan that, in this moment of agony, he is paying for the specific crimes of having deceived four young women.

However, the Stone Guest is simultaneously sure to include references to divine power, thereby reminding the audience that God has always been in control and that Don Juan may have been destined to fall from grace. He calls God's marvels "investigables," a term which Alfredo Rodríguez López-Vázquez unpacks in the footnotes to his edition of Tirso's text, pointing out that "investigable" would have had a different definition in Tirso's time, meaning something closer to "inscrutable" or "unknowable" rather than "able to be investigated" (Tirso edited by Rodríguez López-Vázquez 300). By highlighting the mysteries of God's power over the lives of men, the Stone Guest re-centers the conversation about free will onto the marvels of God. One of the greatest criticisms of a Molinist ideology of free will is precisely that it minimizes the power and influence of God; by stating here that God's marvels are outside man's realm of understanding, the Stone Guest returns power to divinity, reminding Don Juan and the play's audience that God will always have the final word and that humanity may never understand His reasons and intentions.

Although the Stone Guest reminds Don Juan of God's influence in his life, his message ultimately appears to be that Don Juan sought out his own destruction and that his tricks have brought about his death, which supports the Molinist interpretation that free will determines one's salvation. In this reading of the play, Don Juan is condemned to hell because he has behaved in a way that denies him divine grace. Not only has he sinned, but he has done so with the knowledge that his actions have been immoral and with an abiding belief that he will be able to repent at a time of his choosing (always later). Catalinón has served as his conscience, continually urging Don Juan to make more honorable decisions. Don Juan, however, ignores

him, proving that he misbehaves for sport and that he "has a misplaced faith in the limits of redemption" (Friedman 62). He believes, as Molinists do, that he is in charge of his own salvation and may act as he pleases as long as he asks for forgiveness at some point before his death. This proves untrue, as in his final, painful moments Don Juan begs to confess and be absolved and is rebuffed: "No hay lugar; ya acuerdas tarde" (Tirso 148). This moment complicates the Molinist reading of the text by proving that Don Juan is not, in fact, in control of his own salvation. Don Gonzalo's assertion that it is too late to confess demonstrates that Don Juan's excessive belief in his own free will is misguided.

Don Gonzalo's statements leave space for the audience to question the extent of Don Juan's culpability. The Stone Guest specifically indicates that it is too late for Don Juan to seek redemption when he is mere moments from death, begging the question of when he would have had to confess in order to ensure his salvation, if salvation were a possibility for him at all. Don Juan has committed mortal sins that separate him from God's saving grace, and, although he is continually reminded that he must confess and repent in order to reconcile with God, he refuses to, spurning the only ritual that might have saved him. By forgiving prior sins, the sacrament of confession effectively silences them and allows the confessor to regain the grace of God. The sins of the past are therefore erased, allowing now for the possibility of the salvation of the sinner.

Although Don Juan refuses to confess, he has done everything else in his power to avoid the consequences of his actions by literally leaving each moral failure behind him as he moves from one city to the next. He is aware that his actions represent a miscarriage of societal and moral norms, but he does not want to take the necessary steps—as outlined by the religious system that dominates his society—to correct his own behavior and to absolve himself. Instead,

he looks for what appears to him to be a more convenient solution: flight, and the promise that he will confess later.

However, his encounter with Stone Guest prevents him from truly separating his past from the present. Daniel Rogers calls the statue "a powerful dramatic symbol for the reappearance before Don Juan of what he believed (or vaguely hoped) he had left behind him" (156). As I have stated, the tomb effigy always functions as a connection of past to present and of death to life; similarly, a ghost is inevitably a figure out of the past who is made present, both in time and in space. The (re)animation of the tomb effigy of Don Gonzalo represents an ongoing, living past which exists within the present; the Stone Guest is, for Don Juan, the past catching up with him. This past, it must also be stated, is not past at all but is actually simultaneously present. It is dynamic and new, exercising direct influence over the events of Don Juan's present and future.

Confession is the only framework by which Don Juan might have avoided evoking the Stone Guest, but Don Juan paradoxically refuses to participate in the sacrament while also placing too much trust in its power and his ability to manipulate it. If ghosts return to settle unfinished business, then Don Gonzalo appears as the Stone Guest due to both an unresolved personal conflict with Don Juan, his killer, and, on a larger scale, Don Juan's religious debt of penance and forgiveness. He believes that it will be sufficient to confess and repent in his final moments, though this confidence is, of course, proven to be misplaced. While the timely and sincere employment of the sacrament of penance would lay to rest Don Juan's unscrupulous deeds, his refusal to abide by the Christian morality that underpins society means that his past, and the figures from it, live on. Don Juan's refusal to repent creates the ghost of Don Gonzalo,

meaning that Don Juan himself brings the Stone Guest to life through his actions and his abstinence from the religious rituals that govern society.

In many ways, this ghost is a symptom of Don Juan's failure to confess. He is a manifestation of what was left undone and unsaid. This refusal is an issue of timeliness. In fact, he does not necessarily *refuse* to confess, but rather he insists time and time again that he will do so later. His refrain, "tan largo me lo fiáis," is, at its core, a temporal expression. The unfinished business that the ghost represents is left undone because Don Juan's life is cut short before he makes the choice to confess and resolve his past misdeeds. However, it is not only time that works against Don Juan. In addition to temporality, his intentions are at question. Moreover, the two issues appear to be deeply linked; the fact that Don Juan puts off his confession indicates some lack of sincere remorse for his deficiencies. When he does ultimately attempt to confess, just before his death, he is denied salvation based on his failure to have confessed *in time*, with this notion of timeliness suggesting some amount of true and honest morality.

Further contributing to the notion of temporality and intentionality of confession is Don Gonzalo's definition of God's justice, repeated once in the quote above and again as he and Don Juan sink into the ground. He says: "Esta es justicia de Dios, / quien tal hace, tal pague" (Tirso 147 and 148). This characterization of divine justice explains that God decides to save or punish man based on his actions, including his repentance and remorse regarding any sins committed. Further, the reader or viewer of the play must understand that man's actions matter to an extent, but that choosing salvation is not an infinitely available option. Don Juan is provided with ample opportunity to choose salvation but only attempts to do so after he has begun to suffer the consequences of his behavior; once again we may infer an insincerity to his confession. His condemnation serves as a warning against an extreme Molinist ideology; man cannot choose

salvation at any moment, but rather he must choose salvation via remorse and repentance in accordance with God's predetermined timeline. It is arrogance that allows Don Juan to believe that he may control his own timeline of confession; the structure of his life and his salvation is not under his purview but rather is under God's. Mario Trubiano describes the play's re-centering of God in man's life thus:

> En *El burlador de Sevilla* Tirso se propone restablecer a Dios como centro y meta de la existencia del hombre… En el ámbito cristiano, esto significaría la reafirmación de que el alma humana, con la gracia divina y su libre albedrío, queda todavía regida por un orden moral pre-establecido por Dios, de quien depende y ante quien tendrá que responder inevitablemente. (204)

While Tirso's play undoubtedly demonstrates that free will and actions determine whether or not a person is granted divine grace, Trubiano points out that it also reminds its readers and viewers that grace is ultimately granted by God. In other words, free will must operate within God's predetermined framework for acceptable and moral behavior. Trubiano's reading falls in a middle ground between Thomist and Molinist interpretations and deftly navigates the contradictions of the debate. The existence of a whole spectrum of understandings complicates a didactic reading in which the play instructs its audience on proper, moral behavior.

When examining the question of Don Juan's behavior, the issue of culpability must necessarily come into play. If Don Juan's actions are what cause his downfall, then he is to blame for the events of his death. Don Gonzalo's appearance as the Stone Guest is a direct response to Don Juan's exploits, perhaps most demonstrably in that he returns in order to punish Don Juan. More importantly, the Stone Guest's intervention on behalf of divine justice comes only *after* the human system has been incapable of adequately controlling or punishing Don

Juan. Arias notes that, "the textual portrayal of an ineffectual king precludes the possibility of a judicial solution to the crisis" (367), leaving divine intervention as the only possibility for Don Juan to encounter true consequences. The intervention is therefore *reactive* instead of proactive, which suggests that Don Juan and his actions, and therefore his free will, are responsible for the appearance of the ghost.

