

Memory, Will, and Understanding in *El veneno y la triaca* by Calderón de la Barca:

A Cognitive Approach

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation explores the representation of cognition in the Spanish Golden Age theatrical genre the *auto sacramental*, with reference to the best known playwright of these eucharistic mystery plays, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and specifically his pre-1644 *auto El veneno y la triaca* (*The Poison and the Remedy*). I contextualize the *auto* in the Western philosophical tradition in which it was rooted, while also probing the psychomachia or allegories of mental and emotional processes in relation to philosophy of mind, cognitive literary studies and recent neuroscientific research. How are cognition, emotion, and decision making used and depicted in dramatic structures including character, plot, performance, and audience reception? This study establishes the relationship between organic neurological and psychological processes and literary tropes and archetypes that can make the dramatic mimesis of the *auto sacramental* understandable or successful even in modern secular theatrical contexts.

Dedication

To my parents, Mariluz Villar Otón and Luis Rodríguez Miguez †.

Also to my aunt Marina Villar Otón †.

Gratitude is not a word which could contain all this love.

Contents

Abstract.....	iv
List of Tables.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
1. Introduction	1
2. Autos Sacramentales	6
2.1 Autos sacramentales: a brief review of the genre.....	9
2.2 Cognition in the autos.....	16
2.3 The case of El veneno y la triaca	32
2.3.1 The myth.....	32
2.3.2 The metaphor of the physician	37
2.3.3 The idea of health as a state	42
2.3.4 Semiology of the disease.....	45
2.3.5. Noumenal character of the disease.....	47
2.3.6 Nosology of the Disease	51
2.3.7. Diagnosis and treatment.....	52
3. Memory	60
3.1 Calderón de la Barca and the memory	74
3.2 The memory and the Catholic Doctrine.....	94
3.3 Contemporary notions of Memory	103
3.3.1. Sensory memory	103

3.3.2. Short-term memory	104
3.3.3. Long-term memory	105
3.3.4 The memory and the future	109
3.3.5. Damasio and the somatic markers	110
3.4. The use memory in the play: memory and self	113
3.5 Repetition	125
3.5 Different types of memory	129
4. Will	137
4.1. Philosophical approaches to Will	137
4.2. Will in Calderón de la Barca	139
4.3. Will in <i>El veneno y la triaca</i>	142
4.4 Action	144
4.4.1. Mental Components of action	150
4.4.2. Characterization of the dramatic personae	175
4.4.3 How the first decision is actually made in <i>El veneno y la triaca</i>	191
4.5 Mirror neurons, allegory and theater	207
5. Understanding	212
5.1 Understanding in Calderón de la Barca	216
5.2 Understanding the play	230
5.2.1. Cause and effect	231
5.2.2. Allegory	241
5.2.3. Uncertainty, Anticipations and Suspense	253

6. Conclusion.....	265
Works Cited.....	272
Biography.....	295

List of Tables

Table 1. Relationships	243
Table 2: Space and time	244
Table 3: Sin and disease	245

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Reaching this point has been a long process which has involved many changes. Changing my country of residence, changing my language, changing my home, changing many of my ideas, and in sum and to a great extent, changing my life. But as I try to prove in this dissertation about theater, change is the very essence of life. And change must be welcomed because it forces us to make decisions, to reflect on who we are and what we want, and because it pushes continuously to an improved self, so when the curtain falls we can say... it was a good performance.

If there is a person who has been key in this process, no doubt it has been Professor Margaret R. Greer. As her last advisee, I hope to merit a part in the *autos sacramental* genealogy that starts with her advisor Alexander Parker, and that has in me this new installment. Margaret R. Greer is a world-known specialist in Early Modern Spanish Literature and as such, she has contributed to this dissertation. Her stimulating classes, wise advice, certain guidance, and deep insights have left a indeleble mark on this study. But she has been much more than that: she has been a magnificent example of the integrity, intellectual curiosity, openmindness, and rational discussion that we all envision in the perfect scholar; she has been a much appreciated haven of humanity in the sometimes lonely and frustating world of the academic research endeavor; and, most importantly, she has been an endless source of encouragement and support. For

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but the heart doesn't know of limits. Thanks to my father, Luis Rodríguez Miguez, to my aunt Marina Villar Otón, and to my mother, Mariluz Villar Otón.

I love you.

1. Introduction

We cannot jump over our own shadow.

German proverb.

This study aims to contribute to the study of the “necessary”¹ structure of stories. With this goal, several factors and approaches are combined in this dissertation. First of all, the study of theater, which as a dramatic/performative/mimetic art, allows us to study its biological counterpart²; which is to say, how dramatic narrative mirrors our perception and engagement with the world³. Secondly, this study addresses Golden Age religious theater, particularly, the allegorical genre of the *autos sacramentales*, representing the Christian mystery of the Eucharist during the feast of Corpus Christi. I chose this theatrical genre for its mythic component, which I explore as cognitive and affective structures. *Autos sacramentales* belong to the Christian theater context, and this allows us to study these deep mental structures in the context in which they were/are produced. It is not the aim of this study to decide whether these

¹ In Philosophical terms, a necessary condition for some state of affairs X is a condition that must be satisfied in order for X to be.

² In the sense of the Aristotelian mimetic médium: “There is still a third difference- the manner in which each of these objects may be imitated. For the medium being the same, and the objects the same, the poet may imitate by narration- in which case he can either take another personality as Homer does, or speak in his own person, unchanged- or he may present all his characters as living and moving before us.” Aristotle, *Poetics*, Section I, Part III.

³ With this, we mean the fact that communication happens in real time, without the possibility of repeating or coming back to collect information, or the fact that several senses are in use, like sight and hearing.

structures are created in the first instance in the realm of nature or nurture, using the common binary distinction⁴, but to demonstrate how they reinforce each other in the production of a narrative corpus that repeats itself, and repeats its devices through the centuries. But, given the fact that several literary critics have pointed out the limited number of dramatic situations, plots or stories that they include, could it be possible that that limit responds to a limited biological matrix⁵? Up to what point do stories need to be narrated in a certain way to be able to produce meaning? Of course, there is a meaning that is derived in relationship to the values of the cultural milieu of a work, but the objective of this study is to address the relationships among different parts of the plot that can be related to the ways our minds process, store, and assign values to information. Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei illuminates this concept the cognitive world-processing triggered by mimetic works:

When we are most immersed in literary reading, and when that immersion is most significant, we may experience a literary work as constitutive of a 'world'. With reference to the phenomenological tradition, it can be shown how this world is both a novel creation and serves to disclose, not least by shifting our perspective from, the world of ordinary experience. In this light, it will be shown how the problem of mimesis poses a challenge for recent neuroscientific approaches to literature. At the same time, neuroscientific findings show the

⁴ Especially when this dichotomy is false: "The psychobiosocial model replaces a continuum anchored at its ends by nature and nurture with a continuous feedback loop". Diane F. Halpern in *Handbook of Educational Psychology*, 2006, p. 647.

⁵ From Georges Polti's formulation of the unique 36 dramatic situations, to the more recent work of Matthew Jockers, Professor of English at the Department of English in the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, who with the help of computers analysed more 40,000 novels, arriving to the conclusion that there are only six possible stories, this is an idea that has been present in the study of literature for more than two centuries. The computer program used by Jockers is available to download at github.com. github.com/mjockers/syuzhet. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

insufficiency of phenomenological accounts which fail to acknowledge the physiological and cognitive processes that underlie literary imagining (425).

This refers to the property of stories as biomimetic artefacts, that is to say, they replicate nature, an idea which is not new at all, as Plato and Aristotle refer to this imitative quality as a fundamental part of art⁶. It is a quest for a grammar of dramatic action which replicates a grammar of biology. As receivers of stories, we need to be able to relate to them, and this must be understood not only culturally, but also in a more ingrained realm, the realm of how our biology works. In that sense, our study of narration must not limit itself to finding traces of biological processing in dramatic personae and action, but to understanding how those structures help to shape theater itself.

Christian religious theater involves very regular plots, with remarkable anthropological detail, relatable to an enormous number of people; furthermore, its allegorical architecture employs one of the most basic structures through which our brains process information: analogy. These characteristics make it an apt object for analysis in the framework of Philosophy of Mind. For this approach, I have chosen a traditional Christian definition of mental properties: the faculties of the soul as St. Augustine defines them: memory, will, and understanding. I have also articulated the

⁶ Biomimetics, a synonym of biomimesis, is a term coined in by Otto Schmidt in 1950 in his dissertation to refer to the transfer of ideas and analogues from biology to technology as a way to solve problems. Deborah Jenson and Marco Iacoboni also explore the biomimetic character of literature in their article "Literary Biomimesis: Mirror Neurons and the Ontological Priority of Representation."

the use of those three faculties of the soul, or mental properties, as delivered through dramatic plot.

2. Autos Sacramentales

A very popular genre in the Early Modern period, the *auto sacramental* reached its peak in the 17th century, until it was banned in the 18th century.¹ In modernity, the genre underwent increasing marginalization, for several reasons. First of all, the increasing secularization of Spanish society, and in the same vein, the increasing secularization of the Euro-American sphere in which Christian doctrine traditionally held sway, led to the eclipse of this genre in Corpus Christi festivals as well as on stages. Secondly, the genre had experienced a minor resurgence under the regime of General Francisco Franco, and subsequently was identified with the values of the Francoist dictatorship.² The fact that early Francoism used *autos sacramentales* as a

¹ In the late 17th, *autos sacramentales* experienced a degradation in which the coexistence of sacred and profane elements led to a increasing rejection from the Enlightenment thinkers, who saw in these spectacles an attack against the moral. Finally, *autos sacramentales* were completely banned from stages by a *Real Cédula* of 1765. We will have to wait until the 20th century to see the return of the *autos* to the stages.

"1765: Real Cédula de 9 de junio prohibiendo la representación de Autos Sacramentales.

Por el señor D. Manuel de Roda se me ha comunicado la resolución de S. M., del tenor siguiente:

Ilustrísimo Señor: Noticioso el Rey de la inobservancia de la Real Orden en que el religiosísimo celo del señor Don Fernando el VI prohibió la representación de las comedias de santos, y, teniendo presente S.M. que los autos sacramentales deben, con mayor rigor, prohibirse, por ser los teatros lugares muy impropios y los comediantes instrumentos indignos y desproporcionados para representar los Sagrados misterios de que tratan, se ha servido S.M. de mandar prohibir absolutamente la representación de los autos sacramentales y renovar la prohibición de comedias de santos y de asuntos sagrados bajo título alguno, mandando igualmente que en todas las demás se observen puntualmente las prevenciones anteriormente ordenadas para evitar los inconvenientes que pueden resultar de semejantes representaciones. Y de orden de S.M. lo participo a Vuestra Señoría para su inteligencia y cumplimiento. Dios guarde a V.S. muchos años como deseo.

Aranjuez 9 de junio de 1765.= Manuel de Roda.

Lo que prevengo a V.S. de orden de S.M. para su cumplimiento en la parte que le toca, y que, a este fin, providencie lo conveniente a que se observe puntualmente lo que S.M. manda; en inteligencia de que doy igual aviso al señor Gobernador de la Sala, para que, haciéndolo presente en ella, cuide de su ejecución. Dios guarde a V.S. muchos años. Madrid, 10 de junio de 1765. D^o Obispo de Cartagena. - Sr. D. José Francisco de Luján y Arce."

² Nevertheless, this also changes in the Spanish Theaters from the 60s with the arrival of Manuel Fraga to the Ministry of Information as Victor García Ruiz has pointed out. The peak of *autos sacramentales* staging during the Francoist dictatorship takes place in the period 1936-1945, with a constant decrease from then. "Un poco de ruido y no

means of propaganda has remained fresh in the minds of the Spanish theater people, with notable exceptions like José Tamayo, or cases like the theater group Ditea in Santiago de Compostela, in the 60s, or the company of theater of Mariluz Villar Otón in Ourense, in the 80s and 90s.³ Secularization in Spain has been abundantly studied, and it has its roots, among other factors, in the church-state separation that took place with the arrival of the democratic system in 1975. This is a very important factor in the contemporary dismissal of the *autos*, as we will see, for *autos sacramentales* worked in the Early Modern period as a means of political propaganda.⁴ The second root of the banishment of *autos sacramentales* from our stages is the individual secularization by which individuals progressively have turned less to Christian doctrine to build their own sets of moral rules.⁵ *Autos Sacramentales* haven't yet been separated from the political-sociological circumstances in which they were born, or as they were perceived in relation with the recent Spanish past, and their reading is still very subject to it, eclipsing all other factors that these plays embody. But I argue in this thesis that it is

demasiadas nueces: los autos sacramentales en la España de Franco (1939-1975)". *Divinas y humanas letras. Doctrina y poesía en los autos sacramentales de Calderón*, edited by Ignacio Arellano, Blanca Oteiza, and María Del Carmen Pinillos. Reichenberger, 1997, pp. 119-65.

³ Rodríguez Villar, A.J., *Cuando Compostela subió el telón*. Alvarellos Editora, 2011.

⁴ The discomfort with the *autos* is not just a post-Franco phenomenon, as its regular performance was halted as well in Spain in the 18th century, in accord with Enlightenment ideology, as we have seen.

⁵ For more information about this phenomenon, see Pérez-Argote, *Cambio religioso en España: los avatares de la secularización*. Centro de Investigaciones sociológicas, 2012.

time to separate a dramatic genre and its cultural heritage from belief systems and their use in political life. In the same way that we don't consider the presence of the gods in Greek tragedy as a literal representation of existent omnipotent divinities, *autos sacramentales* are still waiting for such a reframing to be welcomed back to our stages. That will be the moment in which the audience will value, over the political-ideological circumstances of their creation, the symbolic, abstract, and conceptual contents of these plays, especially those penned by Calderón. He assembles in his *autos* all the components of this tradition in Spanish theater and in some ways, foreshadows many of the abstract and existential traits of twentieth-century theater.

Calderonian *Autos sacramentales*, besides addressing Catholic doctrine, in many cases, especially those of Calderón, also include to a significant extent a discourse about *natural* truths and how human beings interact with their environments, and how concepts like perception, emotion, action, and moral consequences are intertwined. All of this occurs in a cultural environment ruled by Catholic morality, which generates a particular *emotional community*. Barbara H. Rosenwein refers to these emotional communities as "groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions" (2). But, as Patrick Colm Hogan has accurately pointed out, the fact that emotions are modulated by the

society in which they arise doesn't mean that emotions are purely a social construction (90).⁶

In the case of Calderón de la Barca, although many of his approximately 80 *autos sacramentales* address very contemporary problems and situations of the seventeenth century, we also see in them a profound humanism. This humanism is not attached to any time or space (this said with the natural limits that this affirmation entails) and aims to understand how human individuals work. This understanding, beyond mere description, is what Calderón achieves with the use of the *psychomachia*, the conflict of human cognitive properties on stage⁷. So, what are *autos sacramentales*?

2.1 Autos sacramentales: a brief review of the genre

The *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro* defines *auto sacramental* as: “un género dramático escrito para la exaltación de uno de los dogmas centrales de la religión católica, el de la transubstanciación eucarística” [a dramatic genre written for the exaltation of one of the central dogmas of the Catholic religion, that of the

⁶ “Claudius recognizes in Hamlet's mourning a threat to his own position and rule. Like many rulers, he invokes God against that threat. Finally, the mere fact that Claudius needs to justify his own lack of mourning, and that he needs to chide Hamlet in terms of both gender and religion, tells us something. It tells us that this is not a matter of social construction. The emotions have not been socially made. If they had been made, then Claudius's manly lack of grief would seem entirely ordinary. There would be no reason to rationalize it”.

⁷ The word *psychomachia* refers to a poem written by the Latin poet Prudencius in the 5th century C.E. In it readers can find characters like Chastity, Lust, Anger, Prudence or Greed. These are all phenomena that can be located in the mental realm, and turned into allegories, become characters that fight each other. As the etymology of the word implies, a *psychomachia* is a struggle between different phenomena in the soul.

eucharistic transubstantiation] (19).⁸ The word *auto* shares its etymology with the word *acto* or "act," in the larger nomenclature of agency and autonomous behavior. In Spanish Golden Age theater, the word *auto* in effect was used as a synonym of "play," specifically a one-act play, without the temporal ellipsis between several units of information and the intermissions of multi-act plays.⁹ This concept and organization might derive, among other factors, from the fact that *autos sacramentales* served as theatrical sermons in festival contexts.¹⁰ Although sermons are divided into several parts, they conform to a single unit of information with no perceptible external divisions to the listener (although perceptible to the reader).¹¹ The qualifier *sacramental* owes to the fact that these plays are devoted, in general terms, to the exaltation of the sacrament of Eucharist. The juxtaposition of both terms comes into use in the seventeenth century. Prior to that period, *auto* was used to refer to any play in one act.¹²

⁸ Ignacio Arellano. "Auto sacramental." *Diccionario de la comedia del Siglo de Oro*. Edited by Frank P. Casa, Luciano García Lorenzo, and Germán Vega García-Luengos. Editorial Castalia, 2002, pp. 18-22.

⁹ "Its division on a chronological basis into six parts, with a varying number of *autos* or scenes, is unique to the Spanish Drama". (Crawford 141).

¹⁰ In words of the very same Calderón: "Sermones // puestos en verso, en idea // representable cuestiones // de la sacra Teología, // que no alcanzan mis razones // a explicar ni comprender // y el regocijo dispone // en aplauso de este día." Loa of *La Segunda Esposa*. Calderón de la Barca, P. *Obras Completas*, T. III. Edited by Ángel Valbuena Prat. Aguilar, 1987, p. 427.

¹¹ Fray Luis de Granada divides the sermon into six parts: exordium, narration, proposition, confirmatio, confutation and conclusion (186).

¹² "Il est à noter ici que, vers la fin du XVI^e ou le commencement du XVII^e siècle, le mot *auto* n'était l'équivalent ni d'*auto sacramental* ni d'*auto al nacimiento*, et ne s'appliquait pas exclusivement aux

Although it is true that not all *autos sacramentales* focus explicitly on the theme of the Eucharist, as Ignacio Arellano has pointed out, they still address the topic of redemption:

Sin embargo, aquellos autos sacramentales en los que la Eucaristía no parece ocupar mucha extensión específica en el texto, o cuya aparición se concentra en la apoteosis final, siempre resultan observables desde la perspectiva de la redención humana, es decir, tratan de la Redención del género humano, con sus motivos anejos (caída, pecado original, mal, bien, sacrificio redentor de Cristo), tema que es inseparable en la teología católica de la institución del sacramento de la Eucaristía, que representa de forma incruenta el mismo sacrificio del Gólgota. Es, en suma, un teatro litúrgico marcado por el sacramento de la Eucaristía, o, si se prefiere, por el tema de la Redención (687).¹³

Two important points should be foregrounded here regarding dramatic art, the idea of the sacrament, and the idea of redemption. The Eucharist is one of the seven sacraments¹⁴ in Christian doctrine, as instituted by Jesus Christ at the Last Supper according to Luke 22:19: “And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to

représentations en l'honneur de l'Eucharistie ou de la Nativité, mais à toute oeuvre dramatique *en un acte*”. Rouanet, L. *Colección de autos, farsas, y coloquios del siglo XVI*. Madrid, M. Murillo, 1901, p. X.

¹³ Arellano, Ignacio. “El auto sacramental.” *Historia del teatro español del siglo XVII*. Cátedra, 1995.

¹⁴ The word sacrament comes from the Latin *sacramentum*, which in its original meaning referred to a commitment between individuals involved in a financial transaction. It also referred to the oath the Roman soldier took when he enrolled in the Roman military. The Carthaginian theologian Tertullian (c. 2nd c-3rd c.), was the first writer who applied this word to some liturgical actions of the Church. He called baptism a *sacramentum*, equating the oath taken by the Roman soldiers swearing loyalty to the emperor with the one made by the Christian to God (Stasiak 16).

them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'.¹⁵ A sacrament is, according to the catechism of the Catholic church, an "efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is 'dispensed' to us. The visible rites by which the sacraments are celebrated signify and make present the graces proper to each sacrament. They bear fruit in those who receive them with the required disposition."¹⁶

In a visceral sense, sacraments are performances that make visible something that belongs to the realm of the supernatural. The visible sign is important in itself, but what is truly important is the eternal truth that it evokes. This visibility is related to the fact that sacraments are conceived to be performed in community. This means that, in a sense, sacraments require an audience. This audience reinforces the idea of the community that represents the Church, but also leads us to the idea of performers and audiences. This is very clear in the Initiation Sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist, or in the Commitment sacraments, such as Marriage and Holy Orders. It doesn't seem that clear in the Healing sacraments, Reconciliation and Anointing of the sick, but in those cases, in the absence of witnesses, the priest still

¹⁵ This study uses the New International Version of the Bible.

¹⁶ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1131.
www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s1c1a2.htma. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

represents by proxy the community of parishioners, as he does in all other cases, even in the absence of more witnesses.¹⁷

This collective property of sacraments necessarily forces us to reconsider the goal of *autos sacramentales*. It has been argued by several scholars that *autos sacramentales* are born in the light of Counter-Reformation as a propaganda tool against heresy and Protestantism.¹⁸ The reason for this has to be found in the political situation of Spain in the seventeenth century. After the Declaration of Wittenberg by Martin Luther, Catholic Europe, which had lived according to the same faith for centuries, faced a schism in which Spain would have a prominent role. While in the sixteenth century, Charles V of Spain wanted to create a united Europe under his power and gathered around the Catholic faith, he had to fight the rebellions of the northern countries, which, beyond a power struggle, took the form of a religious conflict. It is then that Spain established itself as the defender of the Catholic faith in Europe. This idea is not new, as we can find this notion during the centuries that the Spanish kingdoms consider themselves the heirs of the Roman Empire in the Middle Ages, an empire that becomes Christian with Constantine.¹⁹ The Reconquista will keep alive this

¹⁷ "The Sacraments, like preaching, are social acts, usually performed in community and always relating to the community." White, James F. *Christian Worship in Transition*. Abingdon, 1976, p. 44.

¹⁸ Among these names we can cite González Ruiz, Menéndez Pelayo or Valbuena Prat.

¹⁹ Recaredo I, Visigothic King of Hispania, converts to Christianity in 589, in the Third Council of Toledo, sealing this way the identification between Catholicism and Spanish Monarchy as a mean of unification

religious identity, and that will influence the evangelization enterprise that the Catholic Kings Ferdinand and Isabella decreed for the colonization of the Americas.²⁰ The narrative of Spain as a cohesive community draws from the practice of Catholicism to an extent that is still present in the twentieth century, or in other words, being Catholic is the cement that in many narratives keeps the community together.²¹ The objections to the idea of *autos sacramentales* as a mere tool against heresy comes from several fronts: first of all, *autos sacramentales* are an evolution of Medieval religious theater, so the idea itself has a longer history, although of course it evolves to respond to the immediate needs of society throughout the centuries. Second of all, in the “Códice de los Autos Viejos” we don’t find excessive mentions of heresy, so it doesn’t seem this was the main goal when representing these stories on stage. Third, the Council of Trent (1545-1563), established that all teachers had to teach Christian doctrine, and for the illiterate population, the obligation of attending mass existed from the times of Constantine, making this narrative very present, and therefore, familiar. Although not everybody could reach the same level of complexity in the understanding of theology, we can

between Hispano-Romans and Visigoths. Visigoths consider themselves the Western heirs of the Roman Empire while the Bizantine Empire was the Eastern heir.

²⁰ One of the main symbols of the *Reconquista* is an Apostle, St. James, who would even come back in the 9th century to fight the Muslims in the Battle of Clavijo, according to the legend.

²¹ More specifically in the patriotic Francoist propaganda, which always identified Spain with the shelter of Catholic Faith.

accept that a big part of the population knew its basic tenets, as the communities were organized to a great extent around the churches. Finally, *autos sacramentales* are basically a performative liturgical artefact. Although pedagogical, we cannot mistake them as regular theology classes. They share with the mass the intention of *performing* certain mysteries of the Catholic tradition, and they do this *in community*.

In sum, the major traits of the *autos sacramentales* are the following:

According to the definition of Sebastián de Covarrubias in his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611), an *auto sacramental* is “la representación que se hace de argumento sagrado, en la fiesta del Corpus Christi y otras fiestas [the performance of a sacred plot, in the celebration of Corpus Christi and other ‘fiestas’.]” It usually is developed in one act, in verse, between 1000 and 2000 verses. It uses allegory as an intertwined system of metaphors, in which abstractions frequently become characters.²² These metaphors are based on the *suposiciones* or relationships between concepts and the images that represent them. They have an *asunto*, or subject, which is the timeless idea of the redemption of men, expressed by intention as the glorification of the sacrament, and an *argumento* (story line or plot), which is the form that the *asunto* takes, taking stories from the Bible, from doctrine, from hagiographies, or from history.

²² Arellano, Ignacio and Enrique Duarte. *El auto sacramental*. Ediciones del Laberinto, 2003, p. 34.

2.2 Cognition in the autos

Besides addressing Catholic doctrine, in many cases, especially those from the pen of Calderón, *autos sacramentales* address to a significant extent *natural* depictions about how human beings interact with their environments, and how concepts like perception, emotion, action are intertwined.

In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, through the multiple levels that the text includes, we have several realms that interconnect, mimicking natural processes, all of them in triads: 1) emotional arcs (elicitation, experience of the emotion, recovery of emotional homeostasis), 2) health, sickness and recovery, 3) action structure (elicitor of the action, the action itself, and the outcome of the action) 4) and finally the very same dramatic structure that rules these theatrical works (grace, fall, redemption).

The dramatic structures of the Western world have their foundations in Greek tragedy, Roman comedy, and, especially, the theories of Aristotle.²³ Since Aristotle, we have been using the schema of introduction, conflict and denouement. To this, Aristotle adds elements like *hamartia* (a mistake or error in judgment), and *anagnorisis*, which implies a recognition, that is to say, the use of consciousness to acknowledge an important truth. Aristotle also said that tragedy is a mimesis of nature, and therefore,

²³ Collected in *Poetics*.

whenever we experience a theatrical work, we envision nature at work.²⁴ Aristotle talks about mimesis as a way to perfect and imitate nature. In this vein, we can understand theater, or at least the type of theater that *autos sacramentales* embody²⁵, as a way not only to imitate but to perfect nature.²⁶ When we talk about “perfected nature”, we refer to the idea of production of meaning, or in more popular terms, achieving a satisfactory outcome. That is to say all events must happen for a reason, and that reason should lead to a refinement, improvement, or progress. This is the *telos* of tragedy, but also the *telos* of the basic operations of life, as we will see later. As Aristotle pointed out, art must recreate events that are especially important for men, and *mimesis* must be supported by *poiesis*, the act of poetic creation, always with an elevated *telos*, or final goal. This elevated goal cannot be other than the representation of a stylized truth, a

²⁴ The different theorists of the Early Modern period in Spain insist on the idea of tragedy as a mimesis of nature.

²⁵ As more contemporary works of literature depict a non-mimetic structure, and lack of cause-effect relationship, that is not the way in which our brain decodes reality. For a further exploration of the brain’s quest for meaning, consult Marsen’s “The Role of Meaning in Human Thinking”. *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2008, pp. 45-58, and for more resources on non-mimetic fiction see Brian Richardson, “Beyond Story and Discourse: Narrative Time in Postmodern and Nonmimetic Fiction”, 2002.

²⁶ As Ignacio Arellano and Enrique Duarte say in their work *El auto sacramental*: “el asunto es siempre el mismo en todos los autos, mientras que los argumentos son diferentes (...) es verdad que trata siempre, en mayor o menor medida, del Sacramento de la Eucaristía, pero la variedad innumerable -sobre todo en el caso de Calderón-, de los argumentos e ilustraciones de motivos en torno al gran tema de la Redención-Eucaristía, permite a su vez una gran variedad de formulaciones dramáticas concretas” (17-18). By redemption we understand freeing someone from a bad situation or pain; it constitutes one of the central dogmas of Christianity, as with his redemption Christ saves humankind from sin and death.

deep truth that will contribute to the community in terms of its moral consistency and cohesion.

In this sense, theater is the perfect cultural artefact that conjugates mimesis and poiesis. As Gunter Gebauer says: “The productive side of mimesis lies in the new connections it forges among art, philosophy and science. [...] it has a part in our symbolization of the world and in processes of simulation” (2). Theater is a created work that resembles *nature* but emphasizes the events that will lead the receiver to an elevated truth. Obviously, this elevated truth responds to the set of moral rules that operates in a society or era, but at the same time, it is a tool that works against the idea or feeling of a random universe in which cause and effect relationships are nonexistent. This meaning-making will contribute to the feeling of coherence and transcendence.

And there is no more elevated truth, or at least no more important truth, than knowing who we are and therefore how we react. As Keith Oatley claims, the process of simulation or fiction allows readers to explore their personal truths and personal emotions in relation to the context in which they arise.²⁷

In this process, many scholars agree on describing six basic and universal emotions: “fear, anger, sadness, disgust, surprise and happiness have been found to be universal emotions in terms of their facial expression and recognizability, as shown in

²⁷ Oatley, Keith. “Why Fiction May Be Twice as True as Fact: Fiction as cognitive and emotional simulation.” *Review of General Psychology*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1999, pp. 101-17.

the work of Ekman and others" (*The Feeling of What Happens* 285). LeDoux also insists on this universality of emotions, proposing a different selection: "Eight basic emotions - surprise, interest, joy, rage, fear, disgust, shame, anguish - controlled by 'hardwired' brain systems", and adds that guilt is the combination of joy and fear (112). These biological appreciations have their antecedents in Early Modern vocabularies. We should keep in mind that in this moment of history there is a clear idea of the existence of a human nature as Sabuco states in *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre*, a treatise addressed to understand human nature and self-knowledge.²⁸ Luis Vives, in his treatise *De Anima et Vita*, also discusses this *nature*, not in terms of essence, but of function (as contemporary neuroscientists do), in order to create that meaning that resolves problems:

No nos interesa nada saber qué es el alma; en cambio, nos interesa muchísimo conocer cuál sea ella y cuáles sus operaciones; tampoco el que ordenó que nos conociéramos a nosotros mismos, pensó en la esencia del alma, sino en las acciones para regular las costumbres, de suerte que, una vez expulsados los vicios, secundemos la virtud que nos ha de conducir al lugar donde, en plenitud de sabiduría y con inmortalidad, pasemos una vida muy feliz.²⁹

²⁸ Olivia de Sabuco Nantes Barrera (1562-c.1645), was a Spanish philosopher and physician, author of "Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre" (1588). There are doubts about the authorship of this work, considering the possibility that it was written with her father, Miguel Sabuco Álvarez. The first edition was published in 1587. *Biblioteca Complutense*, alfama.sim.ucm.es/dioscorides/consulta_libro.asp?ref=X533766205&idioma=0. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

²⁹ Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540) was a Spanish philosopher, humanist and pedagogist. He wrote about the soul, the emotions, memory and learning, and he is considered the "father of modern psychology."

Following Rosenwein's terminology, there are emotions that are valued and emotions devalued in this particular place and historical moment in which *autos sacramentales* are written, with guilt usually being the engine of these plays. Guilt is an emotion in which the subject believes –accurately or not- he or she has violated his or her moral standards or has violated the norm to which he or she voluntarily follows. In the case of Christianity, this emotion is central to its judicial system because guilt beyond an emotion is a state in relation to the law of God. In the case of Calderón's plays that are central to this study, due to their abstraction and symbolism, the question is not the material elicitors of the emotional response, what makes us feel guilt or redemption, but how these emotions are elicited and processed. It is not about what type of wealth has triggered greed, or what object has awakened lust, but the fact that those emotions exist and how they work.

In the preceptive treatises that influenced the Spanish theater before Calderón, mimesis is related to the normative ideology and to actions in relation to that norm. Juan de la Cueva, in *El viaje de Sanio* (1585) refers to Aristotle and his idea of poetry as an imitation of nature and adds "De la vida humana// es la comedia espejo, luz y guía, // de la verdad pintura soberana."³⁰ About tragic poetry, Cueva defines: "Es un retrato que nos va poniendo/ delante de los ojos los presentes// males de los mortales

³⁰ This image of theater as a mirror of human life is attributed to Cicero by Donatus. See *Sources of Dramatic Theory: Vol. 1, Plato to Congreve*, edited by Michael J. Sidnell and D. J. Conacher. Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 79.

miserables, // en héroes, reyes, príncipes notables". In Cueva's *Epístola dedicatoria a Momo (Primera parte de las comedias y tragedias, 1588)* he says: "Pues la comedia es imitación de la vida humana, espejo de las costumbres, retrato de la verdad, en que se nos representan las cosas que debemos huir, o las que nos conviene elegir, con claros y evidentes ejemplos, poderoso cualquiera dellos". López Pinciano adds the other element that is key in theater, the action: "Y digo que el primero, que es ser imitación, está ya bien declarado, y acerca dél al presente no hay más que considerar de que la imitación, juntamente con la acción, digo, imitación es acción [...] toda especie poética perfecta conviene el ser imitación de acción u obra, que todo es uno" (*Filosofía Antigua Poética, 1596*).³¹ Pinciano notes the Aristotelian precept of "limpiar las pasiones del ánimo", present particularly in epics and tragedies. So, the relationship between theater and emotions is a classical idea, as such is the change in those emotions needed to achieve a satisfactory outcome. The important detail here is that in the case of *autos sacramentales* this catharsis is produced in the audience through the catharsis of the main character. This happens because in the Eucharistic *autos*, the advent of the Eucharist purges the protagonist's passions, bringing him or her back to a state of steady happiness, or grace. Through a mirroring procedure, spectators replicate the sinner's cleansing process in the play. It is the Aristotelian catharsis. Because *autos* are

³¹ Alonso López "el Pinciano" (1547-1627) was an important 16th-century Spanish commentator on Aristotelian theatrical principles. Micer Andrés Rey de Artieda insists on this idea about comedies acting like lessons "para vivir con orden y medida", *Discursos, epístolas y epigramas de Artemidoro* (1605).

not tragedies, the main point is not to work through “*misericordia y miedo*” as Pinciano would say. They are not functioning as warning messages that contain bitter endings for the protagonist (beyond its potentiality to happen if the main character doesn’t modify his/her conduct). Instead, they work by allowing the audience to leave the theater or plaza with a renewed sense of rebirth and new beginnings. Juan Martí, in his *Segunda parte de la vida del pícaro Guzmán de Alfarache* (1604) claims that tragedy shows the audience what they have to escape from while comedy reveals what they must imitate³²; when we watch an *auto* we find warnings and lessons about both; if the spectator has to run from evil, he also has to imitate the quest for grace. There is no doubt that being in sin or in grace equates to feeling happiness or disgrace.

The *autos sacramentales* constitute their own genre, and they are created with a very clear goal: to show the power of redemption. That is to say, in between the efficient and final cause, the efficient cause is to witness the hero or heroine’s happy ending, but the final cause of the play is to demonstrate the mighty power of God as the Savior of souls.³³ If God is the Alpha and Omega, the ultimate cause of everything, the presence of God contributes to give meaning to the protagonists’ lives, by explaining the actions the characters performed, and by being the definitive cause of

³² All these notes about Spanish preceptive treatises are taken from Sánchez Escribano (1972).

³³ Augustine says about this that Christ wanted to heal the diseases of the bodies and souls to manifest himself as the Savior, because he is the creator of souls and bodies (21 MA I, MAI XV 318-19).

the restoration of order. This process occurs through negative emotions that work as purgatives, and in many cases that are inspired by the Devil. In the words of Saint Augustine in *City of God* “so long as we wear the infirmity of this life, we are rather worse men than better if we have none of these emotions³⁴ at all” (14. 9). So, these plays announce that these negative passions or emotions are necessary to restore order, and this way one can again be with God, after the expulsion from Paradise. This expulsion is nothing more than the recognition that it is natural for fallible humans to experience painful emotions.

The narrative and dramatic structure of the Bible has been thoroughly studied. The expulsion of man from Paradise could be the most schematic, yet enlightening account of this dramatic structure. As Jack Katz claims

The text of Genesis is not only a religious explanation of the origins of humankind but also a narratively integrated set of empirically verified, universal claims about human nature. Especially applicable to emotions as they arise and subside in everyday life [...]. Genesis locates the sources and dangers of emotional life dialectically, in the emergence of human identity as reflexive self-consciousness (545-546).

Following the classical division of protasis, epitasis and catastrophe, we find in the Spanish Early Modern theater a clear three-stage structure.³⁵ *Autos sacramentales*

³⁴Fear and grief.

³⁵ Luis Alfonso de Carvallo, in his *Cisne de Apolo* (1602), supports the idea of dividing the action in three acts, as the plot is divided into protasis, epitasis and catastrophe. In addition to this, he emphasizes the tripartite division of life, with infancy, adulthood and old age that resonates in the tripartite division of the comedy and action model.

begin with a well-defined initial situation, man in Paradise, which is interrupted by a conflict generated by two forces working together. On one hand, we have the desire of the Devil to disturb that state, on the other hand we have the *hamartia* of the main character, man, who decides to eat from the forbidden tree. The restoration of order is delayed until redemption, which comes from the sacrifice of the son of God. We are reminded of this sacrifice in every Eucharist. The Eucharist works as a *Deus Ex-machina* that nevertheless requires the will of the main character and his desire to restore order. *Autos sacramentales*, at least in the case of Calderón, rely heavily upon the final exaltation of the Eucharist; with this last element of the Eucharist, along with the original state and the disruption of that state, we now have our complete dramatic structure. This has special significance in the *autos* in which Human Nature/Man/Soul is the protagonist. It is important to acknowledge the existence of stages that change, because as Northrop Frye has noted, criticism often deals with literature in a frozen or spatial way, while drama is an art that moves in time, "we are following a movement in time, and our mental attitude is a participating one" ("A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakesporean Comedy and Romance" 134). Those changes are marked by events in the plot, but also by changes in the emotions of the protagonists. Not in vain, the etymology of the word *emotion* brings us back to the idea of motion, a motion

leading to an action. And the Greek etymology of drama is none other than *action*. We find in these *autos sacramentales* an action that ends the state of happiness, turning it into a state of displeasure, and another action that restores the state of happiness.

In *Rhetorica*, Aristotle identifies emotions as an affect of the soul accompanied by pleasure or pain. This pleasure and pain are warnings about a situation's value for life. That is to say, emotions have a valuing quality, which in these plays tell us about the benefits or damage of the trigger situation for the main characters. In the same way, pain alerts the brain about possible problems in the organism. This is why the allegory often takes the shape of a bodily affliction in Christian doctrine (and that explains the common metaphor as Christ as a physician, as we will see in the play studied in this dissertation, *El veneno y la triaca*).

Etymologically, "salvation" shares a meaning and roots with "health", and here is where we can make use of the mechanism of metaphor, to state that salvation is equivalent to the recovery of health.³⁶ Health is also defined by the World Health Organization as a "state of well-being", a definition that can be contested as we will see. Health is more desirable than illness, and illness is a dynamic process with two possible outcomes: recovery or non-recovery, the latter of which leads to death. In this

³⁶ Fray Luis de León states this idea in *De los nombres de Cristo*: "'Jesús, pues, significa 'salvación' o 'salud', que el ángel así lo dijo. Pues si se llama 'Salud' Cristo, cierto será que lo es, y si lo es, que lo es para nosotros, porque para sí no tiene necesidad de salud el que en sí no padece falta, ni tiene miedo de padecerla" (452).

cosmic view, physical death should be encountered in the optimal state of spiritual health, that is to say, in grace. The plot's conflict is where the dynamism occurs. The same in life: overcoming obstacles is the dynamic part of existence. And it is for this reason that we experience emotions. As Keith Oatley puts it, an emotion "is a psychological state or process that functions in the management of goals. It is typically elicited by evaluating an event as relevant to a goal; it is positive when the goal is advanced, negative when the goal is impeded" ("Emotions" 273). So, we have here again this idea of "telos" that we have seen in Aristotle. Or as Robert Kegan has put it, the aforementioned production of meaning is equivalent to using experience to discover and resolve problems.³⁷

Jackson Barry's concept of the "basic pattern of events" explains this idea with regard to theater. In his book *Dramatic Structure: The Shaping of Experience* he discusses how "the dramatic image is shaped from the materials of experience" (56). He maintains that the patterns chosen by the dramatist respond to the view of the basic patterns of life in time that he and his audience assume as certain (or at least, the patterns that the author thinks his audience assume as certain). Regarding this idea of Barry, Marvin A. Carlson adds:

The Greeks found a pattern of a successful man struck down a significant reflection of human experience. The Elizabethans tended to view life as a progressive historical process. The nineteenth century exhibited a strong believe

³⁷ For further information, see Kegan, R. *The Evolving Self*, Harvard University Press, 1982.

in determinism; and the twentieth century has inclined toward random and unstructured patterns (485).

What does this tell us about *autos sacramentales*? Like the rest of the *comedia*, it has a structural pattern that repeats itself, creating a formula. There is little attempt to change the formula; rather, the real virtuosity relies on variations of that formula. This formula addresses two things: the first is the basic patterns of life according to Calderón and his audience; and the second is the nature of reality. The first aspect of the formula, the “happy ending” of these plays invokes an optimistic view of life, in which it is possible to recover from any bad experience or feeling if the correct actions are taken. *Autos sacramentales* portray a man happy by nature, whose bad decisions can make him fail, but there is always a chance to recuperate from any failure.³⁸ They heavily rely on the idea of free will and the capacity to decide our actions in the interest of the best outcome. This type of life pattern appears to be related to a Catholic philosophy, but also to a moment in history in which in Spain defending the notion of free will is extremely important in the midst of the Counterreformation. In the second place, the semiotics of these plays’ formula reveals a world that functions in a mechanical way, in which causes and effects are perfectly assembled. This is an

³⁸ We cannot know for sure how these plays would persuade the audience through the device of punishment (the bad feelings resulting from the bad decision of committing a sin), but recent research seems to indicate that in order to modify behaviors through narrative, the ones that stress the positive consequences of the right behavior are much more effective than those which stress the negative consequences of wrong behaviors. See Kang Lee et al., “Can Classic Moral Stories Promote Honesty in Children?”, *Psychological Science*, vol. 25, no. 8, Jun. 2014, pp. 1629-36.

Aristotelian contribution to describing the material world that in this case corresponds with the spiritual/emotional world. The *auto sacramental*, as a religious-content artefact, still instills the idea of a knowable material world, thanks to the use of the allegory, which translates this materiality to the realm of immaterial emotions. A good example of this is the very same Eucharist, a piece of bread that denotes the restoration of grace, the restoration of happiness, nourishing the soul as bread does the body.³⁹ In the case of Calderón, we can find a depiction of a much more insecure view of the materiality of life in his secular plays, beginning with *La vida es sueño* (1635). In this play, as in many others, it seems difficult or impossible to know material reality, leading to feelings of confusion and lack of direction or purpose, that is to say, the inability to resolve problems. But in *El veneno y la triaca*, through the use of allegory, that confusion doesn't exist, as mental states become physical states. This is why Calderón also relies on the physical reaction that these two different realities cause in our bodies: the feeling of discomfort. In *El veneno y la triaca*, this rejection, this discomfort is turned into a material reality in the metaphor of sickness, which appears as directly provoked by sinning. Recent findings support the idea that social rejection shares somatosensory

³⁹ Even if we are able to explain these changes in a biochemical, physical way in the brain, the fact remains that we cannot explain how being happy "feels". This is the immaterial experience that philosophers refer to as qualia, defined by Frank Jackson as "certain features of the bodily sensations especially, but also of certain perceptual experiences, which no amount of purely physical information includes" (127).

representations with physical pain.⁴⁰ There cannot be a greater rejection than expulsion from Paradise, as expressed in metaphorical terms in the *autos*. The metaphor not only is based on the shared property of both elements (physical discomfort and emotional discomfort), but also on a material process measurable in the brain. If the idea of rejection applies here, it is because there is an equivalence to the idea of happiness, with the idea of happiness provided by someone. In a society in which well-being is related to the idea of being “in the presence of God”, discomfort can be translated in terms of the rupture of the attachment relationship. It is not a coincidence that the metaphor distinguishes God as the Father and Soul/Man/Human Nature as the son. We are here in a cultural environment that, despite stressing the idea of the individual through the exercise of his free will, ultimately demands that the individual respond to a higher power.⁴¹

This mechanism of cause and effect is explored in the *autos* through the relationship between actions and moral consequences, which elicit certain emotions in the characters. In the case of the *autos sacramentales*, the main emotion usually is guilt, inspired by Christian doctrine, and accompanied or expressed through other emotions

⁴⁰ Kross, Ethan, et al. “Social rejection shares somatosensory representations with physical pain.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Feb. 2011, www.pnas.org/content/early/2011/03/22/1102693108.full.pdf+html. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁴¹ To further pursue the idea of how overcoming the notion of hierarchy and “higher power” gives birth to the modern idea of the individual, see Louis Dumont, *Essays on Individualism. Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective*, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

like pain, sadness, and remorse.⁴² Guilt is one of the main emotions related to action and will, as guilt requires the recognition of agency and of a caused evil, and especially a violation of rules.

In Early Modern Spain, and in Calderón, this idea of rules and the violation of rules is constantly present, finding in *autos sacramentales* its most metaphysical expression, as Margaret Greer explains in her article “The Weight of Law in Calderón”. When it comes to action itself, we must remember that the Philosophy of Action requires an agent, with an intention and therefore a consciousness. This intention can be divided into beliefs and desires, and those beliefs and desires lead to a bodily movement that finally executes the action.⁴³ These beliefs and especially these desires are key in the conception of Calderón when he writes his *autos sacramentales* and sets his characters in motion. The movement of the *argumento* is developed in three stages: trigger, action, and outcome of the action. Guilt is an incoherence between the action and what the agent thinks he should have done; between what is and what should be. It is an emotion that is experienced neocortically as it involves several capacities located

⁴² Deriving from the original sin, caused by the will of Adam and Eve, the Catholic doctrine of original guilt is articulated around this feeling about the disparity between what should be done and what is actually done.

⁴³ George Wilson, and Samuel Shpall, “Action.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*.. [/plato.stanford.edu/entries/action/](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/action/). Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

in the neocortex such as judgment, consciousness and the intellect.⁴⁴ All of this occurs in the context of the community, as few emotions are as communal as guilt.⁴⁵ It is important to note that after the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Eucharist became the most important sacrament for Catholics, through which the sinner receives Christ and recovers Grace, that is to say, it is the sacrament that marks the cleansing of guilt. This factor, as Spain took the lead in the Counterreformation, along with the still very hierarchical Spanish society, explains the recurrence of these plots in Early Modern Spanish theater. Guilt encompasses the existence of a ruled world that must always remain that way, an idea the guilty character truly accepts. In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, guilt is metaphorically turned into disease, instead of being explicit as such. We often find in the *autos* the exposition of a dramatic conflict that includes a social problem with personal implications: an external trigger elicits an external conflict with inner consequences that must be solved in order to restore the internal state, and must be solved within exterior moral boundaries.

⁴⁴ "The primate neocortex is partly composed of many complicated association areas. It's the part of the brain that, in humans, is associated with cognitive functions related to reasoning, complex problem solving, forethought, and language". Jurmain, Robert, et al. *Introduction to Physical Anthropology 2011-2012 Edition*. Cengage Learning, 2011, p. 214.

⁴⁵ Baumeister, Roy F., et al. "Guilt: An interpersonal approach." *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 115, no. 2, Mar. 1994, pp. 243-67.

2.3 The case of *El veneno y la triaca*

2.3.1 The myth

El veneno y la triaca is an *auto sacramental* by Calderón de la Barca, which tells the story of the fall of man after eating the forbidden fruit. Calderón uses the metaphor of Christ as physician, *Christus Medicus*, in his *autos sacramentales* *El veneno y la triaca* and *La cura y la enfermedad*. The first was written before 1644, possibly in the late 1630s or early 1640s (Ferrer 296); The second consists of a second version of the same theme, dated around 1657-1658, which implies "a rewriting ... more in line with the poet's technical expertise and ideological and dramatic maturity,"⁴⁶ as Escudero has pointed out in his critical edition of *El veneno y la triaca* (11, 96).

This metaphor is developed without a very complex allegory. A Princess, heiress of the Empire, is enjoying her garden in the company of her tutor, Understanding, and her lady-in-waiting, Innocence. Deceived by the Devil (Lucero⁴⁷) and Death, she decides to eat an apple, despite warnings. The apple looks beautiful and delicious, but as the title suggests, the apple is poisoned. After the Princess gets sick, Christ comes in the form of a physician and heals her. Grace is reinstated in our protagonist. Of course *the auto sacramental* gathers the common elements of the doctrine

⁴⁶ And in which the metaphor of *Christus Medicus* is greatly enlarged.

⁴⁷ In this *auto* Calderón gives the Devil the name of Lucero, a word applied in Spanish to bright celestial bodies. Lucero is related to the latin word Lucifer or "bringer of light" or "morning star". Lucero is a common name in Spanish for the Devil.

and tradition: the Princess is guilty of the sin of pride, mother of all the vices and the poison is disguised in an apple.⁴⁸

There are many interpretations of this myth and many questions surrounding it.⁴⁹ One question, however, stands out from amongst the rest: Why would God deny

⁴⁸ "The patristic tradition that Augustine inherited did not have a unified view about the nature of Lucifer's primal sin. The majority view, including Origen, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Ambrose, held that Lucifer's sin was pride (*superbia*) — a view that took as its Biblical warrant the verses addressed to Lucifer: "Thou has said in thine heart: I shall ascend into Heaven; I shall exalt my throne above the stars of God... I shall be like unto the Most High" (Is. 14:13-14). The minority view, including Irenaeus, Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and Cyprian, held that Lucifer's sin was envy (*invidia*), and more specifically envy of humanity for being created in the image of God." (King 262).
Regarding the apple, "The traditional perception of an apple tree, from which Eve took fruit and misled her husband — which becomes an established motif in the history of art — arises from a double misunderstanding. Neither the Hebrew original nor the Greek translation makes reference to an apple. The mention of an apple is a translation error, or at least a feisty concretization, filling out the gap in the biblical narrative concerning the species of the tree. The undefined fruit of the tree in the Hebrew text was identified as *malus*, "apple" in the Latin tradition, which seemed to be the suitable translation from the common Christian interpretation, because the apple is homonymous with *malus*, "bad, evil" or *malum* "sin" in Latin." (Bauks 267).

⁴⁹Because of its condensation, I will use the categorization of Mary Magoulick to consider this narrative a myth:

"1-Myths are Cosmogonic Narratives, connected with the Foundation or Origin of the Universe (and key beings within that universe), though often specifically in terms of a particular culture or region. Given the connection to origins, the setting is typically primordial (the beginning of time) and characters are proto-human or deific. Myths also often have cosmogonic overtones even when not fully cosmogonic, for instance dealing with origins of important elements of the culture (food, medicine, ceremonies, etc.).

2-Myths are Narratives of a Sacred Nature, often connected with some Ritual. Myths are often foundational or key narratives associated with religions. These narratives are believed to be true from within the associated faith system (though sometimes that truth is understood to be metaphorical rather than literal). Within any given culture there may be sacred and secular myths coexisting.

3-Myths are Narratives Formative or Reflective of Social Order or Values within a Culture (e.g. functionalism).

4-Myths are Narratives Representative of a Particular Epistemology or Way of Understanding Nature and Organizing Thought. For example, structuralism recognizes paired bundles of opposites (or dualities -- like light and dark) as central to myths.

5-Mythic Narratives often Involve Heroic Characters (possibly proto-humans, super humans, or gods) who mediate inherent, troubling dualities, reconcile us to our realities, or establish the patterns for life as we know it.

man the knowledge of good and evil? Taking into account that in Hebrew Adam means "human," it has been interpreted, for instance, as a developmental history of human community.⁵⁰ Also as an anthropogenic explanation of why humans die, understanding death as a punishment that requires a fault, in opinion of Frye and MacPherson (*Biblical and Classical Myths: The Mythological Framework of Western Culture*, 182). A well-known interpretation is the one that equates this myth with the emancipation of the child from the father (19).⁵¹ Robert Gordis refers to this myth as "sexual consciousness", a progression from childhood to adulthood, but also as "the power of calling into existence new beings, which is the distinguishing mark of God" (92). And one of the consequences of the expulsion from Paradise is the loss of the preternatural gifts: impassibility in front of pain, immortality, and control over concupiscence, this being the control of irrational impulses.

As Tim Callahan proves in his reading of Genesis "It is a show that, despite its familiarity, most people don't really know. For example, most people believe the snake

6-Myths are Narratives that are "Counter-Factual in featuring actors and actions that confound the conventions of routine experience". *Georgia College*, faculty.gcsu.edu/custom-website/mary-magoulick/defmyth.htm. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁵⁰ Jeter, Kris. "Paradise Through the Sands of Time: The Human Yearning for Community." *Marriage & Family Review*, vol. 15, no. 2, Jun. 1990, pp. 271-88.

⁵¹ Abelow, Benjamin J. "Paradise Lost: Childhood Punishment and the Myth of Adam's sin." *A Cry Instead of Justice: The Bible and Cultures of Violence in Psychological Perspective*, edited by Andrew D. Kille and D. Daschke. *Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies*, vol. 499, 2010, pp. 19-41.

lied to Eve and that Yahweh told Adam the truth concerning the effects of eating the forbidden fruit" (57). Calderón respects the true reading of the myth and plays with it when it comes to knowledge and decision-making, replicating the matrix of how real decision-making happens, many times in ignorance of the necessary data, and many other times relying on emotional decision-making more than on rational decision-making. So the myth explains to a great extent how the human cognitive apparatus works, strongly based on binary options.

This binary dychotomy appears repeatedly in the study of these works. As we have seen, *autos sacramentales* are binary in their structure, they have an *asunto* and an *argumento*. This binary structure is replicated in the clear form of the allegory, based on metaphors, also of a binary nature, based on two terms. The myth is an allegory itself, and usually divides the world in binary terms, good and evil, an idea that is not alien to *autos sacramentales* and especially not to *El veneno y la triaca*⁵².

Binary thinking is to a great extent a fundamental basis of decision-making because, in its most simplified expression, any decision ultimately entails one choice opposed to everything that is not that choice. Beyond that, binary narratives present themselves as easy pedagogical instruments, especially when the implementation of rules or advice is included in the narrative. The complexity of the world is brought to a

⁵² Claude Lévi-Strauss has studied thoroughly the binary structure of myths, claiming in *The Raw and the Cooked* (1970) that binaries form the basic structure of all cultures.

simplification in our decision making processes, that is to say, our cognitive apparatus simplifies the world to help us decide. In addition, narrative helps this simplification through purposely avoiding the presentation of the aforementioned complexity.

While in life experience our own cognitive apparatus eventually reduces every possible option to only two choices, in fiction that process is completed by the author. Having many options appearing in front of our eyes is a factor of stress, leading to a possible decision-making paralysis.⁵³ This is because, as previously mentioned, decisions are not made rationally, but to a great extent, emotionally. Binary options and a binary structure allow us to choose with a relatively low consumption of energy and resources and at the same time still allow us to feel competent in our understanding skills. This is particularly true in a media like theater, and even more so in a genre like *autos sacramentales* in which there is a clear purpose to move the audience emotionally.

Presenting only two possible choices, a right one and a wrong one, it is easy to convince the audience of the good of the right option, and get them to feel satisfied about agreeing with that choice.

Myths are stories that are repeated constantly in a given culture. As a matter of fact, many myths have very similar representations in different cultures. This is because as pointed out, myths describe a certain epistemology, a way to understand nature and organize thought. And this is why they are repeated over time: because

⁵³ For further information, see Schwartz, B., *The Paradox of Choice*. Harper Collins, 2009.

they answer questions that are always there. In this case, why do death and pain exist? Also, because humans need an explanation, answering our cause-seeking cognition, the explanation requires a binary solution in which there was a time in which pain and death didn't exist. The transition from that "paradise" to actual life is imagined as a terrible event in the history of human kind, that because of our cognitive structure, is impossible to forget. The repetition of these stories, over the centuries, taking into account that the human brain processes equally reality and non-reality⁵⁴, and that literature is also processed as reality⁵⁵, has created this shared trauma that the audience of this given culture needs to exorcise.

2.3.2 The metaphor of the physician

This *auto* follows the traditional scheme of state of grace-fall-redemption allegorizing all men in the human race, or in this case in human nature, expelled from Paradise because of the original sin committed by Adam and Eve. In *El veneno y la triaca*, the *auto* that occupies us, human nature is represented by an Infanta, heiress of the empire, who will be snatched from her dominions because of the first fault, the ingestion of an apple offered by an unloved lover, Lucero, which will cause the illness

⁵⁴ Pascual-Leone, A. et al, "Modulation of muscle responses evoked by transcranial magnetic stimulation during the acquisition of new fine motor skills." in *Journal of Neurophysiology*. September 1995 Vol. 74 no. 3, pp. 1037-1045.