Don Juan's culpability is also made clear in his provocation of Don Gonzalo's statue. Don Juan initiates his interactions with the Stone Guest by tugging on the statue's beard and mockingly inviting him to dinner. Although Don Juan's invitation was meant as a mockery of the dead man, it serves as the first of the double invitation that will be employed in the play's climax.[28] Don Juan's initial insult and jeering invitation of the Stone Guest serves as the catalyst for his demise. Not only does he instigate in his the encounter with the Stone Guest, but he also repeatedly chooses to draw out his interactions with the statue, most notably by insisting that he must follow through on the Stone Guest's return invitation and, in what is perhaps the most pivotal moment of their encounter, by taking the Stone Guest's offered hand, becoming engulfed in a supernatural flame as a result.

Don Juan's choice to proceed despite several warnings not to is widely regarded as evidence that he causes his own death. As Don Juan and Catalinón approach the tomb where they are to dine with the Stone Guest on the second night, Catalinón urges his companion to

[28] Dorothy MacKay defines the folklore of the double invitation as consisting of three parts: "(1) The supper invitation of a living man to one dead, which involves and insult; (2) The appearance of the dead man at his host's supper, and his return invitation; (3) The appearance of the living man at his rendezvous with the dead and his punishment or warning" (11). MacKay shows that the double invitation folklore clearly includes *El burlador de Sevilla*, as well as a number of ballads and tales from across Europe.

reject the invitation and proceed, instead, to his planned wedding. Don Juan insists that he has given his word, and Rogers has noted the irony "whereby one who has lived by breaking his word dies through his unprecedented determination to keep it" (155), observing, additionally, that Don Juan does so in the interest of protecting his own reputation rather than in service to others. It is the same motivation that leads him to take the statue's hand when offered; the Stone Guest asks Don Juan to give him his hand, saying "no temas; la mano dame" (Tirso 147) and it is the implication of fear that Don Juan latches onto and intends to disprove, taking the statue's hand to demonstrate his valor. When he burns, therefore, it is due to his own vanity and pride and his own repeated and determined choices.

All this, however, devalues the role of the ghost in Don Juan's death. While Don Juan does clearly participate in his own damnation, and perhaps even holds the primary responsibility, he does not act alone. The *double* invitation in this play demonstrates a certain reciprocity or mutuality which underlies Don Juan's relationship to the Stone Guest. While the Stone Guest, as his moniker indicates, was initially the invitee, by then inviting Don Juan to dine with him he exercises agency and takes control of the encounter. It is also perhaps worth noting that his invitation ensures that Don Juan takes the role of the guest for his final moments; correspondingly, as has been remarked by Rogers, Don Juan is a guest for each of his four seductions throughout the play. It is therefore not merely his status as a guest that victimizes Don Juan, since he has repeatedly demonstrated his ability to manipulate from that position. Instead, it is Don Juan's discomfort and fear that put him off guard and diminish his authority in relationship to the figure of Don Gonzalo. Don Juan's subordination in this final scene weakens his actions; although he still operates with free will, the power dynamic has shifted, and he is no longer the brash, arrogant trickster we have seen throughout the rest of the play. While the

audience knows Don Juan to be an instigator who has initiated four seductions and even the invitation of the statue of Don Gonzalo, in his final scene he is reactive. The reversal in this scene alone is not cause to discount Don Juan's free will entirely, but the Stone Guest's active role in Don Juan's death destabilizes free will's power and provides credence to the notion of predetermination. Because Don Gonzalo's undead form inherently embodies contradiction, his representation is a fitting space for the exploration of the contradictions of the *de auxiliis* debate.

The Stone Guest is an embodied representation of the overlap between the human and supernatural spheres. When he tells Don Juan that God wants him to pay for his sins at the hand of a dead man (as cited above), he asserts both his supernatural connection to the divine and his former existence as a living man. Not only does he make this verbal reminder, but he is also a figure who has taken the stage as both a living character and as a dead one; the audience is given the chance to see him in life, to witness his death, and then to see his return as an undead statue. His connection to life is therefore tangible to the audience. This duality of Don Gonzalo's staged representation clearly marks his body as first natural and then supernatural, creating a visual connection to both realms in which he operates.

Furthermore, Don Juan kills Don Gonzalo on stage directly before the audience, making him a victim of the protagonist. This victimhood allows for Don Gonzalo's return to be motivated by vengeance; in fact, his desire for revenge is acknowledged on his tomb: "Aquí aguarda del Señor / el más leal caballero / la venganza de un traidor" (Tirso 116). Further, the nature of his death, which occurred as he attempted to protect his family's honor, places Don Gonzalo's actions firmly within the structure of society's code of honor. Vengeance is not only a deeply personal motivation but also, as Judith Arias points out, one that complicates traditional interpretations of the Stone Guest as a representation of God. Arias notes:

> The fire raging within the statue is metaphorically a desire for vengeance so terrible and omnipotent that it survives death itself… He represents the unchristian desire for revenge which consumes each of Don Juan's victims as they gather at the palace and which is, moreover deeply ingrained not only in the seventeenth-century Spanish society but in the human community of all times and places. (371)

For Arias, vengeance is the driving force that has created the ghost; the Stone Guest returns specifically to punish Don Juan for the crimes he committed against Don Gonzalo personally.[29] Arias also acknowledges the desire for vengeance as a *human* trait which reflects Don Gonzalo's connection to the living world, even after death. Moreover, she recognizes that vengeance is base and "unchristian," thereby arguing that the statue's desire for vengeance is proof that his intervention cannot be a reflection of God's will. She also cites the fact that Don Gonzalo is consumed by the unholy fire that devours Don Juan as evidence that God punishes both men in the end. Her emphasis on the omnipotence of revenge overlooks the importance of the symbolic representation of human vengeance that is embodied in Don Gonzalo's return as the Stone Guest.

His interest in personal vengeance is not his only human motivation; Don Gonzalo's return also serves as a resolution for all the chaos that Don Juan has wreaked on the purity of the four women whom he has betrayed. In fact, Don Gonzalo dies believing that Don Juan has

[29] A unique aspect of this ghost's appearance is the fact that he is directly responsible for the death of a living character; while other ghosts I have examined have prophesied the deaths of the living, Don Gonzalo is the only one to *cause* that death. This certainly marks him as the most vengeful of the ghosts I study, but vengeance is by no means the entirety of his purpose and motivation.

dishonored him by seducing his daughter.[30] In death, however, he manages not only to expunge the stain on his own family's honor but also on that of Don Juan's other victims. By killing Don Juan, Don Gonzalo makes widows of Don Juan's seducees, which allows for the dramatic resolution of the play in the arrangement of their next marriages. In addition to being the only satisfactory resolution to the dramatic action – since it would have been impossible for Don Juan to marry all four of the women had he lived, leaving three of them dishonored – Don Juan's death also restores societal order and provides justice. As the titular *burlador* or trickster, Don Juan is the antithesis to order; as Bruce Wardropper notes, "*Burlas* are contrived *engaños*, the opposite of *veras*" (61). Don Juan's *burlas*, which he seems to conduct to entertain himself, undermine the possibility for an ordered and structured world in which truth and reality are objective or stable.

Because Don Juan's status as a *burlador* positions him opposite of truth, the ghost figure who punishes him must restore order. The Stone Guest functions from a position of authority or certainty, insofar as he allows for the reestablishment of order after Don Juan causes chaos. A sense of tension exists between the uncertain world and predetermination, and Don Gonzalo represents both sides of the interplay as Tirso allows the conflict to take a central role. The Stone Guest questions reality by interrogating the concept of free will versus predetermination and

[30] Whether or not Ana was seduced is a matter of some debate. Don Juan will insist in his death scene that Ana understood his trick early on and was never dishonored. However, Vicente Cabrera posits Don Juan's statement to be a lie, arguing that Ana was indeed seduced (Citation). Don Juan must be regarded as unreliable in his statement, as it is possible that he would lie in an attempt to save his life, but this is also an instance in which the truth does not matter as much as what the characters believe to be true. Don Gonzalo is motivated to kill Don Juan by his belief that Ana was seduced and his family's honor has been lost; as long as he believes this to be true, he will react accordingly. In this way, what he believes to be true in some way becomes the truth.

man's role in his own salvation. The appearance of the Stone Guest plays into the anxiety regarding human experience; in these scenes, man is uncertain of his role and purpose. The audience must wonder if our choices and our actions matter and to what extent God exercises control in our lives.