⁵⁵ Speer, Nicole K., "Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations of Visual and Motor Experiences" in *Psychological Science*, Vol 20, Issue 8, 2009, pp. 989-99.

of the protagonist. A pilgrim physician, Christ, will supply the medicines necessary for the recovery of the Infanta, making her his wife. This *auto* presents therefore the medicinal plot, the love triangle and the confrontation between good and evil, as different levels of allegory.

There are two foundations of this type of medicinal metaphor. First, the identification of disease with sin, and secondly, the tradition of the metaphor of Christ as physician or healer.⁵⁶ Regarding the identification of the disease as sin, it is a pre-scientific magical vision that in the words of Laín Entralgo responds to an "abusively personalistic conception of human sickness" (*Pecado y enfermedad* 23). In ethical terms, this identification is related to Kant's *homo noumenon*, who is explained only in terms of his personality and internal freedom; a rational being who legislates the moral law and can act morally for his own benefit.⁵⁷ This *homo noumenon* is opposed to the *homo phaenomenon*, who is explained in bodily terms; he is a rational man but also part of a sensible and deterministic world. This allegory will require the use of both categories, blurring a strict dualism between soul and body, in which the very metaphor of human nature, the Infanta, will need the sensible result, the physical lived illness, in order to

⁵⁶ This idea is already reflected in the etymology of the name: "'Jesús', pues, significa 'salvación' o 'salud', que el ángel así lo dijo. Pues si se llama 'Salud' Cristo, cierto será que lo es, y si lo es, que lo es para nosotros, porque para sí no tiene necesidad de salud el que en sí no padece falta, ni tiene miedo de padecerla" as indicates Fray Luis de León (*De los nombres de Cristo* 452).

⁵⁷ *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge University Press, 1996.

construct the allegory that Calderón offers us in *El veneno y la triaca*. If, on the one hand, Calderón chooses the *homo noumenon*, since we cannot forget we are dealing with a text of a moral doctrinal character⁵⁸; on the other hand, the mere use of the metaphor of medicine implies a recognition of the *homo phaenomenon*. This *homo phaenomenon* will be portrayed according to the characteristics of the physicalist medicine initiated by Hippocrates in the fifth century BCE. The metaphor is linked to the thought of Galen, given that, in words of Laín:

la enfermedad es siempre un estado de su cuerpo: fuera del cuerpo enfermo – en el medio exterior o en el alma- puede haber causas de enfermedad, mas no enfermedad propiamente dicha. [sickness is always a corporeal state: outside the sick body – in the external environment or in the soul – there can be causes of illness, but not illness properly speaking] (*Pecado y enfermedad* 45).

The other element on which Calderon draws to compose this *auto sacramental* is the tradition of the metaphor of Christ's metaphor as physician, *Christus Medicus*.⁵⁹ This metaphor is much more prevalent in Eastern Christianity than in Western Christianity, where the metaphor of *Christus Miles* and the judicial metaphor, in which Christ rescues and redeems sin and death are predominant.⁶⁰ As to its biblical origins, we can refer to the Gospels when Jesus identifies himself as a physician by saying, "The

⁵⁸ Which in this case uses the diseases as reflection of the illusion of control over reality, derived from the need to generate meaning.

⁵⁹ A metaphor repeated by early Christian writers, such as Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius of Antioch, Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage and Origen among others. Lopez Alonso, Marta. "Aspectos éticos de la acción sanadora de Jesús." *Selecciones de Teología*, vol. 171, 2004, p. 217.

⁶⁰ Guroian, Vigen. "Salvation: Divine Therapy." *Theology Today*, vol. 61, no. 3, Oct. 2004, p.309.

healthy have no need of a physician, but the sick" (Matthew 9:12, Mark 2:17, Luke 5: 31), in addition to the numerous references that the Gospels contain regarding the healing work of Jesus.⁶¹ As Klaus Bergdolt points out, "the promulgation of such scenes not only in early theology but also in Christian art, which flourished from the third century onwards, establishes Christ as the single source of hope for those suffering from afflictions of soul or body" (98). Of great importance in the development of the metaphor of Christ as a physician are also the writings of Augustine⁶², who on many occasions attributes to Christ the work of a physician of souls:

Ninguna otra causa impulsó más a Cristo a venir al mundo que salvar a los pecadores. Si se suprimen las enfermedades y las heridas, la medicina no tiene razón de ser. Si pues, un gran médico bajó del cielo, es porque había un gran enfermo que curar, todo el mundo. [No other cause more urged Christ to come into the world than to save sinners. If diseases and wounds are suppressed, medicine has no reason to be. If a great physician came down from the sky, it is because there was a great patient to cure, the whole world] (Sermon 175, 1).

⁶¹ Bergdolt adds: "Jesus frequently appears in the New Testament as a healer, as 'Christus Medicus', whose help is invoked by the sick and afflicted, for 'It is not healthy that need a doctor, but the sick' (Luke 5:31). Scenes involving the healing of the sick represent key passages in the four Gospels, as well as in the Acts of the Apostles " Bergdolt, Klaus. *Wellbeing. A cultural History of Healthy Living*. Polity Press, 1999, p. 98.

⁶² "The intense struggle during the second and third centuries between the cult of Asclepius, the pagan healer, and the worship of Christ stimulated the early Church fathers to describe God's salvation of mankind by using similes taken from medicine." Yoshikawa, Naoë Kukita. "Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul: Henry of Lancaster and Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines." *Medical History*, vol. 53, no. 3, Jul. 2009, p. 399.

Augustine insists on the relationship between sin and sickness when he says, "Head of all diseases is pride, for she is the head of all sins... Heal pride and there will be no injustice."⁶³

The allegory is based on this continuous correspondence between body and soul, in which, although the disease is moral and the remedies are also moral, it will have physical consequences, and the remedies would also be physical. Because for Augustine *gratia medicine est* (Sermon 156, 5); nevertheless, by virtue of its sacramental character, it must be taken into account that grace is administered through sensible means.⁶⁴ In the same way, the sensible theatrical and performative medium to communicate the appearance of sin is the physical illness and the sensible means to erase it is the provision of the sacrament that functions as a drug, ratifying the body as a fundamental element of the dramatic mechanism. If dualism becomes diffuse in this

⁶³ In Io. Ev. Tr. 26,16 (Patrologia Latina 35, 1604) "Caput omnium morborum superbia est, quia caput omnium peccatorum superbia... Cura superbiam, et nulla erit iniquitas." Augustine also says: "Quiso sanar las enfermedades del cuerpo para manifestarse como salvador de las almas porque de cuerpos y almas es él creador. Creó las almas, creó los cuerpos, así como con sus curaciones corporales quiso animarnos a buscar la salud en Él. Sanó a toda clase de enfermos para que las almas, atendiendo a lo que obraba en los cuerpos, desearan para el espíritu lo que realizaba en lo externo. ¿Cuántas maravillas obró? Sanó del flujo de sangre, curó a leprosos, al paralítico; enfermedades del alma son todas éstas. Sanó al cojo y al ciego; cojea todo el que no va por el camino recto de la vida; ciego es quien no cree en Dios flujo de sangre padece el lascivo, y cubierto de lepra se halla el mendaz y el inconstante. Aquí es necesaria la mano de Cristo, que curó tantas dolencias corporales para que las almas deseen y logren también la salud espiritual" (21 MA I, MAI XV 318-19. *Miscellanea Agostianana*).

⁶⁴ "Religious rituals cue humans' cognitive systems for representing actions, which leads people to infer that something is getting done." McCauley, Robert N. "The importance of being 'Ernest'." *Creating Consilience. Integrating the Sciences and the Humanities*, edited by Edward Slingerland and Mark Collard. Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 267.

type of construction, we should understand that the diseased body as a metaphor for the diseased soul does not function in this case as a symbol (in which the relation between signifier and meaning is arbitrary), using the terminology of Charles Sanders Peirce, but as a symptom or indication.⁶⁵ This happens because there is a cause-effect relationship in which the signifier and meaning have a relationship of contiguity. Physical illness is a symptom of moral illness, which brings us back to the relation of sin to illness, on the one hand, but on the other hand, it also refers to the psychosomatic experience of pre-Cartesian belief.⁶⁶

2.3.3 The idea of health as a state

The idea of health as a state is a concept still supported today by the official definition of WHO, an organization that in 1946 adopted the definition of Andrija Stampar, which states that " Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."⁶⁷ This definition is

⁶⁵ Atkin, A. "Peirce's Theory of Signs." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*. plato.stanford.edu/entries/peirce-semiotics/. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁶⁶ "Since in pre-Cartesian society, the body and soul were regarded as unified entities, the one influencing the condition of the other, sin might be the root of disease, and physical healing would directly result from confession by virtue of its cleansing effect. The interconnection between physical and spiritual health was reinforced around the time of the Gregorian Reform and the Fourth Lateran Council, reforms which had a far-reaching impact on individuals in all walks of life." Yoshikawa, Naoë Kukita. "Holy Medicine and Diseases of the Soul: Henry of Lancaster and Le Livre de Seyntz Medicines." *Medical History*, vol. 53, no. 3, Jul. 2009, p. 399.

⁶⁷ The idea of "state" is being challenging by contemporary scholars who define it more accurately as a "dynamic process". According to the WHO: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". The bibliographic citation for this definition is: Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health

however supported today by broad sectors of the medical profession, taking as an example the response of Dr. Luis Rodríguez Miguez, who maintains that "health is not a state, but a dynamic process, with internal and external changes." Rodríguez Miguez continues: "It is not complete either; health, like age, is relative. There are degrees of health as there are of intelligence, equanimity or beauty" (52).⁶⁸ This idea of the concept of health as a state is fundamentally related to a normative binary conception of what should be and what should not be, or what is the same, a natural, proper and essential order of things, which is disturbed and which coincides fully with the Abrahamic order, in which there is an almighty God, creator of harmony and order, and an element of disturbance, evil, which alters the aforementioned natural order of things. In the same way, the idea of health as a state altered by the disease coincides fully with a narrative order in which, in the passage from the initial premise to the conclusion, both states are mediated through a dynamic conflict.

In *El veneno y la triaca* we find a triple expression in terms of the concept of state: first we find the initial state in the dramatic order, which will be disturbed by the

Conference, New York, 19 Jun. - 22 July 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. The definition has not been amended since 1948. World Health Organization, www.who.int/suggestions/faq/en/. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁶⁸ Author's translation.

conflict to finally achieve the restoration of order, the basic scheme of the theatrical object of this study. Secondly, in the theological order, that state is the state of sanctifying grace in which human nature lives before the presentation of the conflict, which is original sin, and the restoration of order will come through the administration of the sacraments in order to return to the state of grace. Thirdly, in the order of medical allegory, the initial state is a state of health, which will be altered by the disease and the Infanta will not return to that state of being until the pharmaceutical treatment that the pilgrim/physician will apply to her.

In the Spanish Baroque theater there is no need for a restoration of the initial order, but rather a restoration of order, albeit significantly different from the initial one, which restoration functions as a closure of the dramatic journey. In the theological order, however, that restoration is much needed in order to conclude the conflict episode. This restoration is the recovery of the state of sanctifying grace, because the state of grace, the presence of God in souls, is a *state of complete well-being*, characterized in the text of the book as "extremo de perfección" (257 – 258), or eutaxia, the state of perfect health.⁶⁹ Although it will not be the original state, but a new state in which

⁶⁹ As a consequence of original sin Adam and Eve lose the original state of grace, that is, the preternatural gifts (immortality, impassibility to pain or grief, integrity by which passions would be subject to reason, and science or knowledge without Error) and supernatural gifts (sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit). Although the expulsion from Paradise damages human nature, which is inevitably wounded, now subject to passions, death and pain, it is possible to recover the sanctifying grace in life, which is distinguished from the present grace in that it is a permanent grace, consisting of the presence of God in the souls of men, and that is only lost through mortal sin, which is a sin with will.

death is possible after the expulsion from paradise.⁷⁰ In this new state we see again a relationship with the medical semantic field: there is a total recovery of the state of sanctifying grace, which is the one that in this context is related to health.⁷¹ The health allegory present in *El veneno y la triaca* is a *state*, and in the same way the concept of health still is present in other areas, as the definition of WHO shows.

2.3.4 Semiology of the disease

The semiology of the disease is what the disease does, the expression of its consequences on the patient through signals. Semiology is divided into symptoms and signs. If the signal is subjective, it is a symptom; if it is objective and observable by the physician, it is a sign (Argente 4). As a result of falling ill, the Infanta presents clear signs, such as fainting, which are visible signs on the stage, but also elements that can be understood as both symptom and sign and that are harnessed by the metaphorical language. The Infanta feels that her heart has broken in her chest and experiences a tachycardia: "en él late de manera// que creo muchos son" (876 – 877) This allows the author to identify the physical signal with the metaphor describing the heart of the Infanta as a collective of the hearts of all men. Locating evil in the heart is also related

⁷⁰ Death is one of the characters of this *auto*, as an assistant to Lucero, the Devil figure.

⁷¹ This idea of completeness or perfection still persists in the medical profession: "Healing in its deepest sense [is] the restoration of wholeness." McWhirney, Ian R. "Are we on the brink of a major transformation of clinical method?" *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, vol. 135, no. 8, Oct. 1986, p. 875.

to the old Aristotelian conception of the heart as the center of the soul, since it is the soul that has been affected by the Original Sin. We should refer here to the differentiation that the English language makes between disease and illness. While disease is an objective and measurable concept about a malfunction of the organism, illness refers to the subjective experience of that malfunction. Therefore, it is possible to suffer a disease without experiencing illness and viceversa.⁷² In the case of *El veneno y la triaca* we have both phenomena because there is an objective and measurable disturbance (the effect of poison), but also a subjective experience of the problem, which makes the Infanta lose vitality and wish death, including a suicide attempt. When the Infanta says "Aunque esto que soy no sea, // desde este peñasco al mar // hoy me he de precipitar" (1009 – 1011), threatening to jump from a cliff into the sea, she is denoting the subjective experience, which ends the vital well-being, beyond the disease itself. This way, through metaphor the author achieves an inversion of the terms of the cause-effect relationship; usually it is the objective disease which causes the subjective experience, but by virtue of the allegory we have a subjective experience, the sin, the *hamartia*, causing the subjective disease, the poisoning. The Infanta's loss of beauty -- when she is reflected in a spring, she sees only a corpse -- is halfway between subjective and objective experience; it works in the realm of metaphor as a denial of the Platonic

⁷² For further discussion, see the work of Harry Edmund Emson: "Health, disease and illness; matters for definition." *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, vol. 136, no. 8, 1987, pp. 811-13.

triad of truth, beauty and goodness, but it also introduces an objective element which is the mortality of men as a result of the commission of Original Sin.

2.3.5. Noumenal character of the disease

The possibility of a noumenal experience of the disease is related to the ideology expressed in the *autos sacramentales*, which are moral indoctrinating works in which the principle of free will defended by the Counter Reformation plays a fundamental role. Understanding pride as the sin that is the origin of the rest of the sins, Calderón puts special emphasis throughout the text on remarking on the beauty of the Infanta and her self-infatuation. This narcissism is sung by the rest of characters in the form of a chorus and by the character Music, thus satisfying on stage the requirement of universal knowledge.⁷³ In this sin of pride, sin is present very early in the play.⁷⁴ In the same vein the sin of Lucero resonates, anticipating the climax of the conflict and an imbalance in the personal configuration of the Infanta, or what is the same, a disturbance of her internal harmony. The Infanta is ill because of a moral error, voluntarily committed since her Inocencia⁷⁵ warns her that the apple is a forbidden

⁷³ "In order for the real spectator to recognize himself in the "ideal spectator" of the chorus, the values transmitted by the latter must be his own, and total identification must be possible. Accordingly, the chorus has no chance of being accepted by the audience unless the audience is welded together by cult, believe or ideology" (Pavis 55.)

⁷⁴ In the first intervention of the Inocencia, one of the contributing characters of the Infanta, Calderón anticipates the change of state that the protagonist will suffer, pointing out her sin: "No con hermoso desdén// desprecies festejo igual" e introduciendo el factor de la soberbia" (87–88).

⁷⁵ Named with this spelling in the edition of Escudero.

fruit. However, the normative nature of the Abrahamic order reappears, since the Infanta is aware that the fruit is forbidden but not of the consequences of eating it: she thinks that by eating of the apple she will not stop being happy (850 – 851). She cannot fall into sin without wanting or noticing it, according to the doctrine, but she is ignorant of the consequences of sin. This will be countered by the superior knowledge of the physician, who knows the consequences of the administration of medicines, establishing a scientific knowledge of cause and effect. This knowledge without error is one of the preternatural gifts lost by man with the commission of original sin. Lucero, the antagonist, appears portrayed as a suitor hurt by the Infanta's rejection, but also as a learned scientist, capable of poisoning the natural elements.⁷⁶ Lucero's collaborator in

⁷⁶ Yo supe ciencias, yo supe
por ellas los diferentes
secretos que hierbas, plantas,
piedras y frutos contienen.
Del más venenoso hechizo
contra ti pienso valerme,
que te haga, por fuerza mía,
las viandas excelentes,
que aquesas copas te sirven;
los cristales que esas fuentes
te rinden, siempre sonoras;
las bellas flores alegres,
que tributan estos cuadros
en hermosos ramilletes
he de avenemar, llamando
a que confecciones temple
el veneno del hechizo,
a la Muerte, que la Muerte
mágica es, que fingir sabe

this task will be Death, an element introduced in the biblical story following the expulsion from paradise and a more serious consequence of the illness, influencing the pair of sin-death, illness-death ("y eternamente han de ser// amigos Pecado y Muerte", 666 – 667).

Despite her lack of full knowledge of the consequences, the Infanta is responsible for the moral error that precipitates the disease; there was a willingness in it. But sickness is not a punishment sent by God; it is a mechanical consequence of sin. It is the etiology or cause of disease, which by virtue of the metaphor establishes a pathogenic external agent, the apple, introducing into the play the ambiguity of the external factor. In the original state of grace, Nature functions as a vassal of the Infanta.⁷⁷ However, "en el pecado original del hombre participa toda la naturaleza creada [in man's original sin, all created nature participates]" (Escudero 143). Thus, all the natural elements that in the first part of the *auto* were servants of the protagonist will now begin to harm her. It is not just how the weather of different seasons makes her feel cold or hot, but the very fact that the apple can contain poison. This is also linked to the loss of the preternatural gifts, enabling the Infanta to feel pain but at the

mil fantasmas aparentes. (638–657).

⁷⁷ "Todos la obedeceremos// con en efecto, señor, // Infanta nuestra, pues vemos// que de lealtad y de amor// vasallaje la debemos" (142–146).

same time establishing an element of ambiguity in matter after the original sin, conferring to all matter a changing moral sense. If the apple, the external agent, can be poisoned and cause disease, other external agents such as wheat or water can be the medicine and cause of healing. Matter functions in relationship to the state of grace or sin.

As a noumenonal being responsible for her own morality to her own benefit, it is necessary for the protagonist to want to be cured and for this reason it is also necessary that the illness is not only an objective experience, but also a subjective experience of suffering, explicitly explained in the verses in which the Infanta observes the threatening change of the external world (969 – 1011) and the verses in which she refers to her internal changes (1019 – 1058). The Infanta is the first to recognize her illness (through her first shudder after biting the apple and the internal and external change that follow) and it is also voluntary in her to want to be cured from the pain experienced and summarized in the verses "este fuego que me abrasa// este áspid que me muerde,// víboras que despedaza// en el corazón cebadas// son homicidas del alma" (1403 – 1407), words that follow the question "¿Adónde hallaré remedio?" (1408). If the will is present in the character of the Infanta, her Understanding, unfolded in another character, will be in charge of finding the cure, which is none other than calling a physician.

2.3.6 Nosology of the Disease

The nosology of disease is what the disease is. Sin, as a disturbance / elimination of the state of grace, brings a disharmony that is measured in terms of illness, with objective and subjective results that will render the Infanta's life impracticable until restored to her health / state of grace.⁷⁸ The concept of state is emphasized by Calderón in this *auto* through the treatment of time: in this original state of grace, in the earthly paradise, it is always spring "porque aquí son todos// Primavera solamente" (686 – 687), denoting thus the suspension of the passage of time (Escudero, 2000:88) and, therefore, of any possible dynamism. This eternal spring of the *locus amoenus*, which is paradise, not only introduces the idea of state of well-being, but also refers to the idea of the primordial beginning or state of life, since that represents the spring, the pre-summer state⁷⁹, and winter or the sunset of existence. The Infanta recognizes Understanding, the character that initiates the play, as the wise arbitrator, "árbitro docto, de cuanto en acordada armonía, // ya con risa, ya con llanto, // cubre con su capa el día, // y la noche con su manto" (32 – 36), insisting on the idea of harmonic state. However, the disease consists of change, of dynamism, as we have seen. After biting the apple, and after the

⁷⁸ Regarding this aspect, Laín states: "Fieles a esta actitud intelectual, los médicos del siglo V (desde Alcmeón a Hipócrates) verán la causa próxima de todas las enfermedades en un desorden de la *physis* de quien las padece; y su causa remota, en una alteración de las relaciones vitales entre la individual *physis* del enfermo y la *physis* universal" (*Pecado y enfermedad* 32).

⁷⁹ Or entrance to the summer, as the entry of the *Tesoro de la Lengua Castellana* by Sebastián de Covarrubias defines it.

initial pain, the Infanta will cry furiously for the cessation of what she has been so far and before moving into the story of her feelings, she anticipates her own death ("celebrad, con triste llanto, // las exequias de mi muerte," 868 – 869), breaking the initial harmony in which she was called to inherit her father's empire. From that moment, time will begin to pass, introducing the factor of mortality: "Los tiempos con sus presencias // la cantaron y afligieron // ... que ha de llorar viendo estoy, // en pasando el día de hoy, // mañana por el de ayer" (959 – 968). If winter, the first season when time is set in motion, comes to an end, after it spring will come with the cure (1338 – 1340), restoring in nature the beauty that belongs to the state of grace.

2.3.7. Diagnosis and treatment

Although the Infanta is aware of experiencing evil, she cannot heal herself on her own, but needs external treatment. Her Understanding will treat sin as a disease with words such as *curar*, *convalecer*, *sanar*, and anticipates the possibility of the Infanta returning to her former state, "volviendo a quedar como antes" (1111).⁸⁰ For this he summons physicians to find the *triacaca*. The concept of *triacaca* collaborates in the development of the allegory of binary struggle, as it contrasts the sacraments and their routes of administration to that of the pathogens.⁸¹

⁸⁰ The elements will become then her vassals again (1114–1115).

⁸¹ "Medicamento eficazísimo compuesto de muchos simples, y lo que es de admirar los más dellos venenosos, que remedia a los que están emponzoñados con qualquier género de veneno [A most

The figure of the physician only appears once the illness has been established, in the manner of a *Deus Ex Machina*, because as we have seen, *the healthy have no need of a physician, but the sick*, likewise establishing a healing medicine in contrast to preventive medicine and linking it with the judicial metaphor of Christ as redeemer. In the end, even for the medical profession, it is easier to discuss the concept of illness than health as Emson says (812). Christ appears then in the ship of the Church dressed as a pilgrim, and as the *galán* of the play, characterized as a "gallardo joven" [handsome young man]⁸² (1198). He identifies himself saying "al Mundo vengo, llamado// de las gentes que me aguardan,// a dar salud y vida// a una bellísima infanta,// que dicen que en él padece// una enfermedad extraña// de hechizos" (1235 – 1241). The pilgrim is not only a physician who is going to make an analysis of the situation but is also a merchant (1243), who has acquired in his travels two species that can restore the Infanta to her beauty and grace, or in other words, to her external and internal state of health. The

efficacious medicine composed of many simple ones, and what is surprising, most of them venomous, which cures those who are poisoned with any kind of poison]" (Covarrubias).

⁸² A characteristic repeated by the Infanta ("lindo talle// tiene el huesped" 1448–1449) and by Inocencia, at this moment Malicia, who notes the rarity of a handsome doctor ("Novedad rara// es por lo menos el ver// que un médico galán haya", 1449–1451). In subsequent verses, Inocencia / Malicia expresses distrust of the fact that a gallant physician can indeed cure, attributing this reasoning to Malicia's inherent suspicion. The reference to the oddity of a handsome physician is related to the satyre about the figure of the physician, also mocked by Calderón, and studied by Hendrik Schlieper. Schlieper, Hendrik. "Matasanos y Salvador. El médico y la medicina como variaciones teatrales de Calderón." *Actas del XV Coloquio Anglogermano sobre Calderón. Calderón y su escuela; variaciones e innovación de un modelo teatral*. Wrocław, July, 14-18, 2008, edited by Manfred Tietz, Gero Arnscheidt and Beata Baczyńska. Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011, pp. 461-481.

fact that the treatment is known before the diagnostic consultation takes place in the allegory emphasizes the divine nature of the physician and, therefore, his omniscience. This physician *brings health* (1261 – 1262) to the patient; with this, the metaphor regarding health is outsourced and related to the drugs that will be dispensed, which effectiveness the physician knows even before studying the case (1303).⁸³ This reveals an understanding of a physical and mechanical universe, capable of causing moral change. Although the Pilgrim in the first instance knows that his remedies will be effective, he still goes through the process of diagnosis to distinguish in the *argumento* the medical knowledge from the miracle. In his presentation the physician clarifies that on his mother's side, he is the Infanta's brother, introducing the element of empathy between physician and patient, that is to say an emotional interest. This is related to one of the basic elements of the evangelical story, the first-person knowledge of suffering on the part of Christ. This is not a physician who does not know the pain, but a physician capable of empathizing with it, because he himself experiences it in his humanity through the Passion. Christ knows that "fatiguas, hambres y sedes" await him on Earth (1320), and that suffering turns him into another patient able to understand the suffering of the sick. If the efficient cause of disease has been the apple,

⁸³ Fray Luis de León also refers to Christ as health in *De los nombres de Cristo*: "Cristo, pues, se llama Jesús, porque él mismo es salud. Y no por esto solamente, sino también porque toda la salud es sólo él" (469).

sin, the ultimate cause is to give the child of God the opportunity to demonstrate his redemptive power.⁸⁴

At the time of the consultation, the Pilgrim and the Infanta establish a dialogue that functions as both medical consultation and confession. On the one hand we have here a use of *therapeutic logos*, on the other hand the medical inquiry required for the diagnosis.⁸⁵ The first question concerns the feelings of the patient, who experiences pain in the chest, in her heart. The second question corresponds to the cause of the disease in the eyes of the Infanta, who, we cannot forget, is aware of her error due to the doctrine of free will, which is why she answers that the cause has been to eat an apple. After each question the Pilgrim suggests a remedy that has to do with the material aspect of the answer. If the heartache has been referred to as fire, the drug will be water; to counteract the bite of the apple, another bite, which will be none other than the bread of the Eucharist. The Eucharist has an internal effect, since it calms the pains (1520 – 1521) and an external one, since even the dress of the Infanta changes (1518). The third stage of the diagnosis refers explicitly to the healing logos, when Christ says: "Mal que las palabras hicieron// se ha de curar con palabras" (1482 – 1483), referring to the words

⁸⁴ This is what Jesus says in the Gospels: "He neither sinned nor his parents," Jesus answered, "but this happened so that the work of God might become evident in his life" (John 9: 3); "This disease will not end in death, but it is for the glory of God, that by it the Son of God may be glorified" (John 11: 4).

⁸⁵ In *Pecado y Enfermedad*, Laín Entralgo makes an exhaustive review of the *therapeutic logos*, explaining how in the Platonic *Cármides* the use of spells or verbal ensembles with therapeutic intention is still represented at the end of the fifth century. In this work, Socrates refers to the therapeutic logos as "beautiful speeches" or "good speeches" which bring the *sôphrosynê* or serenity of the soul (33-37).

that accompany the Eucharist causing the miracle of transubstantiation, as Escudero points out (175). It is a Logos with a sacramental character, according to John Slater (163). The water is related to the classic lustral bath⁸⁶, as an element healing by a topical application; The Eucharist is the oral remedy and the words, the therapeutic logos that will act in the moral and emotional realm. There is a fourth element, that of the vision of the cross as an element of penance and therefore purgation (as opposed to the tree of death, where the serpent is), and in a certain way, a cathartic remedy of the disease; the cross will be "quien más ha de sanarla" (1541), the most healing factor. If heartache is the penal pain, the medicinal pain is the pain of penance.⁸⁷ These healing elements function in the manner of *triacas*: being of the same species, they function as antitheses of the four elements of the disease: the environment (the tree), the symptom (heart pain) and the two causes. Although one of the causes is material, the apple, the other is immaterial, the words, covering the spectrum that relates sin and disease. In both cases, "toda ponzoña// se cura con la contraria" (1492 – 1493).⁸⁸ The Pilgrim makes his recipe,

⁸⁶ Laín Entralgo explains the lustral bath and its institution on the part of Agamenón in his book *La curación por la palabra en la Antigüedad Clásica* (34-38).

⁸⁷ For the distinction between "penal pain" and "medicinal pain" see Laín (*Pecado y enfermedad* 82).

⁸⁸ It responds to the Hippocratic principle of *Contraria contrariis curantur* as a method of restoring equilibrium: "Rational Hippocratic therapy consisted in correcting, by diet and drugs, any imbalance of the humours. This was achieved by opposing any deviation in one direction by its opposite. For instance, a cold and moist condition had to be met by a regimen (or drug therapy) that was warming and drying. According to Galen, this was the truly Hippocratic therapeutic principle, best known in its Latin version: *Contraria contrariis curantur*" (Temkin 12-13.). Regarding Calderón, Rogelio Cuesta explains the phenomenon in his doctoral thesis: "Calderón parte de una correspondencia antitética usada frecuentemente en la justificación de la conveniencia de los sacramentos por parte del Hombre según la

which on one level of the allegory will be composed of material elements of the same species (but different sign) than those related to the disease, and on the other, will represent symbolic elements of Christian doctrine such as baptism, Eucharist, cross, and healing performed through verbal terms. Although the medical catharsis focuses on the Infanta's verses in which she experiences the *triacas* (1566 – 1579), the theatrical climax is centered in the moment in which the Pilgrim, rising in the air, takes the Infanta in his ship towards his heavenly palace. The Infanta is now his wife, turning the medical plot into a love plot. After that, we can see Lucero on stage, regretting his luck and remarking, as the conclusion of the play, the defeat of his evil, rather than finishing the play with the celebration of the recovery.

In *El Veneno y la Triaca* we find a concept of health that has to do with the concept of state, equivalent to the concept of state of grace and facilitating the allegory on which this play is based. Both the state of health and the state of grace are static and desirable states, whereas sickness and sin introduce the change of that state, a dynamic change, as they lead to death (both body and soul); in the same way the conflict introduces a change in the theatrical premise, a dynamic change that brings the end of the adventure near, requiring a new change to return to the initial state.

teología medieval: el remedio medicinal nos viene de donde nos ha venido la enfermedad” y para ello cita a San Agustín en la *Summa Theologica*, III, q.61, a. 1: “Tbi autem debet medicinale remedium homini adhiberi ubi patitur morbum” (243).

In sum, sin as a metaphor for illness introduces an element of psychosomatic experience, in which disease is not limited to an organic malfunction, but alters the functionality of the patient's life not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. The use of the sacrament as a medicine configures a physicalist universe in which material consequences exist and material remedies are required, and the physician is presented as a professional of superior knowledge, who applies the diagnostic consultation, is empathetic with the patient and who resorts to *therapeutic logos* as a mode of healing.

3. Memory

Sebastián Covarrubias defines memory in *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* as “*est firma animi rerum et verborum dispositionis perceptio; item recordatio, aetsa, antiquitas*”.¹

Following this definition, Covarrubias explores other meanings of the word, related to the memory that others leave behind, in a clear positive tone, which gives us a sense of the consideration that memory had in the Early Modern world. The Real Academia de la Lengua defines memory in its first entry as the “*facultad psíquica por medio de la cual se retiene y recuerda el pasado.*”

But how has memory been conceptualized in the history of philosophy? Plato doesn't develop a formal cognitive theory, although he sketches something similar in his dialog *Timaeus*. Regarding memory, in *Theaetetus* (191c, d, e), Plato discusses memory through the character of Socrates who calls it the Muses's mother², remarking its generative character; it also points out the role of memory in the search for meaning and finding truth. For Plato, memory is developed through philosophical dialog in the quest for the real truth that the soul has forgotten. In *Philebus*, memory is explained as the “preservation of the sensation” (34a10). But Plato distinguishes between knowledge and perception, and because perceived things change, therefore, their consequential perceptions also change. This idea will be contradicted by Calderón in his *autos*

¹ Is firm of mind, things and words of the disposition of perceptions; Also, a reminder, age, antiquity.

² For the Greeks, Mnemosine, memory, was the mother of the nine muses that ruled knowledge.

sacramentales by means of metaphors, in which material realities embody non-changeable non-temporal realities. When it comes to the difference between body and soul, in *Philebus*, Plato states, as Helen S. Lang explains:

Plato distinguishes between memory and recollection. Memory and recollection differ in that recollection is soul in and by itself, apart from body, recapturing what soul has experienced in common with body. Recollection and memory are thus essentially the same activity of soul; but recollection is this activity conducted wholly independently of body, while memory is this activity conducted when soul comes together with body. When soul comes together with body, this activity is called "sensation", and sensation requires memory as its preserver (382).

In *Phaedrus* (149b, 250c), Socrates speaks about how that plurality of forms are united together thanks to the ability of reasoning, and

such understanding is a recollection of those things which our souls beheld aforetime as they journeyed with their god, looking down upon the things which now we suppose to be, and gazing up to that which truly is [...] Wherefore if a man makes right use of such means of remembrance, and ever approaches to the full vision of the perfect mysteries, he and he alone becomes truly perfect (250).³

For Plato, ideas are innate in our souls, and whenever we remember, we are remembering the perfection of the ideas. But the idea of this reminiscence seems to be difficult to integrate with the idea of the original sin, as the characters of the myth are confronted with a problem that they have never experience before, not even in its ideal or perfect form. After the expulsion from Paradise, this reminiscence is contradictorily presented in *El veneno y la triaca*: the character of the Understanding, who could be the

³ "Phaedrus." *Greek Philosophy*, edited by Reginald E. Allen. Simon and Schuster, 1991.

natural seat of innate ideas, is presented as a tutor, someone who teaches, therefore ideas must be learned.⁴ On the other hand, the character of Inocencia, in a sense equivalent to Intuition in this plot, shows what we could understand as innate ideas, when she reacts with fear towards Lucero. But the whole system of the Catholic Church with its delegation of knowledge upon superior authorities, plus the very same structure of the plot which forces the protagonist to go through an experience for the first time, seem to be opposed to this idea.

Regarding this in his dialogs *Meno and Phaedo*, Plato talks about a type of memory called *anamnesis* that would be an equivalent of the cognitive idea of memory, which deals with bringing data back to consciousness. In this dialog Plato develops the Paradox of Knowledge (80 d). This paradox consist of the fact that if one doesn't know the attributes of a certain something, it is impossible to recognize it, even if we come across it⁵; if, on the contrary, we recognize it, we know it, therefore, there is no need to seek knowledge. To solve this paradox, Socrates talks about the idea of *anamnesis*, that is to rediscover in our souls' knowledge learned in past lives, because for Plato, the soul is reincarnated infinite times, but all the gathered knowledge is forgotten through birth.

⁴ For instance, Segismundo from *La Vida es Sueño* seems to have an innate knowledge of the idea of freedom, but we cannot forget that Calderón makes sure the audience knows he has been educated by Clotaldo.

⁵ And Calderón will play with this concept when characters react surprised about the disease of the Princess.

The Christian doctrine is opposed to this conceptual frame, because of the historical frame with beginning and ending that it implies. In the myth of the Fall of Man, with Adam and Eve as the first human beings, it is impossible to recall knowledge from past lives, which settles the conditions for the original sin, as we will see in this chapter. There is no knowledge to be recalled, only knowledge to be learned; not in vain do Adam and Eve eat from the Tree of Good and Evil, the Tree of Science.

In *Phaedo* (66 b-d), Socrates explains that the body and the senses are a source of error, and only relying on our reason can we achieve truth, through a process called *noiesis*, the Greek word for understanding and that to some extent is related to the concept of intuition, as it deals with rediscovered truth, the knowledge of the world of ideas that has been forgotten, but is still stored in the soul. Through sensations we can only get opinions, but it is through the reminiscence or the process of rediscovering the truth stored in the soul, that we can recover the learned truth. To Plato, to remember is to learn, because for him knowledge is the recollection of another reality, the metaphysical reality. This theory of reminiscence, recollecting, is also the argument that Plato uses to prove the immortality of the soul. But, once again, Calderón's plot opposes this idea in *El veneno y la triaca*, as the metaphor is completely based on the sensations of the body.

In *Phaedrus*, there is other way of talking about memory: the *hypomnesis*, which is the use of external devices of memory, that according to Plato, weaken our

memories, and that Plato considers a *pharmakon*, a gift from the Gods, but also a curse, as it weakens our own memories. Recalling in the memory is always the retrieval of a sign, a representation of something that is not present. For Plato, these external devices (in his case, writing), are a sign of the sign, therefore, extremely far from the truth. Once again, we see how Christian doctrine is opposed to this, as the very core of the doctrine is based on reminders. The mass, with the use of the Eucharist, is none other than a reminder, a sign of something that is not present, but that through the miracle of the transubstantiation becomes present in the souls of the parishioners, and becomes truth. So the sign merges literally with its meaning. The act of attending a mass, or a theatrical performance, is also a reminder, a way to awaken in the memory certain pieces of knowledge that due to several reasons (in the Platonic order, the deception of senses, the errors of the body), are often forgotten, leading to a disgraceful outcome: the loss of grace.⁶ In Calderón's *autos sacramentales*, the most obvious example being *El gran teatro del mundo*, in which we see how these reminders are implemented constantly, in this

⁶ But, as Thomas S. Frentz reckons: "During Plato's life, the Homeric Epic was the dominant form of communication within Greek Culture. These extended dramatizations recounted the mythic history of the Greek experience, serving as, in the works of Erik Havelock, "oral encyclopedias" which preserved the cultural heritage of Greece as a fragile oral history (61-68). As such, someone had to remember every nuance of these poetic dramatizations. Whatever was forgotten was lost forever. And because their detailed contents were so vital to Greek history, audiences had to identify completely with the performances. Any careless moment of self-reflection, any lapse in concentration, anything that might break the spell of the muse could result in loss of knowledge. Consequently, audiences of the epics became mesmerized, "drugged", "lost" in performance, for only this mind state could record the living history that was Greece. It was this narcosis imposed upon the Athenian citizenry that infuriated Plato as much as his more celebrated attack on poetry as an inferior form of mimesis" (247).

case, as the character of the Ley de Gracia repeats throughout the play: “Obrad bien, que Dios es Dios”, reminding the characters of the need to do good.

For his part, Aristotle wrote extensively on memory, the only philosopher of antiquity to write a treatise on the matter, *De memoria et reminiscentia* included in *Parva Naturalia*, and that is a complement to his theory of the sensory soul.⁷ For Aristotle, the soul is an idea equivalent to life and therefore it informs the body; for him the soul is the total meaning of a body. This is why in *De Anima*, he abandons the Platonic dualism for good. Or as Richard King has put it: “Memory is treated in the context of a naturalist psychology by Aristotle. Its connection to perception and body are guarantees of its modesty, binding it to an individual and the individual’s perceptions” (25), and ignoring the existence of metaphysical realities. There is no need to rely on external aids to know, and human abilities are enough for this purpose. *De memoria et reminiscentia* could be Aristotle’s most psychological treatise, in the modern sense of the word. According to him, memory is related to the perception of the senses and mental imaginery, while recollection is related to intelligence and doesn’t necessarily need images. Animals can remember, while only humans can recollect. Recollection implies the willful act of searching for memories that help us to become aware of the passing of

⁷ According to Richard Sorabji, “Aristotle’s account of memory is fuller than that to be found in the best-known British empiricist” (1), which indicates how influential his account of memory has been. *On Memory and Reminiscence. The Internet Classics Archive*, classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/memory.html. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

time. Aristotle uses the metaphor of the wax tablet where perceptions are imprinted to explain how memory works, and in his account he gives to emotions an important role in how those perceptions are imprinted.

Aristotle links memory to the past and he states that it is not used for the present or the future. The present is about actual sensations, while the future corresponds to the imagination. Memory, according to the philosopher is related to time. That is to say, memory is not a sensation, nor a judgment, but a state or affection of one of those when time has passed by (449b25). Only beings that can notice time can claim to remember, as every memory entails a lapse of time. This is done with the rational soul, the one able to measure time. But for Aristotle, considering that some animals have memory, this doesn't belong to the thinking faculty, but to the primary sensory faculty, the ones that perceive time. Memory is related to imagination, as everything that can be imagined, belongs to the memory. Aristotle explains how memory appears and how it stays:

One might ask how it is possible that though the affection (the presentation) alone is present, and the (related) fact absent, the latter-that which is not present-is remembered. (The question arises), because it is clear that we must conceive that which is generated through sense-perception in the sentient soul, and in the part of the body which is its seat-viz. that affection the state whereof we call memory-to be some such thing as a picture. The process of movement (sensory stimulation) involved the act of perception stamps in, as it were, a sort of impression of the percept, just as persons do who make an impression with a seal. This explains why, in those who are strongly moved owing to passion, or time of life, no mnemonic impression is formed; just as no impression would be formed if the movement of the seal were to impinge on running water; while there are others in whom, owing to the receiving surface being frayed, as

happens to (the stucco on) old (chamber) walls, or owing to the hardness of the receiving surface, the requisite impression is not implanted at all. Hence both very young and very old persons are defective in memory; they are in a state of flux, the former because of their growth, the latter, owing to their decay. In like manner, also, both those who are too quick and those who are too slow have bad memories. The former are too soft, the latter too hard (in the texture of their receiving organs), so that in the case of the former the presented image (though imprinted) does not remain in the soul, while on the latter it is not imprinted at all (450b 25- 450a 32).

Using the analogy of a painting, Aristotle also explains the nature of memories as a sign of something not present, but also an object in itself. This is the reason why sometimes it is difficult to distinguish if something is being remembered or experienced. It is important to note that Aristotle remarks on the difference between learning and remembering, as learning happens the first time, and remembering recalls something learned, which is extremely important in the core of any plot. This will also be key in our understanding of the dramatic structure of the Fall of Man, as for Aristotle, a reminiscence has to differ from something learned for the very first time. Also, Aristotle writes about movements:

If this order be necessary, whenever a subject experiences the former of two movements thus connected, it will (invariably) experience the latter; if, however, the order be not necessary, but customary, only in the majority of cases will the subject experience the latter of the two movements. But it is a fact that there are some movements, by a single experience of which persons take the impress of custom more deeply than they do by experiencing others many times; hence upon seeing some things but once we remember them better than others which we may have seen frequently (451b10).

Emotion means movement and connecting the idea of reminiscence to a movement of the soul, and as we will see, memory can be highly related to emotional

processes: “Thus, then, it is that persons seek to recollect, and thus, too, it is that they recollect even without the effort of seeking to do so, viz. when the movement implied in recollection has supervened on some other which is its condition” (451b2). Here Aristotle explains why some reminiscences are involuntary, foreshadowing modern theories of memory. This is related to the modern idea of the imprints in the body, that we will explain later, and that explains the bodily paths that memory takes. But reminiscences are voluntary, as they work through the voluntary association of ideas, trying to recuperate something stored in the memory. Reminiscence is something of a creative process, as it not only involves the images imprinted but also the reasoning associating them, through which we arrive at the desired point. Animals have memory and because of this involuntary memory, they can know that a certain activity can be hurtful; nevertheless, they cannot remember the experience that originated this knowledge, according to Aristotle. Human beings can, and that is the reminiscence.

Aristotle also defends external repetition as a good practice for the memory:

Hence the rapidity with which we recollect what we frequently think about. For as regular sequence of events is in accordance with nature, so, too, regular sequence is observed in the actualization of kinesis (in consciousness), and here frequency tends to produce (the regularity of) nature. And since in the realm of nature occurrences take place which are even contrary to nature, or fortuitous, the same happens a fortiori in the sphere swayed by custom, since in this sphere natural law is not similarly established (452a30).

This explains the recurrence of reminders in Christian doctrine and the fact that *autos sacramentales* are performed every year, although the *asunto* is always the same.

Augustine presents in *Confessions* an exercise of memory, as this book is an autobiography. In fact, he talks about remembering oneself (*memoria sui*), where the self is. In it, especially in Book X, Augustine insists on the imagistic nature of memory, although he states that knowledge can be achieved sometimes without images. But basically, memory contains images of things, images of the self in the past, and images of God. The real quest for the saint is how to know God, that according to him, is inside of every human being, not perceived through the senses, and that is where memory becomes a key factor. Paige E. Hochschild explains: “Memory in this great text is not simply the way in which the soul retains and meaningfully assimilates present perception and past experiences. Memory is the embodied soul’s mode of approaching God” (139). He also states that every object perceived by the senses is stored in the memory (10.8.13). Interestingly, Augustine thinks that we always remember the object and not the last image of the object (10.15. 23).

For Augustine, memory is where we can store our imaginations, sensations, perceptions, desires, emotions, and ideas of the self. This is why memory becomes an integral part of the person, as it is the faculty that provides continuity. Memory constitutes the self, as it is where the I is kept (10.8.14), and Calderón follows him on this point as we will see. People can know the content of their perceptions without any type of exterior/metaphysical help, a trait in which Saint as Aristotelian, and that

explains the genre of the *psychomachia*, as a play in which different parts of the mind interact, being the assistants of the protagonist, the very faculties of his or her mind.

Augustine thinks that as humans we are prepared to survive with all our cognitive abilities, as animals are, the only difference being that through those very same abilities humans can know God: "In recalling you I rose above those parts of the memory which animals also share, because I did not find you among the images of physical objects" (10.25.36). But he also admits that there are more abstract objects that cannot be stored in images, for instance, the very same God.

Using the same paradox of knowledge that we have seen in the *Meno* by Plato, Augustine states that everything we can know was previously stored in the memory (10.10.17) probably not through fully-aware thinking processes. He also maintains that everything that enters through the senses is imprinted in our memory forever (10.18.27, 10.19.28). It might be hidden for some time until something recalls the remembrance, and when it comes to ideas, they have been stored in some way in our minds since our moment of birth. This is interesting in regards to the role of the character of Understanding in Calderon's *autos*, because he is a character indeed different from the Princess, but still part of the Princess. This is why Understanding can warn the protagonist about the dangers or the solutions, as he is the guardian of ideas learned at some point of life.

About emotions, Augustine states that they can be remembered without being re-experienced (10.14.21). And that makes sense, not only on a biological level, but also on a dramatic level. If after committing the original sin, the soul would be able to remember and experience the happiness previous to it, it wouldn't make any sense to repent. The emotion cannot be re-lived, but its absence can elicit other emotions. Likewise, after repentance and the recovery of Grace, the emotion of pain cannot be re-experienced, or the Grace would not be fully operating. The memory, as the equivalent of the I, is the one that judges and values the responses that the I has regarding the physical objects perceived by the senses (10.6.9.) The knowledge of happiness is not acquired through the senses (10.15.23). Furthermore, in Book X, Augustine presumes that in some way in our memory is stored the remembrance of happiness before the original sin, and this is why we keep looking for joy our entire lives. But in opposition to Plato, this storage does not come from a previous physical life.

In words of Bloch, "Aquinas begins by placing memory in an ethical and epistemological tradition and he makes further use of [the] discussion of "prudence" in his preliminary demarcations of memory and recollection" (197). For Aquinas, following Aristotle, of whom he is a devoted commenter, memory is a faculty of the soul, related to the bodily faculties, and within them, to the inner senses.⁸ When we say

⁸ During the Renaissance, Aristotle, Cicero and Aquinas were strongly associated with the study of memory. Yates, Frances. *El arte de la memoria*, Siruela, 2005, p. 106.

that it is related to the bodily faculties, we can understand that it is related to the brain. The inner senses, dedicated to consciousness states, are divided between formal (objectives) and intentional (directed towards an object, which can lead to a certain action or judgment). Formal senses are the ones dedicated to grasping the sensible forms (common sense and phantasia), while the intentional senses are those in charge of valuing the nature of the objects and their relationships (*vis cogitans* and memory).

The incorporeal faculties are the will and understanding, belonging to the intellect, which deal with universal matters. But, memory, as a corporeal faculty, needs an particular and material object. As previous philosophers, Aquinas also agrees on the fact that memory, an intentional internal corporeal sense, processes and organizes what it receives from the external senses, but also from other sources. This is why humans have a sensory memory, directed toward particulars, and an intellectual memory, directed toward universals and abstractions. Once again, metaphor merges both realms.

Memory is in charge of images, but not only of images *per se*, but images as a recognition of something belonging to the past, so memory implies a recognition of the passing of time. Aquinas considers memory as the *thesaurus* of the images with which the *vis cogitans* operates; images that are not grasped by the external senses but that are needed for the *vis cogitans* to operate. Memory also stores intentions, like for instance related to what is good or what is bad, (*Summa Theologiae*, I q. 78 a. 4 in c), and opposite

to animals, is not just a spontaneous memory, rather it can be directed by the *vis cogitans* in which Aristotle called reminiscence. As an intentional faculty, memory operates with images directed to an object, and the important thing is not the image, as it would be for the phantasia, which concentrates on the abstraction of the objects, but the object itself, which has existed in some form in the past. Recalling it makes the object present again.

Aquinas talks about the relationship with time and movement (*De memoria et reminiscencia*, I-310, II-318), as time is related to the existence of movement, and in the same way, we can perceive ourselves in the passing of time (*De sensu et sensato*, XVIII, 271). Thanks to the external senses, among other faculties, we are able to recognize ourselves in the passing of time, which, at the same time, we perceive as a continuum. And we perceive ourselves, or other objects, in terms of continuity, or difference. There is a comparison that is only possible through memory. We use what Aquinas calls the “experimentum” or ability to extract knowledge from many particulars, using the *vis cogitans* (*Metaphysicorum*, I-15). Therefore, we recognize ourselves through the external senses, but also through an interior process in which we are able to establish relationships among many instances of ourselves. Memory is about the sensible objects, the ones that make us feel, but also about the intelligible objects, which we understand. We do this through several images called *phantasmas* (*De memoria et reminiscencia*, II, 320). The difference between an image related to an object in the past, and another

image not related to an object in the past is the difference between memory and phantasia.

The recognition of ourselves happens through the intellectual gathering of many particulars that identify ourselves and that occurs through the intellectual memory, the one able to establish relationships. The act of the very same intellection is also the subject of recall; likewise everything stored in the memory like potentialities, habits (through the acts they are expressed through), and even the will (Summa theologiae I q. 87 a. 2).

3.1 Calderón de la Barca and the memory

In his seminal study, Eugenio Frutos reminds us that Calderón de la Barca uses memory in his *“acepción filosófica y corriente de facultad de recordar”* (190). This author also cites the moral sense of memory, as the reminder of death, and the creative attribution of Calderón’s memory, very close to the imagination. Citing Magraff, Frutos says: *“Margraff dice que recoge lo contemplado, por decirlo así, lo almacena, volviendo al espíritu por una excitación; las imágenes viven del mundo exterior y entran por los sentidos, reproduciéndose asociativamente”* (191). Frutos also captures the sense of forensic memory, as a tool to gather all the information of our own existence, and to help the

characters to remember that everything on Earth has an end; also that only the afterlife is eternal, which is the only place where one can find real happiness (193-194).⁹

Calderón values memory highly, and in the *loa*¹⁰ to the *auto Mística y real Babilonia* (1662) he gives Memory the most important role in the salvation of Man.¹¹

Doubt says:

Voluntad y Entendimiento
bien me dieron a entender
los misterios de este día;
mas a la Memoria es bien
la dé el aplauso mi voz,
pues ella prósida es quien
me acuerda mi obligación
y me encamina a la Fe. (329 – 336)¹²

⁹ The concept of forensic memory is fully developed in John Locke.

¹⁰ A *loa* is a dramatic short genre in verse, used to introduce the *auto sacramental*. Covarrubias defines *loa* as “prológio o preludio que hacen antes de la representación” (2006), and the *Diccionario de Autoridades* adds “Se llama tambien el prólogo o prelúdio que antecede en las fiestas cómicas, que se representan o cantan. Llámase assí porque su assunto es siempre en alabanza de aquel a quien se dedican” (T. IV, 1734).

¹¹ Celina Sabor de Cortazar thinks that Calderón’s stance on this is changeable and that in other instances, the author gives more importance to Understanding or Will (981).

¹² *Obras Completas*. Edited by Valbuena Prat.

In this way Calderón remarks on the importance of Memory in the process of being aware of the future, and therefore making decisions. In this *loa*, the characters are Doubt, Memory, Will, Understanding, Faith and the Musicians. As the custodian of ultimate truths¹³, the divine origin of Man and the coming of Death, Memory expresses her ignorance of Doubt and the inability to understand her. This *loa* also introduces a key idea in the ideological Catholic system: Memory reminds Man what he has to be thankful for: “pues que soy Potencia fiel// del hombre cuando le acuerdo// lo que debe agradecer” (258 – 260). This states the idea of an external, in this case suprapower, which is ultimately the source of Man’s experiences, but also the reminder of the possibility of a worse life. And not only that, Memory reminds Man of the sacrifice suffered for him, therefore the feeling of gratefulness, and also reminds him of his place in a whole history of time intertwined with moral assessments.¹⁴

Among the *autos sacramentales* collected in the edition of Ángel Valbuena Prat (1987), besides the *loa to Mística y real Babilonia* that we have seen, Memory appears as a

¹³ Celina Sabor de Cortázar agrees on this, stating that “En cuanto a la Memoria, su papel es más limitado, pero igualmente trascendente; consiste en recordar al hombre, primero, su origen divino y su semejanza con Dios; segundo, la muerte corporal, cuyo recuerdo constante implica el desdén de lo mundanal y la elevación de la mirada a Dios, fin último” (975-976).

¹⁴ In *No hay instante sin milagro*, Saulo repeats this: “Que siempre que de este Pan// gustéis, y este Cáliz, sea anunciando de mi muerte// la memoria, hasta que venga” (1455–1458). Also in *El segundo blasón de Austria*, the Eucharist is defined as the “memoria del amor” (1399, Arellano et al, 1997,) in *El orden de Melquisedec*, where the words of the liturgy are repeated (1296–1300, Pérez Ibáñez, 2005,) and *El cordero de Isaías* displays another reminder of the son of God (397–402), as it does *El año santo en Madrid* (242–244).

character in the autos *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma* (1631-1645)¹⁵, and *La nave del mercader* (1674), and in the *loa* for *El jardín de Falerina* (1675) and that for *El tesoro escondido* (1679)¹⁶. Also we find the character of Memory in the *loa* to *El valle de la Zarzuela*¹⁷.

In the *loa* of *El tesoro escondido*, we find the character of Memory, along with the other two faculties of the soul, Understanding and Will, and among other human qualities likes Discernment, Thought, Doubt, and the five senses. Faith comes along with Will, Taste, and Hearing¹⁸, while Understanding comes onto the stage with Memory, Taste, Sight, and Smell. In this *loa*, Memory only has two interventions, one of them being

Como es cierto,
que es vida de todos, pues
si al filósofo atendemos,

¹⁵ According to Valbuena Prat, the date of composition is 1631. Alexander Parker thinks the play corresponds to the period 1635-1645. (*Los autos sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca* 248).

¹⁶ According to the edition of Valbuena Prat.