Somewhat paradoxically, Mario Trubiano calls Don Juan himself a "forma fantasmal" (204), because he refers to himself as a man without a name who operates primarily at night. Both of these characteristics, which Trubiano recognizes as ghostly, aid him in his *burlas*; Trubiano thereby establishes a thematic connection between what we typically think of as ghostly behavior and the *engaño* or *burla*. Meanwhile, while Don Gonzalo's apparition does operate only at night, he remains firmly tied to his name and identity. Thus, Don Juan's ghostliness, albeit limited and entirely metaphorical, is countered by the solidity and identity of the Stone Guest, who represents the restoration of order. Trubiano's characterization of ghostly traits is incompatible with the true ghost of this play, indicating that, at the time of this play's publication, the ghost is not yet defined as a figure of ambiguity, at least not in terms of presence or existence. Instead, the Stone Guest reveals merely the beginnings of the potential for uncertainty which will be strengthened in other ghosts represented during this period.[31]

The resolution of this play must occur at several different levels; both the problems that Don Juan has caused on Earth and the moral problem of his failure to confess must be addressed

[31] The *sombra* that appears in Lope de Vega's *El caballero de Olmedo* demonstrates exemplary ghostly ambiguity, as it almost entirely avoids categorization or identification. The primary interpretations of the shadow figure are as an omen of the protagonist's death, with the ghost acting as a sort of vision of the future and the ghost that Don Alonso will become, and as a figment of the protagonist's imagination. This ghost figure is therefore not even determinedly extant, deeply rooting it in a space of uncertainty and ambiguity.

by the conclusion. Don Juan's seductions are a transgression within the complex honor system that governs Spanish society. By seducing four women, Don Juan has ruined not only their honor but also that of their families. As the father of one of the dishonored women, Don Gonzalo is pressured by the same system of honor to murder Don Juan. It is worth noting that the murder committed by Don Gonzalo is unique within the canon of Golden Age ghosts. While other undead figures have prophesied the deaths of the living,[32] Don Gonzalo is the only one to directly cause that death. Don Gonzalo's murder of Don Juan is necessary and incredibly *human*; through this action, he is able to resolve the societal problem of the offense to his family's honor.

On the other hand, the moral problem of Don Juan's refusal of confession is a religious affront which must be resolved supernaturally. He believes that his confession and penance can be continually postponed and then, in the moment before his death, he begs for forgiveness, attempting to make use of the very ritual he had repeatedly declined to observe. Don Juan's self-serving attempt to confess only when it will benefit him represents an arrogant devaluation and de-prioritization of God's will. It is therefore only fitting that the Stone Guest declare his condemnation of Don Juan to be "justicia de Dios" and that he be regarded as God's advocate.

Don Gonzalo, as both the father of the dishonored Ana and the supernatural Stone Guest, is the only figure able to tie up these multiple loose ends with a single knot. His appearance provides the resolution for the chaos that Don Juan has caused in the honor system as well as for the affront to divine influence caused by his refusal to confess. His status as a ghost—that is, as a figure caught between life and death—is fundamental to his ability to enact both human

[32] The *sombra* of El *caballero de Olmedo*, as described in a previous footnote, the undead corpse revived in Cervantes' *La Numancia* and the ghosts called up from purgatory in Juan de la Cueva's *La constancia de Arcelina* are three examples among many.

vengeance and divine justice simultaneously. His ghostliness, therefore, is also fundamental to the play's tackling of the Thomist–Molinist debate, since Don Gonzalo's resolution of human justice supports an argument for a Molinist interpretation of the role of free will in man's life and salvation, while his representation of divine justice supports the Thomist interpretation. Because Don Gonzalo's undead form inherently embodies contradiction, his representation is the most fitting space for the exploration of the contradictions of the *de auxiliis* controversy that was prevalent in religious discourse at the turn of the 17th century. His ghostliness, albeit made of stone, is an essential actor in Tirso's exploration of man's role in his own salvation and, therefore, in the contemporary world.

Chapter Five: Phantom Fear in *El caballero de Olmedo*

Alone on the road late at night, Alonso, the protagonist of Lope de Vega's play *El caballero de Olmedo*,[33] encounters a frightening figure with an uncertain identity and purpose. The figure is a *sombra* – a shadow – and not even certainly human, who introduces himself as "Don Alonso," the protagonist's own ghost. Alonso's state of mind at the time of the ghost's appearance suggests that it is perhaps only a figment of his imagination, indicating that his perception is not a reliable reflection of reality. However, it is also possible that the ghost is a brief glimpse of the future, an omen of death that suggests that Alonso is, in effect, already dead. This understanding indicates that Alonso's demise is predestined and that a certain structure and order underpins all human lives.

These two interpretations of the ghost are at odds with each other as the latter cannot represent a concept of true reality beyond the scope of human understanding if it is only a figment of Alonso's imagination. One allows for a reality that is both controlled and predetermined while the other presents reality as malleable and individually-constructed. This apparent contradiction indicates both a desire to believe in an ordered world and an underlying fear that true meaning and objective reality do not exist. If we believe that the ghost is objectively real – that is, that it exists outside of Alonso's perception – then we can maintain our belief in the structured world. If we believe that the ghost is Alonso's imagination or fear causing

[33] The date of composition of this play is unknown. One study situates it between 1620 and 1625 (Morley and Bruerton 180). A later study compiles a variety different sources for the date of this play and concludes that it was likely written in either 1621 or 1623 (Arellano 95).

him to see what is not there, then we accept that each person perceives the world differently, that what we believe to be real may not be, and that, in fact, a singular truth does not exist.

The shadow encountered by Alonso can be understood in two different ways: either as internal or external to Alonso's imagination. The vision might appear as a figure sent to Alonso supernaturally by some external force, perhaps by the Celestinesque Fabia, a witch-cum-matchmaker with somewhat dubious supernatural ability.[34] Alonso wonders if Fabia sent the ghost – and the singing *labrador* who appears shortly after – in order to dissuade him from making the trip home. He believes that Fabia might be operating at his beloved Inés's urging, since the latter has already indicated that she does not want to be parted from Alonso. If this is the case, the ghost is a supernatural figure summoned by the witch. The summoning of ghosts by magicians and witches is a common occurrence in Golden Age theater, as we have witnessed in *La Numancia* and *Arcelina,* and without fail when the ghost is called upon it is for the purpose of divination. By virtue of existing beyond the sphere of human life, the dead are imagined to have access to knowledge of all of space and time simultaneously. When humans are desperately curious about their futures, they call upon the ghosts to bridge the space between life and afterlife and to bring their undead omniscience into the living world. Here, unlike in the other plays with scenes of summoning that I have cited above, the one who summons the ghost is not the receiver of its advice or warning, and so Alonso is unaware of the potential role of the ghost. The ghost also fails to provide explicit prophecy, as is typically done, opening up a space of ambiguity that the shadowy figure occupies.

[34] Comparisons between Fernando de Rojas's *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* and *El caballero de Olmedo* are abundant; see, in particular Marcel Bataillon.

Alonso also considers that the ghost could be a warning from heaven; instead of being sent to him by another person, it could be an omen and an indication that future events are somehow prognosticated but also at least potentially avoidable. This interpretation of the ghost as appearing unsummoned is not unprecedented; we have seen a ghost of this type in *El burlador de Sevilla,* and others exist in works such as Calderón de la Barca's *El príncipe constante* and in the collaboration between Luis de Belmonte Bermúdez, Francisco de Rojas Zorilla, and Calderón, *El mejor amigo el muerto*. The appearance of an unsummoned ghost eliminates the element of human agency in the appearance of the undead. Instead, these ghosts represent an uncontrollable supernatural, and not only that, but also a supernatural that is able to exercise great influence on the human world without the knowledge or consent of those mortals involved. This reinforces the notion of a structured universe where events are predestined, and it simultaneously undermines the ability of humanity to control or even to understand their environment. In other words, the world is ordered and events are predetermined, but not by us.