¹⁷ *Autos Sacramentales, Alegóricos, y Historiales del insigne Poeta Español Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca*. Madrid, 1717. dl.ub.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/calderon1717d/. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

¹⁸ “La razón se cautiva a la fe contra las sensaciones inmediatas del sentido de la vista, del tacto, del gusto y del olfato, fiándose únicamente del sentido del oído por el que penetran las palabras de Cristo que se asumen por la fe. Calderón tenía presente, sin duda, al escribir estos versos, la conocidísima estrofa de Santo Tomás en el *Adoro te devote*: “Visus, tactus, gustus in te fallitur; sed auditu solo tuto creditur; credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius; nihil hoc verbo veritatis verius,” *A María el corazón*, edited by Ignacio Arellano, Ildefonso Adeva, Francisco Crosas, and Miguel Zugasti. Reichenberger, 1999, p. 76. The repetition of this idea can be found in other autos like *El Pleito Matrimonial del Cuerpo y el Alma*.

dice, que el hombre y el sol
engendra al hombre; y luego
le llama el hombre del mundo;
con que ya probado tengo
que da ser y que da vida,
con el material ejemplo
de que con sus rayos tibios
vivan todos; y si a incendios
pasan, en fiebres ardientes
mueran también; a mi intento
bastaba, pues hasta el tronco
le llora el prado esqueleto
y aplaude bello prodigio
sombra, y luz, de abril, y enero,
en el corazón, porque
mayor prueba darte quiero
del mortal domina, cuyo
palpitante movimiento,
con una acción misma está
alentado y falleciendo;

luego, ¿por qué, si le anima
al hombre el corazón, vemos
que vive el hombre, y que este
bebe del sol alimento? (187 – 213)

In this stanza, we can see Memory in charge of collecting the wisdom of the ancient philosophers, but also a certain capacity of deduction when it is able to derive constant truths from the repeated events of history. Memory uses the word “evidence”, as the forensic authority we have studied previously.

In the *loa* of *El valle de la zarzuela*, Memory presents itself as the effects of Understanding and Will, which come on stage with it. They debate about which one of them has the right to bear the palm frond:

Pues para que justifiquen
mis razones el derecho
que à llevar la Palma yò
me motivan, discurriendo
por quantas operaciones
salen de mi, estadme atentos.

Lo primero, si mi origen
desde lexos considero,
què motivo pudo ser

mas eficaz al remedio
del Hombre que yo? Y lo fundo,
no en sofisticado argumento,
sino en la evidencia misma,
pues parece, que el recuerdo
de la Palabra, que Dios
avia dado a su Pueblo,
repetida tantas veces
por aquel Divino Espejo,
por aquella hermosa Zarza,
que tan llena de Misterios
viò Moses, por el vellòn,
pues blanco, hermoso, y terso,
de la Piel de Gedeòn,
donde cuaxò el Rozio tierno
de la Aurora Celestial,
figura del SACRAMENTO
mas excelente, y mayor
Portento de los Portentos,
que oy se celebra, su Inmensa

bondad abreviar los medios
pudo de la Redempcion,
previsto el merecimiento
de la Soberana Aurora;
luego aquí más tengo,
que ninguno de vosotros,
pues hizo presente el medio,
que aunque rigurosamente
no pueda tener recuerdo. (74 – 109)

Later Will speaks this way about Memory:

Tù, Memoria, en tu favor
has traído, que el recuerdo
de su Palabra hizo en Dios
los prodiosos efectos,
que este dia la experiencia
nos haze plausibles; luego
también pruebas lo que yò
gustosamente concedo,
que eres eficaz Agente,

administrando primero
materia, de que se forma
el mas subido concepto. (169 – 180)

.....

Tù, Memoria, solo sirves
de prevenir, sin que en ello
puedas pasar adelante,
prosiguiendo el intelecto
laborioso lo operado
por ti, quedandose en esto,
sin aver mas, que aclarado
tus especies: y yò luego
me sigo, determinando,
Y absoluta resolviendo: (207 – 216)

In this *loa*, in which Calderón explains his concepts about the three faculties of the soul, we can see first, that for this author there is a clear order in time of the action of the faculties. We can also see that for Calderón, in order to act, there is a clear order of intervention. First Memory provides “the first material”, upon which Understanding works, and after that Will decides, relying on the information provided by both of them. Memory is therefore the first to analyze information, taking us back to

Augustine's idea explained before about Memory as the container of the idea of God. And not only as a reminiscence, but also, as the repository of the words of God, that Memory reminds us at every moment to guide Understanding and Will. It is also the reminder of the words of God, and as the first faculty in acting, Calderón's perspective on memory seems to be unchangeable, when current research warns us about how memory can be unreliable and actually can be "rewritten", with every new installment of "remembering".¹⁹ Also, memory doesn't necessarily act before other cognitive capacities, since it is not located in only one part of the brain, but works simultaneously with the rest of the cognitive processes. In this case, Calderón doesn't relate memory to autobiographical memory, but only to the part it has in guiding humans in a good direction, recalling the word of God. This is because in this *loa*, the three faculties are discussing which is "closer" to God, but in other examples, it is also because *autos sacramentales* focus on the commission of the present act, emphasizing the present decisions and not giving excessive importance to the previous experiences that can guide those acts, with the exception of the Devil. Also, regarding the original sin, autobiographical memory is relatively important in the case of Adam and Eve. Their lives, as a "state of grace" lack remarkable experiences to be recalled in order to

¹⁹ Schiller, Daniela, et al. "Preventing the return of fear in humans using reconsolidation update mechanisms." *Nature*, vol. 463, Jan. 2010, pp. 49-53.

“function”. It will be after the original sin when this autobiographical memory becomes important.

In the *loa* of *El jardín de Falerina*, Memory is a character among others like Will, Understanding, Discernment²⁰, and the four elements. The presence of Memory is limited²¹ to the idea of a collector of all the arts, as arts are the collectors of Memory.²²

In *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*²³, Calderón describes what happens when Soul and Body are united, Life being born, and what happens when the Soul gets a divorce because of the misbehavior of Body.²⁴ Memory has a part in this play as one

²⁰ Ingenio.

²¹ “Siendo
Yo de las artes Tesoro,
Pues soy de todas acuerdo,
¿Dudas si lo sé? (*Obras Completas* 1505).

²² This refers to the Greek myth of the Muses as daughters of Zeus and Mnemosine, the Goddess of Memory, previously mentioned.

²³ Edited by Mònica Roig.

²⁴ Valbuena Prat states: “En la obra el asunto procede de un viejo tema medieval: el de la *Disputa del Alma y el Cuerpo*. Ya un pasaje de la *Epístola de San Pablo a los Gálatas* (v.17) alude a la lucha íntima entre la materia y el espíritu, y en forma alegórica trató un tema de este orden Prudencio en su *Psychomaquia*. Durante la Edad Media fue usual el tema de la *Disputa del Alma y el Cuerpo*, constituyendo uno de los debates típicos de la época. En la forma más antigua aparece el Alma en soliloquio habiendo versiones inglesas que datan del siglo X y ese monólogo y los primeros diálogos guardan relación con el motivo de la leyenda de *Alejandro el asceta*, en la cual este personaje, acompañado por dos ángeles, halla un cadáver en el desierto, y con esta ocasión se explican diversas circunstancias de la separación del alma y el cuerpo. Th. Batiuchkof, en su obra *Le débat de l’ame et du corps* (Romania, 1891), estudia detenidamente el tema, ocupándose en su primera parte del origen de la leyenda en que el Alma habla sola, a lo que sigue la parte que corresponde propiamente al diálogo. En la Edad Media española tenemos la *Disputación del Alma y el Cuerpo*, de fines del siglo XII o comienzos del XIII, que traduce *Débat du corps et de l’ame*” de la literatura francesa, y ha sido editado y estudiado por Menéndez Pidal (*Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, 1900), y la *Revelación de un ermitaño* de fines del siglo XIV, escrita en coplas de arte mayor. Más en contacto con la esencia del conflicto calderoniano están las obras que se refieren a las luchas del Alma y el Cuerpo

of the escorts of the soul when she is forced to marry the body. In this *auto*, the Memory is also the first faculty to appear, allowing the body to remember that there is a past in which he was not what he is nowadays, and allowing him to store the image of skies, mountains, trees and rocks that he has now seen. In this play, Understanding appears after Memory and Will, changing the order we have seen previously.²⁵ Here, Calderón makes Understanding say that he is always the last to appear. In *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*, Will belongs to the “villains of the play”, and this makes Calderón change the order, as Understanding is in charge of correcting the ways in which Will

durante la vida del hombre. Así, el tratado de Hildeberto *De querimonia et conflictu et spiritus*, en diálogo (siglos XI al XII, y una poesía latina, que se halla en un manuscrito del XIV (probablemente, el texto anterior) *De contentione animae e corporis*. Hildeberto explica la pugna entre el Alma y el Cuerpo como las desavenencias conyugales, y como corporeizará Calderón: *Caro fit vir, spiritus uxor*. Dámaso Alonso, en su sugestivo estudio *La Poesía de San Juan de la Cruz* (véase su edición en Crisol, ed. M. Aguilar), indica incidentalmente la posibilidad de colocar entre las fuentes de este auto el alegorismo doctrinal con que vistió las poesías de Garcilaso, su adaptador “a lo divino”, Sebastián de Córdoba. Así nos dice: “El centro de la acción entre Silvanio y Celia constituye un verdadero pleito matrimonial del Cuerpo y el Alma.” Celia representa, en Córdoba, al alma, y Silvano es “la parte sensual del hombre”. El pecado se opone a la felicidad de ambos y es causa de su desavenencia, aunque al fin vence la gracia. La coincidencia con el tema de Calderón existe, sin duda; pero me parece extraño que el poeta del XVII conociese ese remedo a lo sacro de Garcilaso, como no hubiese sido precisamente en esta su época escolar. No hay vestigios en el resto de la obra de Calderón, que yo recuerde, que permitan afirmarlo. Sin embargo, la sugerencia de Dámaso Alonso debe tenerse en cuenta, por lo menos en los posibles hilos de la trama de los orígenes, directos o coincidentes, en relación con el auto que nos ocupa. Desde luego, el tema del “árbol de la Redención” se halla en el centro del simbolismo de varios autos; pero esto, procedente de los Padres de la Iglesia, no necesita del intermedio de Córdoba para llegar a él. Diego Sánchez de Badajoz es autor de *La farsa racional del libre albedrío*, en que se representa la batalla que hay entre el Espíritu y la Carne. Calderón se daba cuenta del arcaísmo de su tema. En su *Mojiganga de la Muerte* aparece en una carreta de cómicos que van a representar un auto de un pueblo a otro para el día del Corpus Christi. Entre las “figuras” están el Cuerpo y el Alma, y se alude a un tema de bodas”. (*Obras Completas* 73-74).

²⁵ In words of Valbuena Prat: “En la teoría de las potencias del alma (Memoria, Entendimiento y Voluntad) sigue a San Agustín, pero se atiene a los escolásticos en lo referente a las funciones intelectivas y volitivas”. (*Obras Completas* 74).

has gone wrong.²⁶ Memory is once again in charge of guarding Man from Death²⁷, reminding him that Death will come, and how to achieve eternal life.²⁸ This responds to the very common topic in the Spanish seventeenth century of the *memento mori*: only being aware of death²⁹, can one live without being afraid of it.³⁰ As Mònica Roig explains:

El recuerdo constante de la muerte es una exhortación reiterada y silenciosa al recto uso de la libertad, pero esto es todo lo que puede hacer la memoria por el hombre. Ella es capaz de traer al presente significativas imágenes del pasado (631–662), sombras del misterio eucarístico, pero no puede interpretarlas. Ni tampoco está en su mano tomar decisiones (47).

One remarkable aspect of this *auto* is that Calderón makes the couple integrated by Soul and Body fall asleep, and as the Man sleeps, portrays consequently the effects in the Soul's faculties. In that situation, Memory claims "Con ser Memoria, perdí// la memoria" (996 – 997); with this, Memory describes the lack of agency in the state of sleep, and its current incapacity. All the faculties, and the very Soul, as she does not have her faculties to assist her anymore, remain immobile. Life, the daughter born of

²⁶ The attributes of these characters change in order to serve the dramatic purpose. Spanish *comedia* is mainly based in the dramatic action more than on the psychological development of characters.

²⁷ The idea of the memory of death, as a savior of Man, is present in other *autos* like *Los encantos de la culpa*.

²⁸ "que hay vida y muerte te acuerdo// a mí no me toca más" (1155–1156).

²⁹ This thought, nevertheless brings sadness to the spirit, as Death acknowledges in *Lo que va del hombre a Dios*: "En los humanos pesares// soy quien tiene tanto imperio, // que con la sola memoria// al más alegre entristezco" (487–490).

³⁰ This idea appears repeated among others in *El diablo mudo* (302–303) (García Valdés, 1999).

the union of Soul and Body, remains walking around the stage: this is a metaphor meaning that the only thing that doesn't become still during the sleep is life. The other remarkable moment of the play regarding Memory, is the moment when Body decides to abandon the Eucharist banquet, and in succession, positive characters remind him of the mysteries behind the sacred bread. When they speak, the Memory goes towards them. She is the only character in movement in this scene, and she only stops when Sin denies the presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the Eucharist, but after just a moment, as she keeps walking towards the talking characters. This movement represents how Memory is the one in charge of provide the images of knowledge, and at some point, Body even recriminates her: "¿Cuándo// Memoria, has de descansar?" (659 – 662). According to Mònica Roig, the moment when Memory stops walking expresses the doubt of Body regarding the mysteries of Eucharist, and the moment when Body holds her, this embrace would represent the decision to believe (78-79).

In *La nave del mercader* (1674), a very strongly allegorical *auto*, Memory is presented alongside the two other faculties of the soul, Guilt, World, Devil, Lust, Time, the five Senses, Man, Seller, Desire and Love. It is important to note here the parallelism between the three faculties and the three enemies of the soul (World, Devil, and Lust), allowing Calderón to once again plan his play mathematically. The senses and faculties are identified in this *auto* with actual currency that Man will waste. As Ignacio Arellano points out: "La metáfora de las monedas permitirá a Calderón aplicar

la parábola de los talentos y usar más tarde la imagen tradicional de la deuda para el pecado" (*La nave del mercader* 37). The parable of talents is applied in the sense that Man has to use his senses and faculties to grow and improve, and not the opposite. Memory appears on stage carrying a ring on a tray. The ring, according to Covarrubias, is related to memory in the form of an exchange between the spouses, or by the habit of changing the ring to another finger to remember something. Memory, offering to Man her ring, reminds him of the fact that Death will come, no matter what.³¹

In other autos by Calderón, we find ideas that play with the concept of memory, closely related with what we have seen before. For instance, in *El día mayor de los días*, one of the characters, Time³², insists on the idea of memory as a device³³ connected to the past (402), stating that Thought is the one who can bring pieces of information to Memory (449 – 452). Memory is also modified by time, which can delete it, as is said in *El árbol del mejor fruto* ("ya que con el tiempo// tan de memoria se pierde" 875 – 876). In *El indulto general*, Guilt relates misbehavior with a lack of memory, therefore Man's forgetting will be remembered in her book of remembrances: "sea// memoria de sus

³¹ In this *auto*, Memory has few interventions, all of them directed to repeating this idea. We also find this topos in *Los encantos de la culpa* (1177).

³² As Parker has noted: "Las lecciones que el Tiempo pueden enseñar se hallan almacenadas en la memoria humana, y la memoria es capaz de procurar al pensamiento lo que éste requiera en forma de los fantasmas históricos que puedan procurarse por la interpretación simbólica del texto" (*Los autos sacramentales del Calderón de la Barca* 77).

³³ Also books are memory devices for Calderón as we see in *La vacante general* (854–857).

olvidos// el libro de mis acuerdos” (895 – 897).³⁴ In the same play, we see how memory also plays an important role in the love that Christ feels for the human soul, because “tan en mi memoria estás// desde el punto que te vi,// que a mi ser tu ser uní, con tan suave lazo fuerte// que me ofreceré a la muerte,// por darte la vida a ti” (662 – 667). This stanza also links the sense of sight to memory³⁵ in the topos of love.³⁶ Regarding sight, Nabuco not remembering what he saw in *La mística y real Babilonia*, blames on the act of speaking the fact that he is losing his memories, relating Memory to attention (“Yo vi... no sé qué vi, que no me acuerdo,// con el discurso la memoria pierdo” 683 – 684), and therefore referring to the changeability of memories. Memory is so important in a correct development of personality, that in *El cordero de Isaias*, the character Descuido (Neglect) is characterized by the lack of memory (898 – 700). In this same vein, distracting factors can make Memory forget important things, as Beauty does (*El verdadero Dios pan* 1282). Memory also appears in historical or biblical autos as the custodian of the biography of characters, as in the case of Josef in *Sueños hay que verdad*

³⁴ The same idea of Guilt, or the Devil, keeping a registry of human errors appears in *La inmunidad del Sagrado*, when Lucero says: “¿Qué error mortal// hay, que en memoria no esté// mía? (413–415).

³⁵ More examples of this link can be found, for instance, in *La Viña del Señor*, where Gentile says about Innocence: “¿Quién me llama?// Mas no tienes que explicarlo,// que de una vez que te vi,// Inocencia, fijas guardo// en mi memoria tus señas” (2282–2285).

³⁶ Love and sight are extremely linked in the Early Modern Tradition. As Guillermo Serés explains in his book *La transformación de los amantes. Imágenes del amor de la Antigüedad al Siglo de Oro*, (p. 122 and following). As part of the platonic tradition, the Italian writers or the contribution of the Bible, the idea of the image of the loved one impressed through the eyes is going to be a constant in this literature (142).

son: "Pues no quiero// afligirte la memoria" (170 – 171), or in *La protestación de la fe*, in which Queen Christina says: "las dudas// que en él padezco lo digan// revolviendo en mi memoria// moviendo en mi fantasía// mal formado embrión de todos// los sucesos de mi vida" (933 – 938). But this doesn't happen in autos in which the characters are more based on allegories. Memory has also an important role in bringing back sensations, as we can see in *El mercader del mundo*, in which Gluttony talks about bringing tastes back to the memory: "Pinturas, que pintadas// todas mis glorias son imaginadas// porque cuanto apetece// el hombre el Apetito se le ofrece,// trayendo a su memoria los empleos// de gustos, de manjares y deseos" (893 – 897), or in *El primer blasón de Austria*, where there is another reference to memory in relationship with food: "Aquesto es mental historia,// engañar el pensamiento,// llenar las tripas de viento,// y comida de memoria" (389 – 392); and it is also linked to emotions like fear, which is the case of the lines of World in *El pintor de su deshonra*: "quien haga infeliz memoria// del temor que en mí se encierra" (1341 – 1342). But what seems clear to Calderón is that memory also has a volitive aspect as recollection can be voluntary as the characters of Sinagoga and Judaísmo state in *El orden de Melquisedec* or Entendimiento in *La divina Filotea* (832).

The two versions of *Tú prójimo como a ti*, in which the memory of Man plays an important role, are special cases. In the first version, the memory is symbolized by two rings that the character of Man wears. The three enemies of the soul, lead by Guilt, are

in charge of stealing the three faculties from Man. World is the one chosen to steal the Memory, which he does by taking away his rings. In this act, Calderón plays with the allegory to develop a whole discourse about memory of God and memory of the world as opposed realities. This distinction is based on the world as being something external to man, something that we can grasp through our senses, and therefore respond to realities that are measurable (referring to a responsive brain model), while God is more an internal reality, something for which Man needs to quest in his interior (referring to a generative brain model). The more Man focuses his attention toward the exterior, the more his memory will be filled with those realities, instead of remembering God, which as we have seen is the real object of memory according to Augustine: “dando indicio// que la memoria del mundo// viene a ser de Dios olvido” (350 – 351). The same idea is explained in the second version of this auto. In both of them Calderón plays again with the idea of getting back memory as the only way to win God’s forgetting (that is to say, forgiveness): “¡Ah, Dios, qué piadoso, qué fiel, qué benigno// buscas su memoria por darle tu olvido!” (v1: 167 – 168, v2: 431 – 432).

Calderón hardly uses the verb “recordar” in his *autos sacramentales*, however, he uses to a great extent the verb “acordar”. Acordar is defined by Covarrubias as “reducir y traer a la memoria alguna cosa”, and its etymology derives from “a”, meaning proximity, and “cordis”, meaning heart; therefore the original meaning of the word is “linking hearts”. This is related to the English expression “learning by heart” or

the French expression “apprendre par coeur”. This is an idea that echoes the belief of Aristotle that memory resides in the heart, and that links with the notion of emotional experiences as easier to remember.³⁷

Supporting the thesis of this chapter, in the protagonist the act of remembering is connected to the idea of remembering God, the divine precepts, while the memory of past times, of events in the past, or past information derived from semantic or autobiographical memory, is mainly related to the villains. In *El año santo de Roma*, Love reminds Fear that Obedience and Truth are the punishers of the Devil (1825). Faith also invites Thought to remember the Sacraments so as to reform Apostasy in *No hay instante sin milagro* (1254 – 1255). In the same vein Faith reminds Apostasy of passages of the Old Testament, and Apostasy, by herself, remembers them.³⁸ In this play, there is a constant link between thought and the ability to remember, as this character/mental process is identified with the operator of memory. Of course, the information that Thought recalls is related to divine truths.

Villains usually display working memories: how to do things. These memories, thanks to the allegory, become semantic memories, pieces of knowledge we acquire over time. A good example of this is Desire saying the lines: “Si es que yo de algo me

³⁷ While for Plato these attributions were seated in the immaterial substance of the soul, for Aristotle, thought and memory were in some part of the body, choosing for this purpose the heart (*Rhetorica* 205). Also the Hebrew tradition locates the memory in the heart, as Douwe Draaisma indicates (46).

³⁸ Apostasy at some point also recognizes Constantin (401–405).

acuerdo// la hostería por empresa// que llama a los pasajeros// tiene una sirena" (*La nave del mercader* 1354 – 1357). At the level of the working memory, Desire knows that its own essence is intertwined with persuasion, the irrational attraction, personified in the symbol of the mermaid. At the level of the semantic memory, and again by means of the allegory, the mermaid is located in a hostel, adorned with the image of a mermaid at his door. And Desire remembers this place. We see the same device in other villains of the play, Devil and Lust, who converse about how "they do things", all of it while talking about what they remember. Devil asks Lust to remember to use her spell without forgetting his venom. She answers that the reminder it is not necessary (1380–1387). Because that is what they do. They are about action, and their memories are frequently about how to do things. Finally, villains never forget: "Bien te acordarás, Lucero, // -que en ti no puede caber// lo flexible del olvido-" (*La viña del señor* 113–114).

Memory is a constant reminder of the past fault, as we can see in *La universal redención* in which after being banished from Paradise, Man's memory torments him (196), reminding him of what he has lost: "me atormenta la memoria// del bien que un tiempo tenia" (430–431)³⁹ But memory is also named when saying that something will be remembered in the future⁴⁰; memory is summoned especially to remember

³⁹ We find this idea in words of Thought in *No hay instante sin milagro* (743–744) or in *Sueños hay que verdad son*: "Si nuestra culpa acordamos, // justamente padecemos" (1400–1401).

⁴⁰ Besides *El segundo blasón de Austria* (1769), we see this case in *A María el corazón* (1664, 849), and *El divino Orfeo* (1634, 534). This appeal to memory as a reminder of triumph is also applied to other doctrines like

triumphs, the triumph of good, the triumph of the Eucharist and the triumph of God,
as in *El segundo blasón de Austria*:

Pues para que también haya
Memoria de tan gran triunfo
La fe le ofrece una alta
Cruz en la cumbre del monte
Luego que el camino se abra,
Que sea inmortal pardon
De esa religiosa hazaña. (1725–1731)

3.2 The memory and the Catholic Doctrine

“If we now ask where the giants were before they lived in Don Quixote’s memory, the answer will be, in the books of chivalry, that is to say, in the imaginations of other men who invented tales about them” as May states (122). The problem with the Princess, the protagonist of *El veneno y la triaca*, is that nobody has told her this story before. And just in case we forget, we need to be reminded continuously:

Pero el sacrificio de la misa es incruento (“incruenta representation sacrificii
cruenti in cruce eisque memoria”): “en este divino sacrificio, que en la Mias se

Judaism. In *El socorro general* (1644) we see: “Hebrea milicia, cuyo// siempre ilustre, siempre invito// valor no podrá olvidar// la memoria de los siglos;” (1–4), and in *El cubo de la Almudena* we find something similar referred to Islam: “Valientes jóvenes, cuyo// siempre heroico, siempre invicto// valor no podrá borrarle// de mi memoria el olvido,” (37–40).

realiza, se contiene e incruentamente se inmola aquel mismo Cristo que una vez se ofreció Él mismo cruentamente en el altar de la cruz [...] Una sola y misma es [...] la víctima [...] el mismo que entonces se ofreció a sí mismo en la cruz, siendo solo distinta manera de ofrecerse" (*Diccionario de los autos sacramentales* 67).⁴¹

As we can see in Augustine's doctrine in the words of Teske:

Memory plays a role in relation to the Christian faith. The trinity of faith does not consist in commending to memory merely the sounds of the words of the Creed without understanding them; rather, a believer not only commends to memory the events which these words signify and recalls them, but also loves what these words proclaim, command, and promise. For one can hold in memory the events of Christ's life and think of them, while regarding them as false or trying to refute them (156).

Smith explains how memory in Catholicism is not only related to the real comprehension of the eternal truths, but also to the tradition of accumulated knowledge that rules the Catholic doctrine.

Members of the Roman Catholic Church have a positive obligation to listen and learn from the 2.000 years old memory, experience, and wisdom of the church. Like any human being, the church has learned from and grown in wisdom and insight from its twenty centuries of experience and much to offer its members as they work at forming their consciences in regard to particular moral issues of the day (123).

⁴¹ Ignacio Arellano, *Diccionario de los autos sacramentales* citing Denzinger (67). There is a constant quest for the remembrance of Christ's sacrifice in Catholic doctrine. This is also visible in Calderón, who, for instance, puts music in charge of reminding the audience that sacrifice, evidencing the knowledge of Calderón about the emotional value of music. In the *loa* of "El verdadero Dios Pan", when History asks Music what her contribution is, she answers: "La memoria de tan horrible portento" (*Obras Completas* 1239).

The Catholic church is an institution founded to enact remembrance in the opinion of Dillon (252). According to Christian doctrine, God experiences past, present and future in the same plane, but for all other entities, time unfolds in a straight line that divides each experience into those three states, depending on whether it is potential, actual or past. This happens despite the fact that man is created in the image of God.⁴² And this is why there is no memory without time. This way of passing time is called in physics terms “the arrow of time”, a concept developed in the early twentieth century by the British astronomer Arthur Eddington. It involves the idea of the “one-way-direction” of time, or in other words, the fact that time never goes the opposite way. Memory unfolds in the same direction. This idea of one-way direction is present in Abrahamic religions since their beginning. At a deontological level, the “arrow of time” is related to the physical concept of entropy, which holds that the universe tends to disorder. And that is the core of the Christian narrative: God sets things in order, but, because of the intervention of evil, and man’s free will, things move toward disorder. It is only the influence of God which brings them back to order. On a narrative level, in the case of the Bible, the whole narration is presented with a beginning, a middle part and an ending. What makes the Bible different from other narratives is that the ending is yet to come, so the reader is living in the middle part of

⁴² Genesis 1:27. "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them."

the narrative. In a metaphorical way, there are things to be remembered and things to be imagined. Because of this, at the communal level, and at the individual level, it is possible to account for responsibility, as the arrow of time allows establishing a series of events related by a cause-effect relation. That is to say, it is this arrow of time which allows the existence of consciousness, because we are able to organize events at a linear level; as Hume said, we perceive the sequence of events, not the relationship among them. Without this one-way-direction, every event would appear as simultaneous to our own minds and the very same act of thinking would not be possible, as thinking, timewise, also happens linearly. Furthermore, there is a philosophical problem with the idea of the present, as it is not the border between past and future, but a flow defined by William James in *The Principles of Psychology* as “the prototype of all conceived times... the short duration of which we are immediately and incessantly sensible” (vol. 1, 631). This flow is called “specious present” and it lasts only a few seconds. But beyond that, everything is past and future.

The arrow of time also grants the existence of emotions that are capital for the doctrine, not only on a philosophical level, but also at a systematic level. The confession is based on five cardinal points: examination of consciousness, sorrow for sins, purpose of amendment, confession of sins, and fulfillment of penance. The first two are related to the past: examination of consciousness demands a reflection over the past. On the other hand, sorrow for sins creates a present emotion caused by a past that is

still present. The third, purpose of amendment, relates to the future; it is a present moment caused by a projection into the future. The actual confession would be the present moment, and penance is halfway between present and future as it projects the length of the penance. Repentance or guilt are emotions directed only toward to the past, because they are emotions that have a past object. Fear is an emotion directed only towards the future, in the face of uncertainty. The mere act of confession is also developed in a flow of time in which time never stops, as the purpose of amendment has to be proved and experienced without an end point. Every *auto sacramental* written by Calderón encompasses a sin and and redemption (except *Lo que va del hombre a Dios*, in which the redemption is not total), and at the same time, every *auto sacramental* portrays the past to be remembered, and the possibility of future, to be remembered as well. And this past and future are articulated through memory.