Alternatively, it might be an externalization of Alonso's fear and melancholy, an imaginary projection that does not truly exist outside of Alonso's experience. Alonso considers this possibility as well, calling the apparition the imagination of a sad man; he implies that his own fear and sadness could have created a phantom outside of his body and yet inside of his mind. The shadow, then, would represent a fault in Alonso's perception of the world. Critics have supported the different explanations to varying degrees and are rather divided in their opinions as to the origins of the figure. Francisco Rico, for example, asserts that the ghost was sent by Fabia (47), and Helmy Giacoman agrees (16), while José María Ruano de la Haza believes it is a figment of Alonso's imagination (49), with which Everett Hesse agrees (63), and Gwynne Edwards attributes it to melancholy (287). It is worth noting that critics such as Alice

Schafer, Diego Bastianutti, and Diego Marín, whose work I rely on for this chapter, acknowledge and embrace the ambiguity of the figure and its indeterminate origin. Here I want to claim that the origin of the ghost cannot be divorced from its purpose and relationship to reality, so these diverse points of view regarding the nature of the phantom are important to engage with, as they indicate his tenuous connection to the so-called real world.

The differing implications of the varied explanations for the ghost's appearance bear consideration. If it is a projection of Alonso's emotions, then it is not, strictly speaking, real, but rather imagined. If it has been sent by Fabia or by some otherworldly force, then it is a figure whose reality is external to Alonso; it is no longer imagined, but rather more objectively extant in the material world, since it exists outside the mind of Alonso. These two distinct possibilities create a contradiction; both cannot be true at the same time, and neither can be certain while the other remains a possibility. The ghost is a figure that depends on interpretation; it is ambiguous and therefore incomplete. The audience must "complete" the figure by determining if they believe it to be real or not, thereby providing the missing elements of a full understanding of the ghost's role in the play. Alonso models the same debate that the audience is guided to have, considering the various possible understandings of the figure (although, importantly, Alonso does not come to a final conclusion that could cement one interpretation as the truest). That different readers or viewers may disagree on the origin of the ghost after engaging with the same work reiterates the malleability of reality as presented here on the stage. The coexistence of various explanations positions the ghost in an overlapping, interstitial space between various possible truths. Because the reality of the figure is interpretive, it is not objective; it is therefore not a real figure, but neither can it be considered to be entirely unreal.

The ghost appears in an already strange and uncertain atmosphere in which Alonso is on-edge and fearful. The dark and gloomy atmosphere of Alonso's encounter with the ghost begins to settle over the stage at the end of Act II, which is, incidentally, the moment when Alonso begins to witness strange omens that anticipate his death. Don Alonso, a knight from Olmedo visiting the city of Medina, has fallen in love with Inés. Inés, despite retuning Alonso's love, is promised to Don Rodrigo. This, of course, pits Don Rodrigo against Don Alonso. Don Rodrigo suspects that Inés prefers Alonso and begins to develop a plot to kill his rival. Both men are slated to participate in a bullfight in Medina, and on the morning of the festivities, Alonso begins to feel a profound sense of unease. He awakens from a dream, which he does not describe, and steps outside to see a goldfinch killed in midair by a hawk. This is the first of three omens. It is clear that Alonso is represented by the goldfinch struck down mid-flight by the hawk that represents Rodrigo.[35]

The sense of unease induced in Alonso—by both his strange but unspecific dream and his observation of the goldfinch and the hawk—is not enough to prevent him from participating in the bull fight, Alonso saves Rodrigo's life by heroically killing the bull after Rodrigo has been thrown from his horse. Alonso then makes his return journey to Olmedo to visit his parents. Rodrigo, jealous of Alonso's heroics and more threatened by him as a romantic rival than ever, resolves to kill Alonso on the ride home. It is at the beginning of that trip that Alonso encounters the shadow-figure. Later, he crosses paths with a laborer who is singing a folksong that describes Alonso's death as if it had already occurred. Each of these three portentous encounters, which

[35] For a complete analysis of the symbolism of the birds and the allegorical nature of this incident, see William McCrary, H. Gaston Hall, or J. W. Sage.

occur at the end of Act II and during Act III, predicts in one way or another Rodrigo's murder of Alonso on the road from Medina to Olmedo.

The interpretation of the *sombra* as a prophecy is informed by the ominous context in which it appears. The sense of dread that characterizes the scene is not created by the figure, but rather preexists, and the atmosphere certainly affects its reception. Not only does it appear in an eerie atmosphere, but its own physical appearance is also mysterious: "Al entrar, una SOMBRA con una mascara negra y sombrero, y puesta la mano en el puño de la espada, se le ponga delante" (Lope 191). This description of a masked shadow depersonalizes the ghost, since it is not an identifiable person but rather simply a figure. Alan Paterson points out that the costuming of the figure is a practical issue; since it introduces itself as Don Alonso, the mask prevents the audience from immediately recognizing that it is not actually a duplicate of the protagonist's actor (134). However, at the same time, the masking of the figure is a deliberate choice that allows for its ambiguity. As Ruano de la Haza notes: "La ambigüedad … subsiste en el texto dramático, pero el director la podría resolver en su texto teatral permitiendo que los espectadores vieran el rostro de lo que Alonso cree ser una sombra" (50). If the figure is not a ghost, removing the mask would reveal that fact. With the figure masked, the audience cannot rule out that it is Don Alonso's double, nor can they confirm it. Instead, it is neither ghost, nor another supernatural figure, nor human, and therefore it can be all at once. It is represented by a human, but this does not necessarily signal its humanity, since in theater every actor must be understood as a stand-in for what they are not. Instead, the ghost is an inscrutable character who appears to an already unsettled protagonist, which reinforces its ambiguity.

Furthermore, the appearance of the ghost is tonally similar to the omens that come both before and after it. All three are somewhat ambiguously supernatural and each affects the fear

and anxiety of the protagonist, heightening his sense of dread as he makes his way home. The shadow's appearance between two other omens has contributed to the understanding that it represents a prognostication of Alonso's future. The similarities between the *sombra* and the *labrador* in particular, both mysterious figures who appear during the journey, may lead to a conflation of the apparitions. Even in the text, Alonso refers to a plural "avisos del cielo" (Lope de Vega 199) as he dies, and the song sung by the *labrador* also pluralizes the reference to the apparition: "sombras le avisaron / que no saliese" (Lope de Vega 196). Leaving aside the implication that the figures were a warning, which Alonso appears to recognize only in hindsight, the pluralization of the word *aviso* implies that the shadow as well as the song were meant as warnings; they serve the same premonitory purpose. However, I must reiterate that the omen of the *sombra* is by no means concrete, and his relationship to the *labrador* is never elaborated. The shadow of Don Alonso is portentous only through its existence, since it does not speak or give any verbal prophecy, and, as I will explore further, its existence is not firmly objective.

Alonso's meeting with the shadow functions as an omen because the figure appears to introduce itself as Don Alonso. When the flesh and blood Alonso asks, "¿Quién es? Hable / … / ¿Es don Rodrigo? ¿No dice / quién es?" (Lope de Vega 191) the *sombra* responds only with, "Don Alonso." Alonso asks the figure to repeat himself and again the *sombra* says "Don Alonso," but no other words are exchanged. It is not even entirely clear that the shadow's words are a direct response and self-identification. They could also merely be an acknowledgement of the man it has encountered.

Still, the ghost has been interpreted as a representation of Alonso's future, that is, of Alonso after his death. Paterson, for example, states: "El don Alonso vivo se encuentra con el

don Alonso en el que se va a convertir: la sombra del caballero anda y seguirá andando el camino entre Medina y Olmedo, como todos los que conocemos la canción bien sabemos" (136). A meeting with Alonso's own ghost is a frightening suggestion that he is already condemned to die, and in fact that his death is so certain that he is, effectively, already dead.

While it is important to acknowledge, as I have above, that Paterson's interpretation may not be "accurate" and is certainly not the only possible interpretation, I also want to explore the implications of his understanding. Certainly, his analysis may be called into question purely on the basis that differing interpretations exist and cannot be disproven; however, neither can his be. In Paterson's interpretation of the figure, the ghost represents a temporal break in the plot. In fact, César Domínguez points out that the omens represent "una fisura temporal" that ruptures the chronology of the play (331), as they predict and depict the future as something that already exists in the present. As Domínguez explains it, "El futuro habla con el presente" (334). This is the role of any portent of the future: they draw the future into the present and effectively communicate backward in time. In this particular case, the future is not only foretold, but represented as having *already occurred* in the present. Lope's ghost-figure is unique in that it is the ghost of a man who is still physically alive.

A ghost like that of Princess Eliodora in *El príncipe tirano*, who has already died, functions in the reverse. Eliodora is therefore entirely caught up in the past, as her function is to reveal past secrets. Further, as a figure who has already died, she herself is an embodiment of the past made present. The *sombra* in *El caballero de Olmedo*, understood as the (future) ghost of Alonso, implicates the present and future in its convolution of time, but seems to leave the past untouched. Juan de la Cueva's Eliodora is one example of a ghost concerned with the past and is representative of a longer list of ghosts with a similar function. The *sombra* is therefore not only

differentiated from her, but from a larger tradition of ghostly purpose. This ghost is peculiar in its disconnection from the past and from specific memories or events. This disconnection contributes to its ambiguity, in that neither Alonso nor the play's audience can associate it with any particular temporal touchstone.

Despite the ghost's lack of direct participation in the past, history remains fundamental to the action of *El caballero de Olmedo.*[36] Louise Fothergill-Payne points out two primary levels of history in the text: "uno que se refiere a la canción cuyos antecedentes se remontan al año 1521, y otro que sirve de tela de fondo para la tragedia y es el reinado de Juan II" (113). The historical setting of the play reflects the era's popular trend of setting plays in historical periods, which in turn indicates a certain reverence or appreciation for times past. The song is, of course, the *romance* sung by the laborer that narrates the death of the knight from Olmedo.[37] Enrique Anderson Imbert points out that the ballad is based on the slaying of a knight on the road from Medina to Olmedo, but that Lope was likely not familiar with nor interested in the details of the song's history, and rather only in the lyrics upon which he bases his drama (65). Because the audience would likely have been familiar with the popular song, Alonso's death is forecast even before the play begins. While the embodied ghost does not participate in history, the past, here represented by a song a century old, still haunts the stage.

Anderson Imbert also spends some time reflecting on the nature of the *romance* and, in doing so, parallels Carlson's analysis of memory and repetition in theater. Genre, he argues,

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[36] For a complete outline of the historical and literary sources of Lope's play, see Rico's introduction to his edition.

[37] I refer throughout to the *labrador*'s song as a *romance* because, as both Fothergill-Payne and Anderson Imbert point out, its lyrics are taken from a verse narrative belonging to the Spanish oral balladic tradition. Although the piece that is sung in Lope's play is merely an excerpt, the original work is indeed a complete *romance*.

relies on recognition by the audience, thereby relying on memory and ghosts. Theater is a form that tends to repeat genre and tropes, thereby marking it as haunted. According to Carlson, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular contain theatrical works of "citation," although they are not presented as such. Furthermore, the repetition of the same actors in different roles in different plays as well as repeated sets or even the repeated use of the stage and theater itself causes a haunting in the reception of any given performance. Because the *romance* is an oral tradition, it follows a similar pattern. As the ballads move from one singer to the next, new versions are created:

> Y así, en boca de innumerables – e innombrables – Juanes, Pedros y Diegos, el cantar vive en pleno pulmón, de variante en variante, rehecho constantemente por una memoria fantasmal, como si fuera la manifestación espontánea de un pueblo desparramado por los siglos. (Anderson Imbert 63)

While there are obvious differences between the *romance* and the stage – primary among them being that theater is *performed* differently each time it is staged but its words remain largely unchanged – Anderson Imbert's words evoke the same notion of haunting and repetition as Carlson's text. To stage a *romance*, then, relies doubly on memory and creates new forms of phantom.

Alonso is, in the eyes of the knowing audience, a dead man walking even before the appearance of his ghost. In this, he echoes the phantasmagorical figure of Cervantes' *Numancia*. The Numancian body does not reveal an unknown future to the play's audience, but rather confirms what is already understood to be the conclusion of the play, thereby reinforcing his own omniscience. Similarly, the function of the *sombra* is not to announce Alonso's death to the public; his death is already known:

> termina con la muerte del protagonista, pero no con una muerte inesperada o accidental, sino con un asesinato, premeditado y anunciado, hacia el que don Alonso se dirige como movido por una especie de destino inexorable. (García Valdés 152)

Instead, it promotes fear, reflects the uncertainty of the protagonist through its ambiguity, and demonstrates to the audience the moment in which Alonso's death becomes absolutely predetermined, or at least revealed as predetermined, in his own life. His encounter with the ghost reveals that Alonso no longer possesses agency; instead, he must continue to his death, which has, in some dimension, already occurred.

Another explanation for the ghost that Alonso considers is that it was sent by Fabia at Inés's urging in an attempt to dissuade him from making his journey. Alonso understands that there is something supernatural about the *sombra*, and so Fabia, who is purportedly a witch, springs to mind. Indeed, when Alonso asks the *labrador* where he learned his song, he does indicate that Fabia taught it to him, suggesting that she is responsible for his encounter with Alonso. However, it is never clear what role, if any, Fabia plays in the appearance of the *sombra*. In fact, it is important to note the extent to which Fabia's alleged abilities have been questioned by critics such as Ruano de la Haza, Anderson Imbert, Bruce Wardropper, and Frank Casa, who point out that Alonso was already in love with Inés, and Inés with Alonso, before Fabia got involved with her love potions. Her role, therefore, is not magical or supernatural but rather strictly as a facilitator of their meetings: she "is needed as a go-between but not as an hechicera" (Casa, "Dramatic Unity" 238). Her ability to summon a ghost is, therefore, in question. Clarity in Fabia's abilities would in turn provide clarity regarding her role in the apparition, since if she could not summon ghosts at all the possibility that she had summoned this shadow figure would

be eliminated entirely. The lack of explanation as to the actual extent and limit of Fabia's witchcraft contributes to the overall ambiguity where the supernatural is concerned in this play.

If the ghost was not sent by Fabia, it remains possible that it is some other supernatural agent meant to caution Alonso to turn back. An interpretation of the *sombra* as a warning is different from an omen because, as we have seen, the omen does not intend to change the future, while the warning still leaves space for an unpredicted ending. There are certainly readers who interpret Alonso's death as at least potentially avoidable; Alice Schafer notes: "Prolepsis fulfills its mission here perfectly, for it suggests a spine-chilling fear in the audience, whilst at the same time it awakens the hope that Alonso may also be fearful enough to retrace his steps" (35). Although that hope proves to be fruitless, the question remains as to whether or not it would have been possible for Alonso to avoid his "fate."

An interpretation of the ghost as a warning does not necessarily disallow Alonso's free will and in fact provides one argument to support his claim to self-determination. The function of the warning is dissuasion. Alonso is warned, albeit subtly and supernaturally, not to make the journey to Olmedo. However, he chooses to press forward *despite* several portents. The "predestined" events could therefore possibly be avoided, if only Alonso had heeded the warnings given. Diego Marín notes:

> Según [el concepto del libre albedrío frente al sino] la vida del hombre puede ser influida por los cuerpos celestes y otras fuerzas misteriosas del cosmos, pero su albedrío permanece siempre libre y capaz de alterar su curso predestinado. (6)

While the omens suggest, through the pre-enactments of Alonso's death, that at least part of his course is already set, they also ostensibly provide him with the opportunity to make a different

choice. Rodrigo may already be waiting in the woods to kill Alonso, but Alonso still has the opportunity to turn back and prevent his death.

It is unclear exactly how much control Alonso could have demonstrated over his own future. The premonitions grow increasingly concrete; the goldfinch and the hawk are merely a metaphorical representation of Alonso's death, while the shadow's existence is a suggestion that he is *already* dead, and the song is a direct statement that he is. This would seem to indicate that Alonso's death also grows increasingly certain, and that at some point during the night it might become inevitable, it is as if Alonso, on the road to Olmedo, crosses a point of no return. The shadow appears as he departs, and so it is difficult to believe that it is already too late for him to save himself by turning back. But the apparition indicates that Alonso has already made his choice. The shadow, then, does not function as much as a warning but rather as a premonition of inevitable doom. The appearance of Don Alonso's ghost instead indicates to the audience that this is the moment in which he dies. This is the moment in which he makes the decision that ends his life.

A further argument against the notion of the ghost as a premonitory warning is that it is incredibly unclear in its communications. The *sombra* hardly speaks at all and in no way effectively communicates to Alonso what his future will be. Although Alonso, as he dies, considers the three omens to be "avisos del cielo" (Lope de Vega 199), it is only with the benefit of hindsight that he understands what they would have been trying to tell him. Arellano points out that the omens cannot function as warnings, precisely because they are so ineffectual: "¿Qué avisos del cielo podrían mostrarse con tal ambigüedad que el caballero no pudiera discernir claramente su sentido?" (Arellano 105). The ambiguity of the ghost once again demonstrates its effect by undercutting its ability to communicate a coherent message or transmit its true purpose.