When it comes to *El veneno y la triaca* this arrow of time is clearly established not only through the normal narrative devices: a beginning, a middle and an end, but Calderón, because of what he is portraying, also shows on stage the moment in which this arrow starts moving. At the beginning of the play, time is static, which is remarked by characters pointing out that the Princess lives in a constant spring. Calderón uses seasons, the most external and primal method to measure the passing of time, as a way to describe this static point in the arrow of time. He does it, not by eliminating other seasons but spring, which would force him to introduce new characters later in the

play, but by annulling their inherent function. Although there are also summer, fall and winter, they all behave like spring, so the Princess doesn't feel the harm of other seasons. For this very same reason, we can understand that the time perception that is stronger in the play is that of the Princess. Calderón sets the subjectivity of the protagonist as the main context of the play, making her protagonism even stronger, even in the presence of Christ. This idea of the ever-lasting spring is not only intended to emphasize that the first action that causes the first movement towards increasing entropy has not happened yet, but also the timelessness that is inherent to God. While the Princess is in grace, she is still part of that timelessness. We are experiencing that stoppage in time thanks to the actions portrayed on stage, in which time/weather participates in the Grace, and it has only good consequences for the Princess. But the character of Death will be also in charge of clarifying it:

Yo te lo diré, pues ya
los tiempos todos ofrecen
juntos, porque aquí son todos
Primavera solamente,
que Ivierno, Otoño y Estío,
aunque sus frutos ofrecen,
como ella es sola la dama,
la dejan lucir corteses. (684–690)

Calderón de la Barca, after the original sin, uses the passing of seasons to start time in motion. The way he does it is pointing out the consequences that different seasons have for the Princess, which is mainly harming her. This way he attains two goals: history starts, and the way it is perceived is through pain (939–965). This is how the Christian doctrine explains this seminal moment with the loss of praeternatural gifts, as we recall. But of course, the arrow of time, from the objective perspective, not from the perspective of the Princess/Mankind, is present in the play from the first verses: it operates not only by presenting different events on stage, events that the audience witnesses, but also bringing other events on stage, essential to understanding the plot, through the memory of characters; descriptions that are not inferred by characters' behavior, but recalled and explained to the audience in a narrative way. Examples of this are abundant: from the Princess explaining that her father gave her her tutor, to Lucero, Evil, explaining his sad story of how he stopped being God's favorite (314–515). Lucero even acknowledges his effort to remember:

Aquí... de acordarme ahora

todo me confundo... (481–482)

There is no memory without linearity of time. This is why Inocencia says: "Sin tiempo nada pasó" (895). Kant said in *Speculative Beginning of Human History* (1786): "The history of *nature*, therefore, begins with good, for it is God's work; the history of *freedom* begins with badness for it is man's work" (*Perpetual Peace and Other Essays: on*

Politics, History, and Morals 54). At the beginning of the play, we see how the Princess is surrounded by the four seasons as characters. We also see that the seasons do not actually change: she experiences a constant springtime, as we have pointed out previously.⁴³ This is a complex topic and, as Kant has stated, time and space are the pure forms a priori of sensitiveness, and an important part of being (*Critique of Pure Reason*). We cannot be and perceive the world except through time and space. Time is passing by for the Princess as it is for the audience because theater develops in time, as theater is composed of actions. But Calderón presents this *suspended time* as a way to mark this *first action* as the beginning of human time and history. As Schelling would also state in *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1842), before the original sin, man shares time and consciousness with God. Original sin is the move that takes man away from this state and marks the appearance of self-consciousness, and therefore his own time:

But beyond the first actual consciousness there is nothing more to be thought except man, or the consciousness, *in its pure substance* prior to all *actual* consciousness, where man is not consciousness of *himself* (for this would not be thinkable without a *becoming* conscious, that is, without an *Actus*); thus, because he must yet be consciousness of *something*, he can only be consciousness of God, not bound up with an *Actus*, thus, for example, with a knowing or willing, thus the purely substantial consciousness of God. The original man is not *actu*, but rather he is *natura sua*, that which posits God, and indeed – because God merely though in general is only an abstraction, while the merely relative *One* already belongs to the actual consciousness – there remains for the primordial consciousness nothing other than that it is that which posits God in his truth and absolute unity (*Historical-critical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* 129).

⁴³ As Escudero has explained in his critical edition of *El veneno y la triaca* (88).

The eternal spring is God's eternal spring. Once this is lost, the four seasons, while watching the Princess as she is going insane, ask Innocence if this has happened before. Innocence replies that they should know, as they represent time and nothing happens that time ignores.⁴⁴ Therefore the shared conclusion is that this is the very first time that this event takes place.⁴⁵ Here we have the reinforcement of the idea that the conflict has to happen for the very first time. The myth of the original sin presents itself as a model for a traditional narrative structure because what happens in the myth of the expulsion from Paradise happens for the very first time, changing the course of

⁴⁴ In Parker's words: "El Tiempo, por haber sido testigo de la Historia toda, es el único que puede revelar los secretos del pasado." (*Los autos sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca* 76).

⁴⁵ Ivierno: Gran mal, extraño accidente
La ha privado del sentido. (882–883)

.....
Estío: ¿Inocencia?
Inocencia: ¿Qué quieres?
Estío: Pues tú, entre nosotros, eres
Quien más la ha hablado y tratado,
Dinos si esto suceder
Suele.
Inocencia: La ignoracia es rara:
¿si aquesto otra vez pasara,
No lo habíais de saber,
Tiempos, vosotros? Yo no.
Sin tiempo nada pasó;
Más sin Inocencia, sí;
Luego supiéraislo aquí
Vosotros mejor que yo.
Esto nunca ha sucedido,
Pues que lo habéis ignorado. (888–900)

history. In the same way, the appearance of the conflict is the first turning point of the plot.

3.3 Contemporary notions of Memory

In the *MIT Encyclopedia of Cognitive Sciences*, Alan Baddeley defines memory as a term implying “the capacity to encode, store, and retrieve information” (514). Encoding may be visual, acoustic, or semantic. Visual and acoustic encoding correspond to the sensory modality. Semantic encoding refers to the general meaning of an event.⁴⁶ Current cognitive science distinguishes among different types of memory explaining the periods of time that it is active: sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory. When it comes to the type of information stored, we distinguish between implicit memory and declarative memory, both belonging to the long-term memory. Implicit memory includes procedural memory and declarative memory includes semantic and episodic memory. These types of memory are not different items or places, but they are interacting continuously and all of them together complete the memory processes.

3.3.1. Sensory memory

Sensory memory is what we perceive through our senses. That means that it is the information that we get through the sensory receptors, depending on the nervous

⁴⁶ Vargas, Patrick T., and Suki. Yoon “Advertising Psychology.” *Encyclopedia of applied psychology: A-E*, Vol. 1, edited by Charles Donald Spielberger. Academic Press, 2004, p. 57.

system. This is the system that processes this information. The information in the sensory memory stays there for a very limited time, three to four seconds, until it passes to the short-term memory system, depending on the attention that we have paid to the perceived object. There is not an act of retrieval here: the information is lost or stored in the short-term memory.

3.3.2. Short-term memory

This type of memory is the smallest part of what we really understand by memory. It has limited capacity and limited duration. It responds to real time perception, and it is measured by the attention span, or the time we can be focused on paying attention to some perception. According to Miller's law, the number of items that we can retain in our working memory without error is 7 plus-or-minus 2. George Miller described in 1956 how the information is stored in chunks; a chunk is the largest meaningful unit that the person recognizes, so chunks will depend to a great extent on what the tested person recognizes. Further research has proven that the number of seven changes depending on the object to be recalled.

Short-term memory links new information to old information; it works closely with the long-term memory, creating a new recoding in the long-term memory. This is why the attention span is also affected by the long-term memory, as the latter affects what is disposable for the short-term memory. Another way to affect the long term

memory is through repetition, an ability that depends on short-term memory, but that allows information to get stored in the long term memory.

What defines what is stored in the short-term memory is attention. We are receiving abundant units of information through our senses constantly, but only the things that call our attention will be stored in this type of memory. The short-term memory has a very limited duration, and this is why when we want to remember something more than the time limit of the short-memory capacity, we must apply the maintenance rehearsal, which is basically repeating the chunks of information so it will stay longer in the short-term memory. When we are applying maintenance rehearsal, new information cannot be entered in the short-term memory. Different types of rehearsing will determine what enters the long-term memory. On the other hand, to be used, memories stored in the long-term memory will be retrieved from it and brought back to the short-term memory for actual operation.

3.3.3. Long-term memory

Long-term memory deals with anything stored in the memory for an indefinite period of time. This type of memory is divided between declarative memory (knowing that) and procedural memory (knowing how).

The declarative memory, when it comes to contents, is itself divided between semantic or episodic memory⁴⁷; with respect to time frames, it is divided into retrospective or prospective memory. Semantic memory refers to facts that we have learned or known at some point, and that constitute meaningful information, that is to say, concept, facts, and events. This type of memory is, as the rest, not infallible and works better when facts are retrieved from time to time. Semantic memory is responsible for the acquisition, representation, and processing of conceptual information. Semantic knowledge networks may be activated not only when objects are visually perceived, but also when they are heard, smelled, or touched, or when the name of the object is read or heard. Semantic knowledge may also be retrieved when writing or speaking about concepts (517).⁴⁸ One of the most outstanding characteristics of semantic memory is that it is not related to a specific event in time, although it is acquired in time, as it is derived from our episodic memory. Every piece of knowledge that we store is acquired or lived in a certain moment, and those moments can shape our knowledge about reality, but the units of information stored in the semantic memory belong to a more abstract category of knowledge that doesn't get stored in terms of time mapping.

⁴⁷ This distinction was made for the very first time by Endel Tulving in 1972 in the chapter "Episodic and semantic memory" in the book *Organization of Memory*, 1972.

⁴⁸ Saumier, Daniel, and Howard Chertkow. "Semantic Memory." *Current Neurology and Neuroscience Reports*, vol. 2, no. 6, Dec. 2002, p. 516-517.

Episodic memory, also belonging to the long-term memory, deals with experiences lived in first person that we can locate in time. It is the memory that stores autobiographical events, including the emotions related to them. This type of memory is the one that justifies the difference between knowing something and remembering something, because, as we have seen in our philosophical review, the classical concept of memory is related to retrieving facts from the past.

Martin A. Conway has defined nine characteristics of the episodic memory: contains summary records of sensory-perceptual-conceptual-affective processing; retains patterns of activation/inhibition over long periods; usually is represented in the form of (visual) images; they are processed from a perspective (field or observer); represents short-time slices of experience; is represented on a temporal dimension roughly in order of occurrence; subject to rapid forgetting; it makes autobiographical remembering specific; and the memories stored in this type of memory are recollectively experienced when accessed.

The other important quality of episodic memory is that is primed depending on the emotional value of the experience. We are more likely to remember experiences with an intense emotional value for us, than those that didn't affect us in that aspect. Episodic memory is also related to what we call autobiographical memory, which are the memories that integrate what we consider a consistent flux in our own lives. This memory creates the sensation of unification of the person, and makes us think of

ourselves in terms of change, comparing past experiences or states with current ones. But instead of processing both realities as different, we compute them like changes to the same being, us. This happens also with beings and entities different from us that we can understand as the same entities through time, despite all the changes they can go through. But as Calderón says through Music in this same play: “propio es de los tiempos// hacer mudanzas [the very essence of time is making changes]” (858-859).

The implicit memory is the one that rules “know how”. It allows us to perform automatic tasks without having to recall past experiences or performances of those tasks. The memory that allows us to perform activities without having to bring it to the conscious sphere is what it is called “procedural memory.” The information stored in the implicit memory leads to the phenomenon of priming, and therefore to what is called illusion-of-truth effect, or the belief that something is true just because we have heard or have been exposed to it before.

Finally, this distinction bring us back to the philosophical literature we have reviewed before, by which we say that memory can be considered an object or a tool. It is an object when we can recall it; it is a tool when we don't need to recall it in order to make it operative with the aim of performing tasks or when it is used to recognize or evaluate a novel piece of information.

3.3.4 The memory and the future

One of the main attributes of the human brain is the ability to imagine consequences in the future. This ability, performed in the frontal lobe is not totally developed until the individual's mid-twenties, which explains teenage behaviors, and also explains why in the conventional dramatic structure the *hamartia* is concentrated in the young characters more than in old ones. As future-oriented beings, humans are constantly performing processes trying to foresee the consequences of different actions in a virtual process of information. This is done using the actual memory, and it is called mental time travel, which happens to use the same mental resources to "travel" to the future, as to "travel" to the past, which we know as "recalling."

What we know as "memory for the future" requires a self-awareness that allows us to imagine ourselves as individualized in each instance of the time line, and a complete understanding of the concepts of present, past and future. This process also involves the working memory, a function that allows us to process different memories in order to imagine future events. Declarative memory is also used to foresee future needs, more immediate needs, which involves another virtual process, "as-if", not triggered by actual conditions. This is key to anticipate future consequences, and requires a whole process of mental scenarios that are created from the bits of information stored in the memory, using episodic memory, from personal past experiences, and semantic memory, or knowledge about the world. As we can see, one

of the problems with the characters of *autos sacramentales*, and in general of the conventional dramatic narrative plot, is the lack of this ability to foresee consequences. The lack of this capacity is what allows for the *hamartia* or fatal error. Nonetheless, *hamartia* means “missing the mark”, or to miss or wander from the path of God. These two meanings convey the idea of space, but they can be translated also in the realm of time. *Hamartia* is losing the aim that must be targeted toward the future. And of course this *hamartia* is related in this theater to a fault of the reason because in words of Garret Sullivan “in Early Modern discussions of faculty psychology, memory is also necessary to the construction of the rational subject” (4). If retrospective reason is aimed toward understanding, towards the future it is aimed at anticipation.

3.3.5. Damasio and the somatic markers

In this review it is fundamentally important to address the theory of the somatic markers formulated by Antonio Damasio, which links how the body stores emotional reactions towards future decisions. In his book *Descartes' error* Damasio defines emotions as changes in the brain and body as reactions to different stimuli, and according to this author, with the repetition of these stimuli and reactions, these physical changes become linked to the trigger situations. Or in other words, our body learns how to react to a certain stimuli. And this is accomplished through emotions. In the face of a certain stimulus, our body recalls a certain emotion and reaction that has been experienced before, and that has been linked to it. The different emotions

associated with different stimuli, meaning with a positive or negative valence, also are fundamental when it comes to pursue the stimuli or situation or avoid it. This theory presents a process of decision-making not entirely based on conscious decisions but also on unconscious ones. Damasio also points out in his hypothesis two ways of process these somatic markers. One is called the “body loop”, and refers to the very straightforward situation when we perceive a stimulus that elicits some type of reaction stored in our bodies. The other one is called “as-if body loop” and responds to an imagined stimulus that, nevertheless, elicits the same reaction although not being real outside our imagination.

The “body loop” and the “as-if body loop” are important when it comes to consider the role that metaphor and allegory play in the *autos sacramentales*, as this narrative device, especially in the case we are studying in this chapter, has the capacity to turn any “as-if body loop” into a “body loop.” The abstraction or the internal triggers (desires, intentions), become reactions to external triggers thanks to the mechanism of allegory. The mental process of erring (always related to an internal and external moral code), become an external process in which there is a material object that concentrates the substrate of the event in a very recognizable action, easily perceived by the audience,.

This hypothesis is fundamental to understand how past experiences influence our present decisions. If the Damasio hypothesis doesn't properly refer to memory in a

conventional use of the term by neuroscientists, there is no doubt that he is describing a process or mechanism related to storing of information. Stored emotions and bodily reactions to different triggers are key in decision-making, and as the research has proven, damages in the areas of the brain related to this storage lead patients to poor decision-making decisions.

The problem with our Princess is that this somatic marker doesn't exist in *El veneno y la triaca*. The lack of this is the reason why the Princess makes the wrong decision when she decides to eat the apple.⁴⁹ If she had had an emotional background, a somatic marker of a previous experience of eating the apple, she would never have eaten it again. But this is important, because in a sense, it explains to us one of the most basic patterns of narrative structure. The conflict must happen to the main character for the very first time. Or at least it has to happen for the very first time in the actual form. The resources to properly judge the act must be limited for the protagonist, including in the resource of memory. If they are not limited, the conflict will not occur because the character would know exactly how to act. Moreover, if the audience suspects that the main character knows clearly how to solve the conflict, the suspense will disappear and, subsequently, interest in the story, as the closure will be present even before the

⁴⁹ For more information about how the somatic markers affect decision-making, see Bartol, J. and Linquist, S. "How do Somatic Markers Feature in Decision Making?" *Emotion Review* 7.1, 2015, pp. 81-89

conflict arises.⁵⁰ In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, we find a perfect example to ponder how this lack of somatic markers are important in the *hamartia*, or error in judgment, paraphrasing Aristotle, needed to put the play in motion. This is especially the case in this play because the whole allegory of *El veneno y la triaca* is based on the idea of sickness and physical suffering, which seems a perfect example of the relationship between somatic markers and decision-making. Remember that this is a story of a Princess who gets sick and the only physician able to cure her, Christ. This sickness and physical suffering is connected, through metaphors, to emotional pain. According to Damasio, as we have seen, there are changes in both body and brain states in response to different stimuli. Here, through the allegory, we have both types of changes. The physical change through sickness, the change of mental state through that same physical sickness, which causes the Princess to become depressed and go insane, and finally, the emotional state change caused by the second element of the metaphor, the emotional pain caused by the sin, the fault, of eating the apple knowing it was a forbidden act.

3.4. The use memory in the play: memory and self

In *El veneno y la triaca* we find several cases of speeches used to exercise the use of memory. Many of them are addressed towards auto-biographical memory, falling

⁵⁰ For a more substantial explanation of the idea of how suspense is the lack of closure in a narrative structure, see *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* by H. Porter Abbot (57).

within what Pavis considers the “technical monologue” or the presentation by a character of past events that cannot be presented directly (219). They tell us what is the past of the characters so we don’t derive it only by their actions in the plot, but also from explicit information. Although Pavis considers monologues “anti-dramatic”, as they move the narrative mode to the epic, they are an important part of this type of theater in which complete understanding encompasses enormous narratives that cannot be contained in a single theatrical work. These are works of narrative which demand from the decoders a steady and shared culture.

When the characters are remembering, they can do it with two main goals: inform the audience about a certain past and/or compare present and past situations, although the boundaries between these two uses is not clear and it depends largely on the emotional implication of the character and the direct impact of the current action in the evolution of the plot. As a general rule, these pieces of information are usually included in monologues inserted in dialogs. That is to say, although the characters are not alone on stage, and in the large frame of the scene they are actually having an exchange of information with other characters, the truth is that the past appears on stage in big chunks, not interrupted for any interpelation, which certainly presents memory as a mainly personal experience, in which memories are not sought but present and easily retrievable. They don’t appear randomly, elicited by some event, but they are consciously recalled as a fundamental part of the character.

When it comes to informing the audience about the premises of the situation and characters, a good example of it is the moment when the Princess introduces herself this way, letting everybody know that she is indeed the Princess:

[...] ayo mío, a quien fio
el gran rey que me engendró,
mi crianza, porque atento
tus capacidades vio.
No habrá menester mi afecto
De quien mi deidad se arguya
Otro aplauso más perfecto
Que haber nacido hija suya,
Engendada en su concepto. (38 – 46)

In this case, the Princess is not comparing anything, as nothing has changed. This is a purely informative use of memory, addressed to the audience, as this is an information shared by all characters in the play. Also, it is a borrowed memory, as she cannot know that she is born from the mind of the Emperor, but something has given her this memory about her own birth and conception. Although this might seem an autobiographical memory, actually it is semantic, which is very interesting, because the very play is the making of the memories of the Princess. She is the type of character

whose previous experiences are of little importance for the plot. Nevertheless, they are exactly those same memories which categorize them as the protagonist.

In a different case, the peak of this use of the autobiographical memory comes in the first long speech of Lucero, the Devil, who devotes 161 verses (354 – 515) to explaining how he was expelled from Heaven, and how he fell in love with the image of the Princess. It is not only about recalling sacred history; he has actually experienced these events and he is explaining himself first hand. With this monologue, Calderón also puts especial emphasis on dignifying Lucero as a character. Through his own account the audience will see more than evil in his motivations. As Peter Anthony Checca explains in his doctoral dissertation *The role of the devil in Golden Age drama* (1975), in Spanish Early Modern literature the figure of the Devil goes far beyond that the archetypal image of the same. This way, and through the love plot, Calderón gives this character an emotional depth that endows Lucero with great dramatic dignity, explains his motivation and reproduces a series of of psychological and cognitive patterns identifiable by a large numbers of spectators. In the words of Patricio de la Escosura, in his well-known monograph about the Devil in Calderón (1875):

Su personalidad es, por ende, eminentemente dramática; no interviene en la representación como figura episódica, o como el *Deus Ex Machina* de los antiguos, para traer maravillosamente el desenlace de la fábula; sino como parte principal e interesadísima de la acción, pues que en ella personifica la mentira en oposición a la verdad; la superstición en contraste con la fe; y en suma, el

principio del mal en obstinada lucha contra el Hacedor Supremo, fuente, origen y arquetipo de todo bien (346).

The Devil is the one character forced to exert on stage that *tour de force* explaining his whole past. First, because he is not the protagonist, so the actions won't be articulated around him, so he won't have many other chances to explain what happened in the play; second, because he needs a plausible motivation that cannot appear on stage, because that is not the *argumento* and because it happened a long time ago.

The Devil's monologue has several attributes of the autobiographical memory. Autobiographical memory, along with physical continuity, is one of the two main supports for the continuity of the self. And all characters observe physical continuity in this play. When it comes to Lucero's recalling, first of all, it explains the episodes of his life, chronologically: his birth, how he becomes the Emperor's assistant, his falling in love with the Princess, his attempt to convince the Emperor not to marry an inferior⁵¹ (the Princess or human nature), his refusal to respect her as his Empress, how in his desperation Lucero tries to defeat the Emperor, and the civil war that that event ignites. In this part, Lucero even recognizes his inability to narrate what happened in the battle, arguing that his memory becomes confused in this passage: "Aquí... de acordarme

⁵¹ The question of the Holy Trinity makes this matter complicated for contemporary secular understanding as the Emperor is the father but also the fiancée of the Princess. The person of the Father is indeed the Father; the son, Christ, will be the spouse.

ahora// todo me confundo... Aquí// fue la mayor confusión// que se ha de ver ni escribir" (482–486). Lucero keeps explaining how he was banished from the court, and how he came to this garden to love her. His monologue, besides the history review, also hints at the comparison between personal past and present which is fundamental in these monologues, and which is fundamental for motivation. Motivation is a mental state strongly connected to the timeline, either in the past or future direction. Lucero connects his past and his future in a dynamic way; he connects his past behavior with his future behavior when he says: "Un imperio me has costado, // y si me valiera aquí// hablar con él, otra vez// le aventurara por ti" (524–527), maintaining the self in the agreement of actions across time and recognizing that these events occurred in the past. It is not only the account of past events, but the explicit admission of those events as still his, integrating them in his narrative. This is in agreement with Locke's idea that I am still who I was yesterday because I remember what I did yesterday. There is a correlation of the self attached to memory and the ability to remember what we did or experienced in the past. Lucero also refers to his creation with attributes that he still has; he defines himself as beautiful and arrogant, brave and witty, jealous and hurt, passionate and noble. And the fact that he defines himself as noble links with the idea of the self attached to honor and deserved respect that José Antonio Maravall⁵² or

⁵² Jonathan Thacker has summarized Maravall's thoughts about this "soy quien soy", utterance common in the Early Modern theater and its significance: "Maravall's basic explanation of the 'soy quien soy' utterance, of the nature of the pressured role-playing of the dramatic characters, seems to me to be well

Ciriaco Morón (67), among others, have pointed out. But in *autos sacramentales*, although they reflect these social structures in which honor is the cornerstone, the self is not so attached to it, but it serves to monitor the changes in the interior subject. That is to say, the self is structured about actions and reactions, and how they fit what it is supposed to be done in an internal level.⁵³ In the case of Lucero, the aforementioned attributes will stay with him the whole play. Those attributes are the ones that define his self, as a character that essentially cannot change without losing his self; but this is not the case of all characters. Adjacent characters don't need to change, or cannot change, but protagonist characters in the *autos sacramentales* have to change, because *autos sacramentales* describe a moral journey. For Calderón, at least in this type of play, the human self might be something immaterial, but definitely something changeable. The self is not a social construction that must be preserved in order to keep one's own place in society, but something that can be improved or worsened. This is the case of the conventional arch for many characters. While they are still the same, they have to

observed and useful: there is clearly a battle between the self (variously characterized by him as 'conciencia íntima' or 'personal' [60], 'propia personalidad' [62], 'ser íntimo,' 'esencia individual,' or 'yo interior' [64]) and the way that society (through the dominant hierarchical, patriarchal, imperialist ideology) expects one to behave 'dada su posición' (63). The 'ser' is the knowable construct for these characters, not the troubling, potentially chaotic interior world" (155).

⁵³ This connects with the Aristotelian idea of the three types of goods in which one is to follow what is good: honor is to try to obtain what is good.

change in order to complete their dramatic trajectory, in opposition to others whose main obstacle is keep being who they are, as in *El alcalde de Zalamea*.⁵⁴

While our Princess won't be less a Princess because of her fault, Calderón manages to still represent the external tension that we can see in his dramatic plays in relationship with society.⁵⁵ While there is not a society here to question the Princess's identity, there are elements that, with their actions will lower her status. The loss of the praeternatural gifts is loss of status. If the Princess was "untouchable" before her fault, after it, she will be subject to damage by those around her, the seasons. So, while the self in *El veneno y la triaca* seems to be an internal question, the way Calderón sets the plot still deploys an interaction with the external world surrounding the character. In a sense, she loses the privileges attached to her status. In this way, the binarism natural to the metaphor is also present regarding the social reading.

The self of the main character in these *autos sacramentales* starts out imperfect, goes through a crisis and reaches her peak with redemption, in opposition to assisting characters that for their own nature, their allegorical nature, need to remain unchangeable. The self is defined by a set or properties, some of which can even be false properties, but that the characters recognize as belonging to them. But what is

⁵⁴ Also by Calderón de la Barca. In this play the *alcalde*, Pedro Crespo, is forced to fight to keep his honor after outrageous actions perpetrated by Álvaro Ataide.

⁵⁵ Mankind will never lose their status in the Hierchachy of Creation, according to Judeo-Christian doctrine.

more important in the case of theater is that the audience recognizes and accepts those properties (even the imagined ones⁵⁶) as integrating those characters. This forces a coincidence in self-perception and perception by others that is characteristic of the literature of this period. There is agreement between characters and audience about who is who and their place in the plot, and therefore not much room for ambiguities. In the case of *autos sacramentales*, the essential properties are more important than the social properties although the allegory might require both of them.⁵⁷ The important fact in this type of narrative is that there is not a steady self that must be recognized or claimed, because the whole objective of the plot is to establish how the new character will be born, the human being following the expulsion from Paradise. A different creature that nevertheless requires memory of who she was before the fall in order to make effective the shared original sin.

In *El veneno y la triaca*, furthermore, we find the case of a character who undergoes an extreme change of personality while still being the same character. This is

⁵⁶ With this I am referring, for instance, to the idea of the infallibility of the Princess, who, the plot will prove, is fallible.