These interpretations, however convincing they may be, all hinge on the assumption that the ghost is brought forth by an external supernatural force, whether that be Fabia or some greater universal supernatural. This is an interpretation, not a fact. It is not even certain that the figure is the ghost of Alonso; although the shadow appears to introduce itself as Don Alonso, it is also possible that its words are meant to address the living, breathing Don Alonso rather than to introduce itself. Still, the figure remains eerie and somewhat unreal in any context; even if its words are not an introduction, one must wonder how it knows Don Alonso's name, why it wears a mask, and how it disappears as suddenly as it does. The particulars of what exactly its purpose is are left unclear.

In fact, it is possible that it is not exactly an omen at all, but rather some sort of imagined vision with no greater purpose. I have shown that the figure lacks a specific, discernable connection to the past, which most ghosts possess, and explored the possibility that its connection is only to the future that he foretells. However, I have not yet addressed the possibility that it exists only in the present as a reflection of Alonso's immediate and temporary emotions. In this analysis, the ghost exists only within Alonso's imagination and is therefore not entirely or objectively real.

The ghost arrives into an atmosphere of fear and darkness that begins toward the end of Act II. Gwynne Edwards notes: "Alonso's account of his dream marks the moment when the play changes from a mood which is often comic to one that is increasingly dark" (287). Although Alonso claims not to pay much attention to his dreams, he admits to feeling perturbed by this one. The sense of unease it causes him stays with him for the remainder of his life and hangs over the remainder of the play. Arellano describes it as:

> Una atmósfera de maravilla, de misterio ominoso que va dominando la acción en contraste con las fiestas primaverales de la cruz de mayo y los galanteos nocturnos a la reja de los jardines. (Arellano 110)

He further explains that: "Lope dispone estos elementos de modo que persiste una ambigüedad, propio del reino de lo poético" (Arellano 110). The emotional backdrop of the final act of the play is one of uncertainty, and so the figures who appear in this environment are shrouded by the same ambiguity.

The melancholic atmosphere at once affects and is affected by the protagonist, who may be suffering from the disease of unnatural melancholy (Edwards 287). The disease, as explained by Robert Burton, is an illness of black bile or choler. He explains: "fear and sorrow are the true characters and inseparable companions of most melancholy" (170). His text enumerates many causes and symptoms of melancholy as they affect different sufferers, but at the core of almost all his explanations is fear and sorrow, with frequent references to dreams and dreamlike thoughts as well as unreal visions, spirits, and ghosts. Regarding Alonso's experience of an excess of melancholy, Diego Bastianutti writes:

> Lope ha creado un personaje melancólico cuyos síntomas no sólo explican la conducta del protagonista, sino que ofrecen también una explicación racional para los acontecimientos misteriosos, desde el sueño de don Alonso hasta el romance cantado por el labrador, sin quitarle por eso aquel aire de misterio a la obra. (27)

This diagnosis of unnatural melancholy provides a medical explanation for all of Alonso's strange experiences, since visions of the unreal are known to be a symptom of melancholy. Furthermore, the effect of Alonso's illness would provoke him to experience fear and sadness,

which would in turn increase his body's production of the melancholic humor and heighten his experience of the symptoms of melancholy.

The melancholic atmosphere of the final act is used as evidence by some critics to show a division in the dramatic unity of the play.[38] This division splits the play into a comedy for the first two acts and then, for the final act, a tragedy. The focus of the comedy is the love story that develops between Alonso and Inés, beginning with love at first sight in the very opening of the play. The final act, meanwhile, turns toward Alonso's inevitable death. Critically, several scholars such as Albert Gérard, A. A. Parker, and Wardropper have pushed back against the notion of a division in the structure of the play. They argue instead that there is a unity of theme – love – and that the play shifts from a comedy to a tragedy in a deliberate and gradual manner. As Paterson points out, "El amor se transforma en la muerte" (136). This transformation happens both on a narrative level, as the romance shifts toward its tragic ending, but also within the character of Alonso himself.

Throughout the play, Alonso has alluded to a feeling that he is dead or dying as a result of his feelings of love. His love for Inés causes his death in a literal sense, since it ignites the jealousy that drives Rodrigo to murder him, but even long before the denouement, love and death are inextricably woven together for Alonso. When Alonso believes his love for Inés is unrequited, it feels like death. When he knows his love is requited but is unsure of their future together, it feels like death. And, finally, when he must leave her in Medina while he travels home to visit his parents in Olmedo, it feels like death. In his last conversation with Inés before he departs, he lays out the metaphor of his separation from her as his death: "Así se acabó mi vida, / que es lo mismo que partirme" (Lope de Vega 191).

[38] See Edwards and Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo.

While Alonso believes this statement to be figurative, there is an ironic twist to his metaphor. The audience knows that while Alonso speaks symbolically, he will indeed die as a result of his departure. Alonso has repeatedly travelled between Medina and Olmedo, leaving Inés behind again and again. Wardropper comments: "Each time [Alonso] absents himself from Doña Inés he rehearses the act of dying" (192). This final absence results in his most absolute absence, that is, his death. Each previous separation has been temporary; they have been, as Wardropper calls them, merely rehearsals. Here the motif of the dying lover is rendered literally; Alonso is lovesick to death, and the ghost becomes a physical manifestation of that.

For Alonso, then, love causes him to die while still alive; the pains he feels as a result of love and its absence cause him to experience a feeling that he likens to death during life. At the point that he decides to return to Olmedo, Rodrigo has already begun to plan Alonso's murder and his demise is no longer merely a metaphor. Instead, it is a certain future. It is in this moment that the ghost appears. The ghost represents the final convergence of love and death: "The death-in-life paradox of the play's love poetry is hideously resolved in this moment of utter terror when the future becomes the past" (McKendrick 104). The moment here referred to is actually the song of the *labrador*, when Alonso's death is sung in the past tense, but his ghost similarly crosses temporalities and indicates his imminent death. Furthermore, the *sombra* appears in the right moment, just as Alonso embarks and thereby separates from Inés. Alonso's love for Inés and his separation from her have finally sparked his literal death, and the fact that the ghost appears in this moment therefore comes to represent Alonso's dual and divided state. Alonso's ghost appears to him while he is still alive, meaning that he is both alive and dead at once; his death is real in the sense that it is imminent, and this is enough to create the ghost.

Because his death is so certain, it is essentially allowed to occur twice. As Alonso prepares to leave Inés in Medina, he tells Tello: "Las penas anticipadas / dicen que matan dos veces" (174). He feels the pain of leaving Inés as he prepares to do it, and again when he does. His end is similar: its anticipation and its undertaking kill him twice. The ghost, in this sense, is created by Alonso's emotions. His despair, which is part and parcel of his immense love, produces a phantom. Similarly, Ruano de la Haza calls the *sombra* and the *labrador* "la culminación de los miedos de Alonso" (48), thereby establishing emotion, this time fear, as the shadow's creator. Lope has already set up a metaphor of emotions creating monsters; the emotion is jealousy, not fear or sadness, but it paves the way for this interpretation of the ghost. When Rodrigo is jealous of Alonso, because he is sure that Inés loves his rival, Fernando reassures him by saying:

> Son celos, don Rodrigo, una quimera
> que se forma de envidia, viento y sombra,
> con lo incierto imaginado altera;
> una fantasma que de noche asombra,
> un pensamiento que a locura inclina,
> y una mentira que verdad se nombra. (Lope de Vega 157)

Essentially, Fernando is explaining that emotions skew perceptions. Vision is not an objective reporter of the world around us, but rather a means by which we interpret information through the lens of our own individual and subjective feelings. A particularly strong emotion can become externalized and, living outside the body, influence our experience of the world toward an untrue one. Ironically, what Fernando writes off as the phantoms created by jealousy is, in fact, reality.

Inés is in love with Alonso and will indeed choose him over Rodrigo, just as the latter fears. While Fernando is incorrect in his assessment in this particular scene, his explanation of the role of emotion in perception provides a possible explanation for Alonso's visions near the end of the play.

Whether we believe that the *sombra* and the *labrador* are created by an excess of the melancholic humor or the strong emotions that Alonso experiences, we must explore the effect that this belief has on our understanding of perception. To accept that the vision is false is to accept that perception sometimes fails. Alonso's eyes and ears have observed and reported a shadow to his mind, and that shadow may not have actually existed. While it might be of some comfort to understand that it happens due to a natural, measurable and, ultimately, explainable disease, the essential admission underlying that understanding is that the human body is not always able to adequately interpret the world. In other words, it is possible that what we consider to be true, to be evident, or to be concrete, is in fact none of those things. Our perception of the world around us is artificial, an *engaño* that tricks us into believing that we understand. A ghost is a reminder that we do not; there is so much of existence and reality that we do not have access to.

In the third act of the play, because of his sadness at the thought of parting with Inés, Alonso demonstrates an emotional and perceptual instability that makes it easy to believe that the ghost is imagined. As Bastianutti remarks:

> Don Alonso ha llegado a tal punto de confusión mental que ya no logra distinguir lo que ve de lo que imagina. En la escena de su vuelta a Olmedo, tanto el protagonista como el lector están dispuestos a aceptar la posibilidad de que aun el labrador que canta el

> romance y aparece en escena, sea creación de la imaginación de don Alonso, acostumbrados como estamos a sus previos visiones y sueños. (34)

Beginning with his account of the goldfinch and the hawk, and the reference to the strange dream from which he awoke to witness them, there has been a marked shift in Alonso's behavior that betrays his untrustworthiness. His emotional unease and his strange experiences could be the cause or the effect of the ghost and omens, but it is never clear to the reader which catalyzes the other. Does Alonso see ghosts because he is unstable, or is he unstable because he has seen a ghost? This ghost breeds instability and is born of it; every bit of uncertainty that surrounds it contributes to its ambiguity, which in turn catalyzes its deconstruction of reality.

Without knowing if the fear or the ghost has come first, it is difficult to determine the figure's origin and therefore its function. There is enough textual evidence to support either an understanding of the *sombra* as an unreal effect of melancholy or imagination or as a truly extant figure sent or created by an external source to represent a predetermined future. The profound ambiguity of the figure muddles the human understanding of death and destiny. Because the omen represented by the ghost is so vague and uncertain – it may not even be an omen, strictly speaking – the whole notion of predestination must be questioned. Ultimately the future represented by the prophetic understanding of the ghost does come to pass, that is, Alonso dies on the road from Medina to Olmedo. Perhaps he was propelled to a certain death by fate, because his death was already written. Or perhaps the ghost was merely an externalization of his fear that he would die.

El caballero de Olmedo is in many ways defined and founded on its mysteries, including the mysterious figure of the ghost. In fact, Wardropper introduces the play by commenting:

> The first observation that I shall make is that the play has always appealed to audiences and readers because of its mystery. A hero who does not believe in ghosts is brought face-to-face with his own ghost… Does he, and do we, see a ghost on the road from Medina to Olmedo? All we can say is that the appearance of a ghost and the traditionally assumed effect of a ghost assail our senses. (188)

Wardropper alludes to the potential nonexistence of the ghost by asking the fundamental question as to whether or not we have seen it. The *appearance* of a ghost is present, but anything beyond the mere façade is uncertain. This *sombra* is an exemplary ambiguous ghost whose appearance deconstructs the notion of reality. When Donald Yates asks of the play's setting, "Was it a world of fact, of reality – or of half fact and half fantasy?" (506) the answer is both. There is no singular understanding of the mysterious world presented by Lope.

The *sombra* is an *engaño* – a deception. It is all artifice with nothing concrete behind it. Its theatricality is not limited to its staged presence but is rather fundamental to its character. Its appearance is a small performance for Alonso, a visual spectacle meant to convey some information or story, and yet its meaning or intention remains entirely unclear. The ghost's ability to convey any fundamental truth is severely undercut by the audience's ambiguous perception of it in such a way that the only possible truth lies in that ambiguity. The ambiguity comes to define the ghost as a Baroque entity, as a visual trick that serves to highlight and reinforce its own obscurity. Its *engaño*, therefore, becomes Alonso's truth. It is both *engaño* and *desengaño* at once; by obscuring reality it reveals the truth. Its revelation is this: there is no defined purpose or meaning, at least not that humanity can perceive. Our reality (or our perception of it) will always be incomplete and absurd, like Maravall's world upside-down. The *sombra*, through his own internal contradiction of being simultaneously real and unreal,

embodies, as it were, the omnipresent deception, disillusion, and doubt that fascinated Spanish Golden Age society. In doing so, it is a uniquely Baroque figure that is a product of its own time. However, simultaneously, it represents that which is inherent in ghosts and therefore that which exists prior to modernity and which outlives it. A ghost is always –always – something of a bridge: between life and death, presence and absence, past and present, and the real and the imaginary.

Conclusion

Ghosts appear, at first, to reflect order, but their characterizations inevitably approach utter ambiguity. The uncertainty that they carry with them is reflected in all of the literature that includes these undead figures, whether that be theoretical examinations of haunting and the paradoxes of the ghosts themselves, or the stories that we hear and tell of encounters with the living past. The implications of the ghosts' ambiguity go beyond whether or not we believe them to be "real." That is, of course, the first question. But if the ghost is real, then we have to ask what that means for our reality. Rodríguez de la Flor has argued that, in the Baroque period, reality is constructed rather than preexistent. In other words, if one perceives a ghost, that ghost becomes real. This undermines entirely any hope of a structured and "true" reality, giving way instead to a world of infinite realities, and therefore also of none.

The ghosts of Golden Age Spain, at first examination, impose a structured timeline onto humanity, while simultaneously proving that they exist outside of that structure. In the first three chapters of this project, we see ghosts who return to reveal a fundamental truth that would otherwise go unknown; in all instances, the ghosts' revelations insist upon the existence of an objective reality. However, even the omniscience of the ghosts is somewhat destabilizing. By demonstrating all that they know, they draw attention to the chasm between humanity's experience of the world and the deepest level of reality. Omniscient ghosts reveal a predestined future, which at first appears to make them a stabilizing force, since they structure a sequenced timeline and pull back the curtain on the influence of a higher power. However, the revelation that humanity has incredibly limited access to the knowledge and perspectives that exist, in one

form or another, in the world undercuts what humanity thinks that it understands. In a historical era of scientific growth and expansion, ghosts embody all that is still unknown. While it may be reassuring to think that there is an order to the world or that there is an external and perhaps divine force that keeps track of and even determines all events and actions, it is simultaneously disquieting to know that humanity will never understand the full extent of truth and reality.

La Numancia, whose plot shows a reverence for the remembrance of history and the dead, clearly outlines a linear historical record from the moment of the play's action to the moment of the play's composition. All of the omniscient figures – the revived Numancian body and the allegorical figures who frame the play – emphasize the predetermination of the timeline; the siege of Numancia takes place because it is destined to, because it has to occur in order to move Spain inexorably towards the height of Empire described by the figure of the River Duero. When this historical knowledge is presented to the Numancian citizens as a vision into their future, the prophecy causes panic. The city descends into a burning chaos in which men kill their families and then themselves to prevent the Roman army from taking them as slaves when the city is inevitably sacked.

And yet the audience outside of the play will not be surprised by the events depicted nor the future described by the Duero's long speech. The history narrated ends in Cervantes's time, ostensibly to ensure the accuracy of the events told. However, the perhaps unintended consequence is a constant reminder that, although the characters within the play are afforded a glimpse of the future, foreknowledge of events is, in fact, out of the reach of humanity. The perpetual return of the dead that characterizes this play also brings the perpetual return of the timeline, and with each new staging, the Duero's speech is further removed from the audience's present moment. The gap is wider every time the play is performed, and the reminder of our lack

of foresight is echoed more deeply. The omniscience, then, displayed by both the reanimated corpse and the allegorical figures, threatens humanity's own perception of what we know by highlighting all of the things that we do not, and cannot, understand.