⁵⁷ Ciriaco Morón analyzes the assertion “sé quién soy” and “soy quien soy” in the light of the tension between physical life and spiritual life, that involve honor: “Por eso en Calderón las afirmaciones “sé quién soy” y “soy quien soy” van siempre unidas a la exigencia de mantener el honor. La persona es tal en la medida en que se hace sometiendo a normas que plantean exigencias. Entre la vida biológica y la vida con honor se establece un forcejeo; si el honor está vivo, la vida física puede sostenerse en paz; pero si el honor, vida del alma, no ha sido respetado, el hombre ha perdido su verdadera identidad y no podrá sosegar hasta que lo recobre. El desasosiego es la tragedia y la violencia; cuando se recobra el honor se produce la paz. Ser es exigirse, trabajar por valores objetivos” (119).

the case of Inocencia. After the Princess' sin, she turns into Malicia. Her character name doesn't change, so there is a formal continuity in the text, which is sustained by the fact that the actress playing her doesn't change either, but the main property of Inocencia, her poor judgement, becomes a cynical wit. Innocence is a trait of man in Paradise, and it is destroyed by the original sin; it becomes malice. Covarrubias defines Inocencia as: "Estado de inocencia de nuestros primeros padres en el paraíso terrenal antes que pecassen: inocentemente, simplemente y sin malicia [state of innocence of our first parents in paradise before they sinned; innocently, simply and without malice]" establishing a clear opposition between both terms. Inocencia has several meanings here that Calderón ascribes to one of the type characters of the *comedia: el gracioso* or comic servant of the protagonist. Like the *graciosos* in the *comedias*, our Inocencia is not very smart, and is earthy, fearful and clumsy. She uses vulgarisms like "remenencia" instead of "reverencia", she uses rustic vocabulary, and she often says "I don't know" (285, 348 and 905) and her first intervention denotes poor judgement as she values the praise of others. In this first allusion to Inocencia we can see the instability in which those terms are presented not only in *El veneno y la triaca* but also in Christian doctrine. While Inocencia values being praised, and the Princess says that she values it exactly because she is Inocencia, Entendimiento will change this train of thought, warning her that the day that she doesn't receive any praise, they will be expelled from Paradise. This is an example of the ambivalence in this story, that

permeates the whole plot and that allows it to happen. While the Princess is asked to have a good understanding from the beginning, her most valued trait, her innocence, is presented as rustic and ignorant. When Inocencia has become Malicia, which equates to wit, the Princess is in a sinful state. Inocencia even displays a poor command of her own decisions, exemplified in the stanza when she says she cannot say the things she actually says, giving away all the information to Lucero:

INOCENCIA. De hablar con vos tengo miedo,
que con ninguno hablar puedo;
por eso no os doy respuesta,
ni os digo que el rey supremo
una hija hermosa engendró,
ni que este jardín la dio
por palacio, cuyo extremo
de perfección Paraíso
le ha llamado, ni que atento,
por ayo al Entendimiento
de la princesa hacer quiso,
ni que ella vive esta esfera,
ni que se apellida ufana
la Naturaleza Humana;

que mal en decirlo hiciera. (251–265)

She *doesn't know* although *she knows*, as she proves in the way she reacts to this first incident with Lucero, based on her intuition, first fearing Lucero, later praising the Princess, as we will see later. Inocencia also displays memory when it is required by the plot: in verses 843–846 she warns the Princess about the forbidden fruit and she invites her mistress to *remember* the *precept*. Doing this, Inocencia is repeating something and forcing the Princess to retrieve her in her memory.

Which is an of the repetition we have seen essential for the use of memory. Right after the Princess eats the apple, Inocencia, still answering by this name, shows a greater intelligence. When asked by the seasons what happened to the Princess, she answers they should know, as nothing happened without time, but indeed without innocence. Summer immediately recognizes that the sense lost by the Princess seems to have been gained by Inocencia. Showing her new wit, Inocencia explains to the rest of the characters the deception in the apple. Calderón doesn't portrait Inocencia as Malicia as a wicked character in that moment, but right after showing her new skills, Summer answers: "¡Gran mal, ay, que la Inocencia// habla ya como Malicia!" (917–918). This is not related at all as the meanness of the character, nonexistent so far, but to the loss of something previous. Inocencia doesn't recognize a change in herself, and it is the Princess who now accuses her of being Malicia and facilitating Lucero's intentions. The case of Malicia is especially interesting because it links with a type of

transformation characteristic of fantastic narrations. No human character or human-like character changes this drastically without some “magic intervention”. But at the same time, it defines a well-known trope in Western culture: the loss of innocence. What is a staple of the biblical story has in our culture a meaning of a milestone from adolescence to adulthood. But we are still “ourselves” even after going through that change. That is why it is interesting that Inocencia doesn’t recognize a change in herself, although for the rest of characters and audience, she is now Malicia.

3.5 Repetition

As we have said previously, because theater is a real-time art, with no possibility of going back through the information, an important feature of the same is the repetition of important information: in the case of the audience, this is information that spectators need to have present in order to understand the plot; in the case of the characters the repetition can be a device of the character to claim her identity, the necessary part of a comparison, or it can be a way to foreshadow where the conflict will arise, as the importance given to the repeated information denotes that that information will be violated in some way, implicitly or explicitly, consciously or unconsciously. This last case of repetition is very clear in *El veneno y la triaca* with the concept of the precept. The precept is “repeated” on stage, but the first installment has happened earlier. Inocencia says right before the Princess bites the apple:

Mira bien lo que apetece,

que hay aquí fruta vedada,
si de un precepto te acuerdas,
y así, antes que la muerdas... (843–946)

The truth is that nobody has mentioned the information of the forbidden fruit before, or the existence of a precept that must be reminded and remembered. But this has happened in the cultural milieu outside the theater. The author relies on the fact that his audience knows that there was a prohibition to eat the apple.

When it comes to claim the identity, this type of plot doesn't require this device as this is not a conflict man to man, but a conflict of man against himself, in this case, woman against herself. When the Princess says: "¿No soy la Naturaleza, // reina ya del Paraíso?" (927–928), she is not repeating that she is the Queen of Paradise, but she is wondering if she is not the Queen any longer. The Princess has lost her understanding ("que incapaz/es de reinar quien no alcanza // entendimiento y razón", 1079–1081), which invalidates her reign, but she still has her memory, a necessary resource to feel repentance. This connects this idea with the self. It is this memory that connects who she is with whom she was, and which makes possible the restoration. Being insane, which is an effect of losing the understanding, doesn't mean to stop being oneself, if the individual remembers her past. In this case, sanity and grace are the same thing in this play. The disease is a psychosomatic experience that affects body and mind:

INOCENCIA. Dicen que hay ley de que nadie

pueda heredar si le falta
entendimiento, y que estando
defectuosa la Infanta,
y incapaz, reinar no puede,
y que ninguno ha de darla
obediencia. (1089–1094)

.....

ENTENDIMIENTO. Decís bien, que en ningún tiempo
podrá tener esperanza
de heredar al rey, su padre,
si incapaz pierde su gracia. (1105–1108)

But Identity must be repeated sometimes for the audience, so the spectators can make sense of why the actions of the plot are split among the characters the way they are, that is to say, why this character does something particular, and not other one, adding to the overall meaning of the play. An example of this is the repetition of the role of Understanding as the tutor of the Princess. He mentions this role, but so do other characters:

INFANTA. Árbitro docto de cuanto
en acordada armonía,
ya con risa, ya con llanto,

cubre con su capa el día,
y la noche con su manto:
generoso Entendimiento,
ayo mío, a quien fió
el gran rey que me engendró,
mi crianza, porque atento
tus capacidades vio. (32–41)

.....

PEREGRINO. Generoso Entendimiento,
a cuyo cuidado encarga
el grande rey del Empíreo
la crianza de la Infanta,
hija suya, hasta que fuese
tiempo y edad de llevarla
a coronar a su corte,
como heredera [...] (1280–1287)

This contributes to the idea of character types, that act in the play not according to their psychology but to their function in the plot.

3.5 Different types of memory

In order for this structure to work, the narration needs a fine balance between the different types of memory. First of all, it has to present cause-effect relationships that the audience can recognize. In other words, the basis of the metaphor must be a relationship between similar patterns. In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, the audience understands the link between the structural pattern of food poisoning and healing, and sinning and recovering grace. There is a memory of both facts that helps the audience to follow the narrative. The audience possesses a procedural memory that allows them to remember how this happens, making it possible for transmission of information to occur, and hence they understand the plot. However, a procedural memory (this knowing how), is also required in the characters. They must be able to elucidate the cause-effect relationships in order to help the plot advance and eventually reach its closure. On the other hand the characters don't have a memory of the Princess being sick, and they don't understand very well what is happening. They don't have a declarative memory of this fact, they don't recall the Princess being sick, but they surely have a working memory (knowing how) that allows them to identify the ingestion of the fruit as the cause of a certain result. In every character there is a clear register of perceptions which they utilize to compare past states with current ones. In that sense, they are identifying a change. This not only helps them to compare past and current physical and emotional states, but also to identify the continuity of character.

This is not a minor topic because we must remember that the lady-in-waiting, the character Inocencia, actually is the Princess' innocence, who becomes Malice after the Princess consumes the apple. The character changes, which could result in the very same Princess turning into another character, or in other words, the emancipation of the adolescent. But this constant comparison between previous and current conditions is what ensures the continuity of the entity. The passing of time is understood here as the matrix of several inner changes and not as the container of disconnected events. This refers to the way in which episodic memory works.

This lack of memory in the main character, sometimes the working memory (knowing how), always the semantic memory (knowing that), defines others of the main attributes of the conventional narrative structure. That is, the idea of the helper, that has been defined in very different ways in the tradition of narrative structuralism. Propp defined the function of the helper in his book *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (1927). This helper can be presented as a magician with supernatural powers, or as an old wise person. In any case, he has much more knowledge than the hero about the conflict, and is usually able to tell the main character how to confront it. Also, the influential book by Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), presents the same scheme, and finally A.J. Greimas addresses the topic from semiotic theory in his work *Sémantique structurale: recherche de méthode* (1966). In this book, Greimas focuses more on the function of the characters than on the attributes of the same, but nevertheless,

insists on a defined narrative structure that appears over and over in very different periods and genres. Literature as a biomimetic artifact reflects our perception of reality and, paraphrasing Lakoff, our cognitive models are based on experience that is the "the internal genetically acquired makeup of the organism and the nature of its interactions in both its physical and its social environments" (*Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind* xiv–xv).

No doubt time spent in a certain medium should increase our knowledge of said medium. At the same time, there is an intuitive knowledge about the "lack of experience of youth", and therefore, it fits with our idea of the elderly being able to advise the youth. That is why in many narratives we encounter a structure in which a young, inexperienced main character, lacking memory, knowledge or know-how, or know-that, is accompanied by an older wiser helper. This older wise helper will be the one in charge of revealing the know-how.

El veneno y la triaca is not a different case. Of course, the wise old helper here is the character of Understanding, who, as Ignacio Arellano points out ("El vestuario en los autos sacramentales (el ejemplo de Calderón)" 90), usually appears dressed as a venerable elder⁵⁸. He will be the one in charge of revealing that the help of a physician is required as well as knowing exactly which physician can help: Christ. According to

⁵⁸ Also in other Calderón de la Barca's *autos* like: *El nuevo hospicio de pobres*, *La viña del Señor*, *El arca de Dios cautiva*, or Lope de Vega's *El peregrino en su patria*.

Christian doctrine, Understanding is one of the three faculties of the soul, along with Will and Memory. As we can see, the three of them are intimately related to action. In Aquinas, a clear source for Calderón, the senses gather information from the sensitive world, and, assisted by memory and imagination, they create an image (phantasma), that is shown to our understanding to better grasp the universal knowledge but not the particular. In the opinion of Alvaro Pascual-Leone, neurologist at the Harvard Medical School, this appears to be one of the mental properties of elders. He states⁵⁹ that aging

⁵⁹ Álvaro Pascual-Leone:

Mira, sabemos que a lo largo de la vida, a lo largo del desarrollo y luego a medida que vamos envejeciendo, el cerebro va cambiando. Ese dinamismo del cerebro va cambiando. La eficacia de los mecanismos de plasticidad que hablábamos antes van cambiando.

Elsa Punset:

Van cambiando a peor, ¿no?

Álvaro Pascual-Leone:

¿Cambiando a peor? Van cambiando distinto. El resultado es que para muchas de las cosas que queremos hacer es peor.

Elsa Punset:

Bueno, es interesante esto. A lo mejor no es a peor sino que la naturaleza ya lo ha pensado así para que te centres en otras cosas.

Álvaro Pascual-Leone:

Yo creo que sí.

Elsa Punset:

Y hemos decidido que es a peor. Que envejecer es a peor por alguna razón.

Álvaro Pascual-Leone:

Por ejemplo, para darte algo que sabemos que es así y que yo por lo menos interpreto como a mejor, el hecho de perder capacidad para asociar cosas muy cercanas, el nombre del objeto, el nombre de la persona... esa pérdida de capacidad para eso está...

Elsa Punset:

¿Te refieres a la memoria?

Álvaro Pascual-Leone:

A la memoria concreta, a la capacidad de aprender los nombres o de recordar dónde dejaste las llaves o de hacer multitasking... todas estas cosas que sabemos que perdemos a medida que nos hacemos mayores va asociado a una mayor capacidad de ver relaciones más distantes entre las cosas y entonces yo creo que la sabiduría de los mayores, que es ver relaciones donde realmente los jóvenes no las ven, esto está sustentado en ciertos sentidos gracias a la pérdida de la asociación directa, de la mirada corta. Ves el bosque. Y el coste es dejar de ver las hojas.

brings with it different cognitive properties that allow the individual to have a more general and in-depth understanding of the medium, a more concrete relationship with it, instead of superficial one. As Vincent Martin points out : “Calderón recupera para su teatro la concepción filosófica de la experiencia (empeiria) tanto como aprehensión sensible de la realidad externa, como también en el sentido de una confirmación de los juicios sobre la realidad mediante una prueba (i.e. tentación). [Calderón recovers in his theater both the philosophical conception of experience (empeiria), in the sense of sensitive apprehension, as well as the confirmation through trials of reality judgments]” (123).

So, the Princess has her Understanding who knows more than she does, has more knowledge than she does, and is able to retrieve it finding a solution; she has her Innocence which will change although she remains the same character, and is the one who would be able to recall exactly what happened and has her own experience. The comparison possible thanks to the autobiographical memory of the Princess will be key for her in order to understand the past and project a new future. After the first bite of the apple, the Princess doesn't recognize where she is; there is no memory of that hostile place: “¿Qué campo es éste que piso?// ¿qué peñasco el que diviso// de tran

Interview in *Redes*, RTVE, aired on 06/07/2013. www.redesparalaciencia.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/entrev163.pdf. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

extraña aspereza?" (924–926); furthermore, the Princess uses a temporal adverb that marks a change in time, "yet": ¿No soy la Naturaleza// reina ya del Paraíso?// ¿Pues quién me ha arrojado dél?" (927–929). There is consciousness of the change: she is not something that she used to be, something did something to change that. What is very interesting is that this pain creates in the Princess knowledge about future events:

Aqueso, no;
la Malicia, sí, cruël,
pues que traes contigo aquel
león que en mortales lazos,
esperezando los brazos
y abriendo la boca viene,
porque ya licencia tiene
para hacerme mil pedazos. (932–938)

In the following verses, the Princess will make a comparison on how sun, moon, flowers, beasts, birds and fountains treated her in the past and treat her now, with clear disadvantages for the present.

In sum, different characters with different functions in the conventional narrative structure reveal different cognitive properties that mimic physical processes related to brain functions. One of them is Memory, being present in some characters and absent in others. Without this distribution of knowledge and memory, the

structure of the narrative would not be feasible since the conflict could not be developed or solved without a character to bring the required knowledge to the plot. This clearly appears in the mythic structure, the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise being one of the first examples of this structure in Western myths.

This myth is archetypal of the dramatic conflict; with the lack of memory being the main premise in order to make a conflict work, the expulsion from Paradise presents itself as the first conflict in mankind in the mythical realm. The confrontation with evil has not appeared before, the confrontation with an opposite force, and moreover, the experience of disease has not appeared ever before. This in a moment of literature when the timeline is linear and prolepsis and analepsis are not present in the external structure of the drama, but only as memories or anticipations. It won't be until the use of non-linear timelines in the narrative context that the option of confronting the protagonist with the possibility of learning how to solve the conflict before it appears will allow different approaches to this property of narrative. In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, Calderón uses as well a metaphor that exemplifies the existence of somatic markers, making the experience purely physical through the use of a disease. The sinning leaves a physical mark in the Princess that will alert her the next time she is confronted with the same conflict, so she will know how to react, and the conflict would not be repeated, as knowing how to solve it beforehand makes it disappear.

At the same time, memory has to be used in characters and in the audience, but the different types of memory have to be used in a sense that allow the dramatic arc to happen, but at the same time allow the suspense to unfold. There are memories that must be allowed to have a working conflict: in this case, some autobiographical memories, like “how did I feel and I don’t feel anymore” which allows comparison; or working memories, such as “how to cure”; but not semantic memories, which are where the conflict mainly resides, in remembering: “what is temptation”, “what is sinning.”

4. Will

4.1. Philosophical approaches to Will

For Aristoteles, will belongs to the rational/intellective soul, along with understanding. Will follows understanding and it is free when it is guided by it. That is when the idea of free will is actualized, while a will executed without the guidance of understanding is only an automatic, instinctive form of will. Both faculties are teleological, addressed to a goal, which should be good and well-being. The problem arises in Christianity, when the idea of original sin damages the will, and makes it a weak will by nature, inclined towards evil. Only the intercession of Grace will bring man back to its balance, then being able to address his free will towards good. This capacity to act towards good is what in Christianity is understood as freedom, and the biggest freedom, *libertas maior*, is privative of saints, while ordinary men operate with *libertas minor*.

For Augustine will is the depositary of the theological virtues: faith, hope and charity. Christianity changes the Eros concept of love, by charity, which is the love directed towards God and men, in the form of divine love. But Augustine also understands the relationship of will and evil. Following Plato, Augustine understands evil not as something substantial, but as a lack of good, and therefore it is not born from God, who is infinitely good, but from the will of man. More particularly, when man prefers the love of the sensible to the love of God. That love for the sensible is

what Christianity calls concupiscence. And which ultimately causes men great pain because they mistake it for the ultimate aim, goodness, which it is not. The first Augustine insists on the freedom of will but in the later Augustine's writings the idea of the will not being enough for salvation gains prominence as the author sees the faculty more inclined to evil than in his first works. This inclination would come from the original sin in which man with his free will, and his ill-fated choice introduces the disorder of sin. At the same time, Augustine doesn't separate man's will from his intellect and emotions, so he understands that these faculties are also important in the exercise of the choice. And because in the fallen state, the intellect of man will be in opposition to God, and his emotions will be ruled by concupiscence. All these ideas are connected to the discussion about God's action and real free will, which has been one of the most debated questions in Christian doctrine, and that in *El veneno y la triaca* obviously takes the stance of the intervention of Christ as a required assistance.

As for Aquinas, he asserts that man has free choice¹. For Aquinas, will is an inclination, an appetite in which we seek a union with the desired object. But for Aquinas, the will is the appetite for the universal, the rational appetite, and not the sensual appetite in which we seek the particular. Will is an intellectual power and will tends to goodness, according to this philosopher. Moreover, voluntary action is all that comes from the will but which is not a necessity. That is to say, voluntary action is

¹ *Summa Theologiae* Ia, Q. 83, a. 1.

something that happens by command of the will and not because it is the natural course of action. Although Aquinas sees will as something relatively autonomous, detached from coercion and necessity, he still understand that will requires knowledge to be executed, but that knowledge will always tend to good. In sum, passions and knowledge are important conditions of will in Christian doctrine.

4.2. Will in Calderón de la Barca

In Calderón de la Barca, Will appears as such, as a character, in the following *autos*: *Andrómeda y Perseo*, *La nave del mercader*, *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*, *Mística y Real Babilonia (Loa)*, *El jardín de Falerina (Loa)*, *El pastor Fido*; as Free Will, *Albedrio*, in *El divino Orfeo*, *Psiquis y Cupido* (1640), *El año santo en Roma*, *El año santo en Madrid*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, *El laberinto del mundo (Loa)*, *La vida es sueño* (first version); and as appetite, *Apetito*, in *El diablo mudo*, *Lo que va del hombre a Dios*, *El primer refugio del hombre y probática piscina*, *El indulto general (Loa)*, as sometimes Will works in the play as an equivalent of desire and appetite. The canonical example of this is the *auto* *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*, in which Will appears as the accomplice of the Body in order to indulge in concupiscence. They face Soul and Understanding who are the characters representing the spiritual (and positive) dimension. In other *autos sacramentales*, Will, Appetite and Desire are their own characters, as in *El pastor fido* or *La nave del mercader*, and the character of Appetite or the character of Desire are not always coincidental with the properties of Will. But in *autos* like *El año santo en Roma*,

Calderón creates a correspondence between Will and the tendency to concupiscence. This is why in *autos* like *Andrómeda y Perseo* or *El pintor de su deshonra*, Will appears as the *gracioso*, the fool, the Spanish *comedia* character in charge of the comic relief and always of low social class. In a complex system like this, Will is not only related with (in this context) negative traits, but also with other faculties of the mind, establishing and interdependence between them. In *A María el corazón*, Calderón clearly links will and thought, stating that without thought, will cannot execute its function, to decide freely. The main quality of will expressed by Calderón is its freedom, aligned with the Catholic defense of the free will doctrine. But its influence is only about inclination. Will never decides, it is Man who decides, and Will subject to him decides what Man actually decides. This facilitates the fact that Will and Man, or Human Nature are split in different characters in some *autos*. Although the object of Will is good, Will cannot do anything if Man doesn't lead it in that direction. In *Amar y ser amado y divina Filotea*, Calderón exemplifies this idea with a fight on stage between Man and Will. In *El gran mercado del mundo*, for instance, Will appears as a positive spiritual power. Will is an ambivalent faculty, an instrument, which can be used in any direction, and Calderón will present this faculty as positive or negative depending on the ultimate message of the *auto*. And because of this, Will can also be subsumed by the character of Man, as the faculty more dependent on him, and this is the case of *El veneno y la triaca*. But when it appears by itself, it can appear related to natural reason, as natural reason advises how

to choose between good and bad, and that action of choosing is the realm of the will. For this reason, these two properties appear interconnected, as in *El laberinto del mundo*. But once man has fallen, will cannot do anything by itself, and it will have to be assisted by Grace and Understanding.

In *Andrómeda y Perseo*, Will (Voluntad) is a character, while Free Will (Albedrío) is another. Sometimes will is the capability of choice while free will is the reminder of the freedom of man, while in other occasions they are coincidental. In any case, they are characters related to the action as Eugenio Frutos has pointed out (1981:205). Because Will and all other representations of this property are related to the act of choosing, they can change their role in the plot and be positive or negative characters. This will depend on the needs of the dramatic arc and what the author wants to stress about the message of the *auto*. But considering how human nature has been damaged in original sin according to Christian doctrine, this faculty of the soul will be closer to repeating the fall than to the opposite in the *autos*.

Voluntad appears as a woman in the following autos: *Andrómeda y Perseo*, *La nave del mercader*, *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*, and *El pastor Fido*. And the Albedrío as a man, in *El convite general*, *El año santo en Roma*, *Andrómeda y Perseo*, *El divino Orfeo* (1634), *El año santo en Madrid*, and *El pintor de su deshonra*. The fact that these characters are interpreted by women or men depends on the grammatical gender of the

word, as will (voluntad) in Spanish is a feminine word and free will (albedrío) is a masculine word.

4.3. Will in *El veneno y la triaca*

The second part of the play starts off after the decision of the Princess: the eating of the apple, the *hamartia* in classical terms, and the hubris that brings the character into disgrace.² Patrice Pavis defines *hamartia* in his *Dictionary of Theater* as an error in judgment, while the same author defines *hubris* as “tragic pride or arrogance.”³ In religious terms, Andrés Vázquez Prada clarifies the equivalence between *hamartia* and sin:

Deordinatio moralis, un desorden que desorienta las acciones que desde el sujeto agente caminan hacia un fin sobrenatural. A consecuencia de ello la razón de

² *Hamartia* is also a term used in the New Testament: “The most widely used term for ‘sin’ in the New Testament, however, is the noun *hamartia* and its related verb *hamartano*. Similar to the Old testament Word *chatha*, *hamartia* means ‘to miss the mark.’ According to Gottfried Quell, writing in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, the Word refers to ‘an offense in relation to God with emphasis on guilt.’ The New Testament usage of *hamartia* describes the human predicament as a complex situation. Similar to the central Old Testament understanding of the human malaise, *hamartia* can refer to sin as a specific act. But in addition, the New Testament authors speak of a power or force operative in the human sphere. As an alien reality which has us in its grasp, sin holds sway over individuals not merely externally, but also internally. Consequently, *hamartia* also denotes the defective, internal dimension of the human person. Both the Old and New Testaments, despite subtle differences in emphasis, view sin fundamentally as failure. As both *chatha* and *hamartia* suggest, sin is primarily ‘missing the mark’ or ‘falling short.’ It entails our inability to be what God desires us to be, our failure to fulfill God’s intention for us.” Grentz, S.J., *Theology for the Community of God*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000, p. 184.

³ Pavis also includes in this entry Aristotle’s definition: The hero “does not fall into misfortune through vice or depravity, but falls because of some mistake” (*Poetics*, sect., 1453a). Also, it is interesting to note that while the first commentator of Aristotle linked *hamartia* with *hubris*, more recent literature links it to ignorance (Thornburn 385). In the same vein, also links the *hamartia* to ignorance and maintains the idea that while the Greek hero is ignorant, the Renaissance hero has all the information: “In *Oedipus* the hero, not knowing what’s he’s doing is in some way guided by fate; in *Hamlet* the crime is carried out deliberately” (43). The Princess of *El Veneno y la Triaca*, doesn’t know the consequences, nevertheless.

finalidad de la criatura respecto a su Dios se desvía, dirigiéndose hacia lo que no es Dios: hacia la criatura. Y esta desviación en la directriz de la finalidad humana flechada hacia lo alto constituye también un *fallo*, un *errar la puntería*, un *apartarse del blanco*. Imágenes todas ellas encerradas en el vocablo griego *ámartia*, con que se indica el pecado (259-260).

This part of the play portrays the conflictive action and its outcomes. This is the part in which the first (bad)⁴ decision⁵ moves the character from her former (first) state⁶ of grace into a state of sin. Here, Calderón examines and sets up a proper act of decision-making, based on free will, performed by will⁷, which will support the whole ideology of the play. It is exactly this moment which explains human nature according to the playwright and according to Catholic anthropology. It explains its vision of human nature as flawed⁸, but also depicts a detailed account of the natural processes

⁴ If it is true, as Parker stats, that the Augustinian-Tomist tradition understands sin as “privación, falta de un bien debido” (“The Theology of the Devil in the Drama of Calderón” 9), it is also true that in the same tradition we find the positive character of sin, not only as a lack of good (Aquinas. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 48., I-II, q. 83).

⁵ As Calderón says in *La Nave del Mercader*: “donde no hay voluntad no hay delito” (813).

⁶ Aristotle in *Ethic Nichomaeae* says: “Because we do not wish to call the living happy on account of possible changes in their fortunes and because happiness is understood as something permanent and not at all liable to change” (EN, 1100b), which fits with the idea of the first action or order as a static state, while, the *hamartia* puts events in motion.

⁷ Calderón defines will in *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*: “Yo soy la que en libertad// poner tus acciones fío” (399–400).

⁸ “Creemos que todos pecaron en Adán; lo que significa que la culpa original cometida por él hizo que la naturaleza, común a todos los hombres, cayera en un estado tal en el que padeciese las consecuencias de aquella culpa. Este estado ya no es aquel en el que la naturaleza humana se encontraba al principio en nuestros primeros padres, ya que estaban constituidos en santidad y justicia, y en el que el hombre estaba exento del mal y de la muerte. Así, pues, esta naturaleza humana, caída de esta manera, destituida del don de la gracia del que antes estaba adornada, herida en sus mismas fuerzas naturales y sometida al imperio de la muerte, es dada a todos los hombres; por tanto, en este sentido, todo hombre nace en pecado.

that explain that fallible essence, which is no other than having freedom of choice. We will find in the works of the Jesuit Luis de Molina⁹ this concept of the will as the main component in man's character formation and in the development of his destiny, an idea that will be embraced by the Spanish Baroque.

4.4 Action

As we have seen, drama comes from the Greek *δράμα* meaning action, which makes a play a form of art in which people act.¹⁰ Action is the most important mode in which humans interact with the world.¹¹ It develops in time¹² as it implies a change.¹³ In the same way, a play imitates actions evolved in time.