Zoroaster's appearance in *La constancia de Arcelina* functions similarly by providing a prophecy that once again indicates a perception of reality that is much broader than humanity's. A striking difference between the sorceries of *La Numancia* and *Arcelina*, however, is found in the identities of the ghost figures. The cast of *Arcelina's* prophetic scene is made up of mythic figures who stand by as Zoroaster narrates the points of their mythology that aid him in influencing Fulcino to abandon his quest. Achilles, Aegisthus, Iphis and Dido do not show the same omniscience as Zoroaster; since they do not speak, it is impossible to know what they know. Instead, they represent a piece of reality that humanity does indeed have access to: their mythology. Instead of the prophetic foresight offered by Zoroaster's omniscience, these figures show a knowledge that is widespread amongst the living. And yet, just like Zoroaster, they are ignored. Fulcino continues as if he had not been warned of impending danger. The knowledge, then, is inconsequential. Cueva's play shows the ways in which humanity disregards the universal knowledge granted to them, whether it be passed down through myth or by a supernatural figure. The question of the purpose of such knowledge in the hands of such imperfect men, who lack the understanding to be able to correctly interpret and weigh that information, is one raised again and again in these plays.

In the first suggestions of the appearance of this dissertation's third ghost, that of *El prínicipe tirano's* Princess Eliodora, we see the fear of ghostly ambiguity. The king perceives, though not by vision or hearing, a phantom presence in his room, but none of his advisors or pages do. The characters must confront the notion that their physical perception of the world falls

short of its true nature; they begin to understand a breach between their knowledge and the truth. However, as I have shown, that function of the ghost is short-lived and Princess Eliodora is soon brought forth into a certain presence, where she shares her omniscience with the living. As we have seen Fulcino do in chapter two, the king and his advisors ignore the implications of Eliodora's shared knowledge and proceed as if they were unaware of the tyrant prince's murderous nature. The omniscient ghost provides crucial information which would otherwise be unavailable to the living about the world in which they live, and yet they cast it aside, showing a growing lack of faith in the value of omniscience. Humanity does not have access to an endless and perfect understanding of the world, but now we see that even when it does, individuals are wont to make preventable mistakes based not on a flawed perception of the world but a flawed set of moral principles. The group of men written by Cueva in this play are so fundamentally imperfect that even supernatural access to unlimited insight cannot elevate them to an absolute understanding of the workings of the world.

Don Juan, a famously flawed protagonist, encounters a confounding ghost figure in the Stone Guest. Don Gonzalo's ambiguity is entirely different from Eliodora's brief brush with uncertainty. His presence is as unequivocal as can be; not only is he made of stone, but he interacts with a number of different characters, proving that he exists outside of the imagination of any one individual. Instead of existing in a state of uncertain presence, he instead introduces ambiguity through his role in the *de auxiliis* debates that occupy the philosophical space of the play. Through his status as partially human and partially divine, he represents both human consequences and divine control simultaneously, thereby obscuring any concrete answer as to which has caused Don Juan's demise. The fierce theological debate in which the play engages serves to once again remind the audience of what they cannot possibly understand about their

own role in the world, and the Stone Guest amplifies that uncertainty by preventing a definitive solution.

The obfuscation of truth by a ghost comes to a head in the last play of this study, *El caballero de Olmedo*. The shadow figure who appears cannot be definitively identified as a ghost, or even as objectively extant in the material world outside of the imagination of the protagonist. Whatever information it might provide, then, is automatically called into question. Furthermore, it gives no concrete prophecy; the notion that he foretells Don Alonso's death comes only from its self-identification as Alonso, believed to be a future, deceased version of the protagonist. This ghost provokes fear and subverts any possible notion of tangible reality. If it is imagined, then Alonso's anxiety has undermined his ability to correctly perceive the world. If it is "real," then it shows merely a glimpse of a universal truth, which is held entirely out of reach of humanity's comprehension.

These layers of uncertainty are characteristic of the specter, whose very definition is full of contradictions. The paradoxes of the undead — their hauntologies — position them as ideal figures for the exploration of the confusing ambiguities inherent in humanity's experience of the Baroque world. Further, the theater lends itself perfectly to a preoccupation with the way things appear and the way they truly are, since everything on stage is necessarily a representation of something offstage, merely standing in or masquerading as the object or character that it purports to be, and so the combination of ghosts and the stage amplifies the artifice created by each. The use of these figures in theater to demonstrate previously unknown truths or to obscure reality, to outline sequential time or to cross and tangle its linearity, reflect the increasing fixation on uncertainty and *engaño* that characterizes the Baroque period in Spain. These early modern ghosts beg the question of their own existence and reliability, and even in the case that they are

demonstrated to be material and all-knowing, they retain an element of humanity's anxiety and insecurity.

As the ghosts shift to an ambiguous representation which implies that there is no true reality, they reverse the structuring nature of the earlier depictions of the undead. In a society that does not believe in an ordered, meaningful world, ghosts who imply an ordered configuration of events actually function as an *engaño*. They enforce the illusion of the knowability of the world, which Don Gonzalo as the Stone Guest is sure to undercut when he says, "Las maravillas de Dios / son, Don Juan, investigables" (Tirso 301). It is an illusion to believe that humanity could access that information, that we could know and understand the reality that exists beyond and in fact forms our experience of the world. As Golden Age playwrights represent ghostly and undead figures on stage, they also explore humanity's role within our world. The world is shown to be absurd and incomprehensible, and humans to be incapable of perceiving the depths of reality. The *desengaño*, then, is the ghost who appears to function as illusory by obscuring reality. This ghost paradoxically reveals the truth by concealing it, because indeed there is no such thing as an objective reality.

Ghosts reveal the world in all its incomprehensibility. They sometimes do so by showing a structure and timeline that encompasses all of humanity, a universal configuration that we cannot hope to understand or perceive in its entirety based on our limited point of view. While ghosts exist outside of the conception of time that binds all living beings, we are trapped in it in such a way that we cannot fathom its exterior. Other ghosts expose the true nature of the world by leaning into its inscrutability. They reveal no secrets and provide no answers to the questions that the living may ask of them; instead, they represent uncertainty itself, often even in their physical forms.

A belief in ghosts has persisted throughout history as they have continually embodied Aristotle's concept of "plausible yet impossible." Ghosts, in all of their fundamental paradoxes, are truly representative of the confounding ambiguity encapsulated in Aristotle's turn of phrase. Because they, like many supernatural imaginings, exist in the liminal space between contradictory extremes, they cannot be entirely understood. They are figures of past and present, and so they must exist outside of time entirely, and yet weave themselves so thoroughly into a human timeline so as to affect its very construction. They are the presence of an absence, and therefore are both present and absent, even when physically imposing or made of such material as stone.

These coexisting contradictions reflect the world in which these figures are conceived; the world around us is unstable and unknowable. As meticulously as we construct our understanding of time, it is a patchwork of stories and poorly covered gaps. As concretely as we measure and define truth through science and order, there are heights and depths we cannot reach. These are the moments in which the ghosts appear, either to explain away our uncertainties or to show us that they exist in the first place. They remind us of the fallibility of our perceptions and the limits of our comprehension. They provoke our fears and, in doing so, reflect our anxieties. Ghosts are impossible, and yet they remain plausible. Schulz posits that the persistence of a belief in ghosts stands in part due to our fear of death, but it is not only death that we fear. We fear the uncertainty, of course, of what is beyond life, but we also fear what is on this side of death. We fear the ambiguity of the world around us and the impossibility of our understanding it. We are afraid, as these Baroque playwrights were, that everything around us is mere *engaño,* but we are also afraid that the *desengaño* will reveal nothing. Ghosts, who show reality and unreality at once, play into this fear.

Ultimately, the reality of the ghosts is inconsequential. Whether we believe in them or not – no matter where we rank them on Schulz's scale of likely to exist or unlikely to exist – their function is fundamentally the same. This dissertation's ghosts are motivated to return by a variety of impetuses; to fill in gaps in the historical narrative, to resolve their "unfinished business," or to make prophecies of the future. Regardless of their reasons for returning, the effect of all the appearances is the same. These ghosts provoke and reflect Baroque anxieties. The mere fact that they exist on a spectrum *between* impossible and real, where some reveal an absolute truth and others obscure it, indicates that these conditions are not absolute. One individual's perception can never match another, and if both are true, then neither can be. We make and tell ghost stories to recognize our own fears and our own limits of understanding. Stories of ghosts who reveal information that humanity cannot know, or access a world that humanity cannot access, or who reveal nothing at all and seem to barely even appear, remind us of all that we have not yet begun to understand. We are haunted by the knowledge that we cannot obtain. The ghosts of Baroque Spain are the ghosts of a growing uncertainty regarding humanity's role in the world. They do not represent merely a fear of the dead, but rather a fear of life and what it might (not) mean.

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