Mantenemos, pues, siguiendo el concilio de Trento, que el pecado original se transmite, juntamente con la naturaleza humana, por propagación, no por imitación, y que se halla como propio en cada uno." Credo del Pueblo de Dios de Pablo VI. Solemne Profesión de fe que Pablo VI pronunció el 30 de junio de 1968 al concluir el Año de la fe proclamado con motivo del XIX centenario del martirio de los apóstoles Pedro y Pablo en Roma. w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/es/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁹ Luis de Molina, like the rest of the Jesuits, emphasizes the importance of free will, an idea that he explains in his work "Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis" (1588). However, there was much discussion about the role of free will in attaining grace in Spain in this moment, as evidenced by the controversy *De Auxiliis* (A debate convened by Pope Clement VIII) in which the Jesuits defended the importance of free will, in opposition to Dominicans who gave more importance to God's misericordia (1597–1607).

¹⁰ "Hence, the assertion some people make, that dramas are so called because they represent people in action" (*Poetics* 3). "Tragedy is mimesis of action, and it is chiefly for the sake of the action that it represents the agents" (*Poetics* 6).

¹¹ "Our corporeal-practical relationship to the world allows us to face the world with relatively unspecified expectations rather than with a clear, throughly defined value system, since our ability to come to terms with reality in a practical sense is an adequate criterion by which to gauge the validity of our expectations. [...] As long as no problems of action arise, human interaction with reality consists in a flexible

So, traditionally, action has been understood as a physical change, but thoughts can also imply changes, at least in the mental realm.¹⁴ This has been thoroughly studied by analytical philosophy and through the performative value of words¹⁵, as thoughts can be made of words. In fact, in the realm of human action, a physical change is not required as an effect, although this is exactly how *El veneno y la triaca* sets its allegory, as we will see. Cushman and Cahn discuss the concept of action:

Actions theorists distinguish from events a different class of behavior called actions. Complex human behaviors, particularly social and communicative

interrelationship between global expectations and global perceptions." Hans Joas. *The Creativity of Action*, University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 159.

¹² Augustine says in *Confessions*: "For when a body is in motion, I measure the length of the motion in time from the moment when it begins to move until the moment when it ceases to move. And if I did not observe the moment when the movement began and if the movement continues to go on so that I cannot observe the moment when it ends, then I am incapable of measuring it... It is clear, then, that the motion of a body is one thing and the means by which we measure the duration of that motion is another thing. Is it not obvious which of the two deserves the name of "time"? A body may sometimes be in motion, at varying speeds, and may sometimes be standing still; but by means of time we measure not only its motion but its rest... Time, therefore, is not the motion of a body" (11, 24).

¹³ Actually, in *Physics*, Aristotle goes to great lengths to explain how time is a measure of change (IV, 10-13). Also, as James F. Allen explains: "The world is represented as a set of situations, each describing the world at a single instant in time. An action is a function from one situation to another, and can be described by a set of prerequisites on the initial situation and a set of effects that will hold in the final situation" (252).

¹⁴ This is a complex topic, for if changes can be measured in the physical realm, it is impossible to measure changes in the mental realm, or what is the same, to understand the movement from physicality to mentality, also known as the "hard problem". The traditional view on this has been to view it through the behavioral framework, as mental changes are visible in behavior changes.

¹⁵ "The uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action, which again would not normally be described as, or as 'just,' saying something." Austin, John L. *How to do things with words*, edited by J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Harvard University Press, 1962, p. 5.

behaviors, exemplify members of this class. When studying the nature of actions, action theorists argue that it is impossible to identify causes, effects, and causal relationships. When actions occur, one is not likely to observe a physical change that functions as a stimulus or cause. Nothing functions as a response or an effect, because actions are arbitrary, learned, and often unpredictable. Since they are more complex than events, actions fail to conform to physical laws. They require teleological explanations in which intention and choice are employed to explain human behavior (10).

This explains why in the Catholic doctrine, sin, which is in itself an act contrary to God's law, can be performed in four ways: thought, word, work, and omission.

Omission, as a lack of action, can also change the physical world¹⁶, understanding this to mean failing to change things to the way they ought to be. Nevertheless, in philosophical terms, action is usually distinguished from mental states. The main difference seems to lie in the fact that an action needs an intention, as an intention is a desire to change reality in some sense. And intention is a mental state.¹⁷ Whether an action needs intention or not in theater is slippery territory, in the sense that the intention does not always belong to the characters, at least in the "big picture." The conventional theory of theater says so, as theater aims to portray, besides actions, complex psyches as well. But if we think of Greek theater, in which fate, as the most powerful force, dictates the action of the characters, the intention is displaced from the character to the teleological aim of the plot. Even in *autos sacramentales*, plays devoted

¹⁶ As the trolley problems, introduced by Phillipa Foot in 1967, show.

¹⁷ Although there is controversy about whether intentions are or are not mental states, we will stick to the definition of Michael Bratman in which he considers them as such (119).

to illustrating the doctrine of individual free will, we find the very same problem, which is a paradox. Characters are not free, as they have to follow their “destiny”, i.e., their dramatic function, even if the play describes a world in which a mode of existence is not predetermined.

To understand this last point we must differentiate between final cause and efficient cause. The final cause is the point B at which a play is designed to arrive.¹⁸ The plot of a play is organized around its final conclusion, a conclusion that is (or should be) climactic. Everything that happens in the play must respond to the necessity of a final production of meaning. That is to say, the actions (derived from the intentions of the characters) are subordinate to the overall structure, which itself is a response to the necessity of organizing the facts and events in such a way that the relationship between causes and effects, in a Newtonian sense¹⁹, works perfectly for the audience to derive a certain meaning or message. The goal of a play is its final message; everything that happens before is just a preparation for that message. So, every event in a play is no more than the necessary cause of a final effect, which is itself the most important component of the plot. The playwright arrives at that final effect through the execution

¹⁸ Although contemporary/postmodern literature denies this teleological goal, and it aims to explore the properties of narrative without any defined closure, in *Poetics*, Aristotle says “Thus, the events and the plot are the goal of tragedy, and the goal is the most important thing of all” (6).

¹⁹ In *Physics*, Aristotle also speaks about this cause-and-effect relationship that rules nature (199 a).

of different actions that can be strong, i.e., directed by a clear intention, or weak actions, i.e., those in which intention is not a key concept of the action.

Actions are the events that respond to the question “Why?” “Why” is the adverb that is in charge of explaining the cause-and-effect relationships in the physical world. The West has been highly influenced by the Aristotelian taxonomy of causes which will set a rigorous systematic structure in Scholastic philosophy.²⁰ And Calderón is highly influenced by Scholastics in the way he structures his plots.²¹ Aristotle says in *Physics*: “we think we do not have knowledge of a thing until we have grasped its why, that is to say, its cause” (194 b 17-20). Taking into account that *autos sacramentales* are a type of pedagogical theater, created to teach *something*, it is consequential to state that its final aim, in the extra-diegetic context, is the acquisition of knowledge.²² In *Physics*, Aristotle distinguishes four types of causes: material cause, efficient cause, formal cause and final cause.²³ In the text under discussion here, the material cause of the first decision is the apple—something edible. The princess eats the apple because apples are

²⁰ Especially from the 12th century in which Jewish and Arab translators will introduce Aristotle to the original Scholastics.

²¹ Parker, Alexander. “Calderón, el dramaturgo de la Escolástica.” *Revista de Estudios Hispánicos*, no. 8, 1935, pp. 273-185.

²² The problem of knowledge is a constant in Western Philosophy, but it is a central concern in the Baroque period, as we can see in the works of authors such as Descartes or Locke. For Calderón, knowledge is not an end in itself but always a means to another goal, as evidenced by the structure of this play. Knowledge is the instrument to approach God (in this case, the reestablishment of grace).

²³ *Physics* II, 3, and *Metaphysics* V, 2.

edible. The formal cause would be the very essence of the object: apples are made to be eaten. Are they? They are in this cultural referential world. First of all, in the West, apples have been part of the human diet since antiquity, so it is not strange to the audience that an apple is going to be eaten.²⁴ They also eat apples. That creates a sense of proximity and understanding. Secondly, the apple is a commonly-accepted symbol²⁵ for sin.²⁶ Symbols respond to a cause-and-effect paradigm, as the symbol itself provokes the immediate conception of a certain meaning. It is also a material symbol that in its signifier, the apple, requires a certain action to achieve its full meaning: it has to be eaten, which is the efficient cause, the third type of cause.

Efficient cause is “the primary source of change or rest.”²⁷ That is to say: the apple is eaten. This changes the situation and opens a new segment of plot. Lastly, we have the final cause, “the end, that for the sake of which a thing is done”²⁸, which is the excuse to bring the character of Christ onto the stage and show all his power; therefore

²⁴ Brothwell, Don R. and Patricia Brothwell. *Food in Antiquity: A Survey of the Diet of Early Peoples*. JHU Press, 1969, p. 32.

²⁵ As Alexander Parker has remarked: “Los símbolos son una clave importante para la interpretación calderoniana, puesto que nos apartan de la realidad material y nos abren a la realidad artística, en la que únicamente podemos comprender la visión poética que Calderón nos ofrece del destino del hombre” (“Metáfora y símbolo en la interpretación de Calderón” 159-160).

²⁶ Tina J. Wray explains this can be related to a misunderstanding of the latin name of the apple “malus”, and its relationship to evil (“malum”), or as the apple traditionally understood as related to knowledge (214).

²⁷ Aristotle, *Physics* 194b 30.

²⁸ Aristotle, *Physics* 198a 25.

we are witnessing a “laudatio” intended for the son of God. As a matter of fact, the whole plot is organized around Christ’s entrance on the stage.

Aristotle uses these causes as explanations of phenomena. In other words, the *a priori* circumstances which allow the action to be taken. Actions can be also caused by coincidences, but one of the characteristics of theater, or at least this type of theater, is that even at the most basic level of the plot, there are no coincidences. As a theater based on the defense of free will, the concept of destiny is not present, and coincidences are not needed to explain what is happening on stage. All characters have a clear intention, and the audience feels the plot to be a balanced conflict among conscious forces. The concept of teleology is not only present in the final cause of the plot, but also in its different parts. It is in this type of theater that the concept of the path from point A to point B, so basic in dramatic writing, takes its most powerful shape, derived from the conscious aims of the characters.

4.4.1. Mental Components of action

Philosophy of Mind has devoted great effort to deciding what is an action and what is not. There are actions that are involuntary and actions that are byproducts. That is to say, when a character is eating an apple, this is an action in itself—the meaningful action in our story—but it can be broken down in several other actions. And while not all these other actions are important for the final message of the play, they are important to understand the action itself and to make it meaningful. Therefore,

there are limits to the metaphors. Not everything can be (and should not be) transposed to the realm of the sign. The mimesis that a metaphor entails needs to be a studied equilibrium between transposed meanings and literal meanings. For instance, it is possible to transport the meaning of sin to the eating of an apple, but for this to be meaningful the apple must be eaten on stage, or at least, it must be suggested in some way that it has been eaten. This sets limits to the concept of allegory as a system of intertwined metaphors in order for them to still be understood by the audience. That exchange of information has to happen. Imagine the Princess takes the apple and keeps it in her pocket. Then, the understanding of the action would be confusing, as introducing it into the body is not the same as keeping it close to the body. When the Princess is eating the apple, there are actions that are involuntary. For instance, the movement of the mouth and action of her muscles in swallowing the bites; the audience can appreciate this, infer this, and their understanding of the action relies on this to a great extent; that is the act of "theatrical acting." But there are also actions that are byproducts. For instance, moving the arm to grasp the apple, or actually grasping it. This is why, in Philosophy of Mind, for an action to be meaningful it requires certain attributes, which are mainly consciousness, agency, and intention. Decision theory is concerned with the factors that lead to a certain decision (or lack of it), the uncertainty that it involves, and its quest for the optimal result in the presence of different options. The decision-making that leads to action is a cognitive process that involves several

beliefs and goals, which can finally prompt or not prompt the action. In this case, we must study the previous beliefs and the described personality of the agent.

In philosophical terms, an action, to be genuine, must be performed with an intention as Searle points out in "The Intentionality of Intention and Action." Intention is one of the possible mental states, along with desires and beliefs. Intention is the commitment to perform an action, but it doesn't imply the action itself. And certainly, the intention of the action can be totally different from the result of the action.

There are several types of intentions, and clearly to act with an intention for the future, to act intentionally, and to act with a certain intention are not all equivalent. It is in the gap between these factors that dramatic writing places the conflict and makes it functional.

As for the Princess "acting intentionally", that is the point in which the play clearly states its meaning. Nobody forces her to eat the apple; actually there are warnings about not doing it. As for "acting for the future", it has been said that *autos sacramentales* are not tied to time or space. This affirmation is based on the fact that many of them do not take place in a certain historical context. However, there are *autos historiales* set in very defined historic circumstances.²⁹ And even in *autos* like *El veneno y la triaca*, the action occurs in a specific time and place the audience can identify relative

²⁹ To see how inaccurate this statement about the atemporality of *autos sacramentales* is, read the epigraph "La historia y lo historial en algunos autos significativos" in Ignacio Arellano. *Estructuras dramáticas y alegóricas en los autos de Calderón*, 2001, pp. 128-146.

to their own—before the Fall, in Paradise. This is the moment of the Law of Nature, which will be followed by the Old Law (or written law, the commandments) and later by the Law of Grace³⁰ (redemption through the sacrifice of Jesus). This age³¹ corresponds to the moment in which man has all his praeternatural and natural gifts. (Actually, the original sin will entail the loss of the praeternatural gifts.) In this moment, and here we address the problem of atemporality in the *autos*, time seems to be suspended, and this is the way it is portrayed in *El veneno y la triaca*. It requires an action to set time in motion, and this is what the original sin will do.³² There is no way for the Princess to anticipate the fact that time is going to begin after her action, because she has no concept of time. The possibility of “acting for the future” doesn’t make sense in this context, as there is no future, in the sense that there are no consequences that change the *status quo*, or at least, the Princess is not aware of this possibility. The audience knows that there is “a future” (the future meaning the time after the expulsion from Paradise) because they understand that the action is set in their past. The audience has the actual perception of the passing of time, mostly because of physical changes that they experience, and the notion that their actions also lead to physical changes. But the princess cannot anticipate the consequences of her action as

³⁰ www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c3a1.htm. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

³¹ In this moment, and after the expulsion from Paradise, man will still be under the Law of Nature.

³² This idea will be developed by idealist German Philosophers such as Hegel and Schelling.

she lacks this embodied cognition³³; she only has the abstract idea of a prohibition.

Nevertheless, she has the intention of eating the apple.

Finally, when it comes to “act with an intention”, what is the Princess’ intention in eating the apple? Here we have two considerations to be made. First, if she doesn’t have the intention of starting time, and with it banishment from Paradise, which hardly seems to be the case, how can she actually be punished for it? What is her actual responsibility for this outcome? The entire situation underscores the uncertainty of existence and our inability to foresee the consequences or results of our actions.³⁴ Secondly, related to the former point, the fact that she is actually punished implies a normative universe in which actions have their meaning according to whether or not they obey the rules, and not according to the value given to them by the agent. Because we cannot know the outcome of our actions, it is better to follow the norms of this given universe. The fact that for Catholic doctrine God is present in the creation fits the idea that the absence of God, or, equivalently, the violation of his rules, is experienced

³³ The notion that the physical aspects of the body play an important role in cognitive processes beyond the brain itself, the body also being able to influence the mind and not only the opposite direction. This idea opposes the dualism formulated by Descartes, and that is dramatized in Calderón’s *auto, El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*. But the theatrical representation of the character of the soul, the Princess, is impossible without giving a great importance to her bodily experiences. The allegory wouldn’t work in that case, as the transposition of meanings would be limited. So, in a sense, the allegory is working against the doctrine of the play.

³⁴ This has been called the “problem of anxiety” in the face of our own fallibility and it has been studied by philosophers like Kierkegaard or Niebuhr. Malone-France, Derek. “Anxiety.” *Faith, Fallibility, and the Virtue of Anxiety: An Essay in Religion and Political Liberalism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

in the physical world that surrounds the protagonist. This idea is what we know as deontology, the idea that the moral value of an action is based on its adherence to the norms. Deontology requires absolute moral values, and they cannot be otherwise, as they are dictated by God.³⁵

So, the ultimate value of a decision is not a function of individual intentions, desires, or beliefs, but whether it conforms to an external set of rules. The individual responsibility is therefore confined to the acceptance of those rules. This philosophical problem will be one of the main factors to which Protestantism reacts. In Catholicism there is an individualistic encouragement, which definitely is unavoidable in a Judeo-Christian context, but it is nuanced by always-present superior forces. In Calderon's world, the Catholic church embodies these superior forces in the moral realm, and the monarchy in the social realm.

Elizabeth Anscombe reckons in *Intention* that when we act intentionally, it is because we have a practical knowledge of the world. Practical knowledge is a certain way to know the truth about the world, and Aquinas defines it as the knowledge of God, who knows the world exactly as it is.³⁶ Opposed to this is speculative knowledge of the world, which is what human agents have most of the time. So, the difference

³⁵ This is the Divine Command Theory, supported among others by Augustine and Scholastic philosophers such as Duns Scotus.

³⁶ Terms discussed by Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 14: God's knowledge.

between failing in our intention or in our performance is the same as the difference between having a practical knowledge or a speculative knowledge. A failure in speculative knowledge relates to our failure in apprehending truth, while a failure in having practical knowledge is a failure in the performance of our actions. But acting intentionally does not mean actually knowing what we are doing, which is exactly the case of our Princess. The outcome can be what is expected, but even in that case, it can happen that we do not really know if what we are doing will have the result we want. This raises a gap in the relation between knowing how the world is, knowing what are the actions which will bring about desired outcomes, and actually knowing that our own actions will bring about our desired outcome. As we have said previously, it is exactly in these nuances where the theatrical conflict develops, at least in the case of *autos sacramentales*.

4.4.1.1. Consciousness and agency

There is no possible intention without consciousness. Consciousness means having the control of the executive system of the mind.³⁷ Although there is consensus in the fact that consciousness is a difficult concept to define, words such as awareness,

³⁷ "In 1981, David Armstrong published an influential essay, "What is Consciousness". In it he noted that the term 'consciousness' can have at least three senses. The first he termed "minimal consciousness", and said that it occurs when there is *some* mental activity occurring in the mind. He called the second "perceptual consciousness," in which we are aware of aspects of our perceptual field. This entails "minimal consciousness" but is not entailed by it. The third sense that he notes is "introspective consciousness." He likens this to a kind of "perception" of the mental, or what we would simply call "introspection." Cunningham, Suzanne. *What is a Mind?: An Integrative Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. Hackett Publishing, 2000. p. 72.

sentience, or subjectivity are usually used as synonyms. Consciousness entails being aware of events happening outside and inside the mind. Therefore it implies an observer or at least the feeling of an observer. This fits with the idea of the mental theater of Descartes. And it also fits with the concept of psychomachia: the concept of breaking the human consciousness into parts and being able to monitor one's own mental processes through a dramatic exposition. This is related to the concept of awareness. And this is the reason why Entendimiento (Understanding) is absent from the stage when the Princess makes her first (bad) decision.³⁸ There is a lack of self-monitoring in that moment.³⁹ There is an automaticity that equates the Princess with an animal in a sense, as she doesn't truly understand the action she is taking. Can it be that this considered self-monitoring, or conscientiousness, is a most highly-valued doctrine of the Catholicism since antiquity? This notion is derived from an ancient tradition that comes from the Greeks. The sentence *γνώθι σεαυτόν* (know thyself), written on the pronaos of the Delphi Temple has been attributed to Socrates, Heraclitus, Tales, and Pythagoras, among others. In the case of Christian doctrine, the idea of knowing oneself is related to the idea of being able to discern between truth and falsity. This is

³⁸ Theologians like Schleiermacher have discussed the relationship between sin and consciousness: "For Schleiermacher, sin is sensible consciousness in distinction to God-consciousness" (Baur 352).

³⁹ As Eric A. Fong and Henry L. Tosi Jr have shown in their paper "Effort Performance, and Conscientiousness: An Agency Theory Perspective", "conscientious individuals appear to increase effort through incentive alignment and monitoring, whereas conscientious individuals do not shirk with or without agency controls". *Journal of Management*, vol. 33, no. 2, April 2007, pp. 161-179.

an idea influenced by Scholasticism, and true knowledge comes from understanding, not from will. Furthermore, this wouldn't be possible without the previous idea of truth and falsity that derives from a ruled creation in which relativity is impossible. As María Alicia Amadei-Pulice explains in the Middle Ages the representation of reality in the theater corresponds to the flat vision of God, and the inclusion of the notion of perspective (Al-Hazen) changes the way the world is portrayed – there are now many eyes contemplating it (111).⁴⁰ Baroque theater, and baroque art in general, will dig into that idea, with the best example being *Life is a dream* by Calderón, in which reality is portrayed as something difficult to know. But *autos sacramentales* as the direct evolution of medieval moralities, and its adherence to the deontological morality, needs to stress that the world can only be possible in one way.⁴¹ This also connects with the philosophical idea of metaphysical realism, which implies that the world is as it is independently of how we perceive it (assuming we actually perceive it). Events and relations between objects also exist independently of how we conceive them. In other words, the apple the Princess eats is a vehicle of evil, no matter how she perceives it. This is important because, if the world does not contain in itself truth and falsity, we cannot arrive at true or false statements; we would only arrive at our perception of the world, in which these categories wouldn't make sense anymore. The metaphor of the

⁴⁰ Amadei-Pulice, María Alicia, *Calderón y el Barroco: Exaltación y engaño de los sentidos*, 1990.

⁴¹ *Autos sacramentales* are a direct evolution of previous forms as Isaac Felipe Azofeifa argues in *Literatura universal: introducción a la literatura moderna de occidente*. Euned, 1984, p. 217.

apple can function because it implies that the statement “breaking the rules” implies an inevitable cause-effect relationship in nature. *El veneno y la triaca*, despite being a play that explores mind processes, denies a mind-dependent world. That is the very same essence of a normative universe. The caveat here is one of the critiques of metaphysical realism: the fact that the world cannot exist independently of how we conceive it, since we categorize and classify it according to conceptual schemes. But, while other *autos* go from the conceptual scheme to the actual scheme describing actual “sins”, *El veneno y la triaca* never makes that jump, and remains in the conceptual sphere. Here I am referring to the tropological⁴² interpretation of the allegory, the one that bears the real moral meaning of the story, since in its pseudo-literal⁴³ interpretation, the play clearly addresses the problem of pride when eating the apple in Paradise. In the moral interpretation, the audience never gets to know the actual fault of the Princess, beyond the fact she failed. Or in other words, the actual sin is turned into a metaphor by the eating of the apple, but we never get to know what is the real referent of the metaphor. We know that her pride is the ultimate cause, which provoked it, but what did it provoke? The audience gets to know there is a relation broken, but never learns how

⁴² The goal of this interpretation is to discern the moral reading of the story.

⁴³ I say here “pseudo-literal”, because the literal interpretation is the story of a Princess who gets sick. Nevertheless, it is a transposition of the Biblical passage of the expulsion from Paradise. So, *El veneno y la triaca*, beyond stating some truths about life according to its author on a tropological level, is also retelling a defined story.

that broken relation worked or what it implied.⁴⁴ The nature of truth in this play limits itself to a conceptual definition, the fact that “it” exists, much more than the expression of how it exists when applied in reality. But the consequences tell the Princess, and the audience, that “it” exists. This is why she falls ill. This is why its contemporary audience can feel the consequent effects of “it”, as they feel pain and experience death, after the banishment from Paradise. The play is no more than the theatrical representation of one of the many accounts of how “we arrived at this point”.⁴⁵ The rest of the ideological apparatus exists to fill that ruled universe with content, which derives from moral, anthropological and philosophical sources. At the end of the play the message to the audience is that human beings are not able to know the world in its totality; therefore, they must rely on external sources of knowledge—in this case, the rules of a normative universe.⁴⁶ The play is telling the audience “how we arrived at this point”, but it is also explaining how the failure of the original sin worked, and that it will be repeated by them infinite times again.

⁴⁴ To understand this, a good example is Calderón’s *auto La lepra de Constantino*, in which the metaphorical term is the leprosy of Constantine, but the referent is the rejection of the Catholic faith, which is also a breaking of the rules, but with a clear content, not like in the case of *El veneno y la triaca*.

⁴⁵ For “realists” the problem of representation is a pseudo-problem and they do not think it necessary to answer whether the representations of real objects really fit the reality of real objects.

⁴⁶ Augustine says in *Confessions*: “For what am I to myself without Thee, but a guide to my own downfall? Or what am I even at the best, but one sucking Thy milk, and feeding upon Thee, the meat that perisheth not? But what kind of a man is any man, seeing that is but man?” (IV, 1).

But let's go back to the Christian notion of "knowing thyself". As God and his rules are the aim of every Christian, knowing oneself not only consists in discerning true from false, or remembering the Platonic triad⁴⁷, good from evil, but also in being able to discern God's will⁴⁸, although this seems to be difficult for human beings according to the Bible.⁴⁹ When Augustine says "Noverim me, noverim te"⁵⁰ (Let me know myself, let me know you), he is implying a connection between every human and God: the fact that knowing oneself means to know God; thus knowing oneself will lead to the following of God's rules. Also, he implies that this is a feedback system in which one cannot know oneself without knowing God and that it is impossible to know God without also knowing oneself.⁵¹ The structure of Calderón's theatrical work, following the Biblical language, stresses this relationship in the form of kinship. The Princess, Human Nature, is the daughter of the Emperor, God.

Does the Princess know herself? She certainly has a notion of her existence, individuality and agency. How could the audience empathize with her without this?

⁴⁷ The Platonic triad states that good, beauty, and truth are equivalent. Plato, *Philebus* 61a–66b.

⁴⁸ Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will (Romans 12:2).

⁴⁹ "Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?" (Luke 12:56).

⁵⁰ Augustine, *Soliloquies*, (II, 1,1). oll.libertyfund.org/titles/1153. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁵¹ *Confessions*, (X, 1).

She represents a complete human being, and represents an entire human circle of action. We tend to guess intentions and feelings in everything that *resembles* humans. On stage we have a human being portraying a human abstraction. So, the audience needs her to express some consciousness and agency to make the plot functional. Or, in other words, to allow the Theory of Mind to work, the mind-reading skill of the audience is necessary for them to empathize and to feel interest in her story.⁵²

How does the Princess express her consciousness and agency? When the Princess gets to speak, which doesn't happen until Entendimiento has set the scene, and presented her, her first words allude to Entendimiento as her most faithful guide. Later she refers to her lineage, the fact that she is the daughter of the Creator. Finally she talks about the different elements of Creation, considers them her vassals, and therefore, places herself as the feudal lady. This locates her on an upper level of the hierarchy and suggests that her will is more powerful than the will of the rest of the elements. She knows this, which means she has a clear consciousness of who she is and what are her powers and attributions. She does not refer to herself as another element in coexistence with the rest, but as an element with the power of decision. Therefore, the rest of the elements are submissive to her.

Árbitro docto de cuanto

⁵² Theory of Mind, or ToM, is the field of Cognitive Sciences that studies how human beings are able to "read" the mental states of other human beings and therefore, anticipate their intentions or feelings.

en acordada armonía,
ya con risa, ya con llanto,
cubre con su capa el día,
y la noche con su manto:
generoso Entendimiento,
ayo mío, a quien fió
el gran rey que me engendró,
mi crianza, porque atento
tus capacidades vio.

No habrá menester mi afecto
de quien mi deidad se arguya
otro aplauso más perfecto
que haber nacido hija suya,
engendrada en su concepto.

El sol, hermoso farol,
con tan templado arrebol
me ilumina suspendido,
que sospecho que ha nacido
para mi vasallo el sol.

La luna, que diferente

cada vez muestra semblante,
mira a mi gusto obediente
una vez hacia el levante
y otra vez hacia el poniente.
Todas esas tropas bellas
de vividoras centellas
me están influyendo amores,
siendo en mis jardines flores
las que en los suyos estrellas.
Sírvenme los elementos:
el fuego en claros tributos,
el agua en dulces acentos,
la tierra en sabrosos frutos,
y el aire en blandos alientos.
Y con halagos suaves,
con acciones lisonjeras,
a mis pies se postran graves,
domesticadas las fieras
y sin libertad las aves.
Ese monstruo encarcelado,

cuando más fiero se enoja,
sobre sí mismo elevado
en crespas espumas moja
el firmamento estrellado,
sin que, atrevido, a la playa
un paso más que otro haya,
que asegurando mi pena,
con un bocado de arena,
le detiene el monte a raya.
Y así, el festejo de hoy
su encarecimiento yerra,
si única heredera soy,
de cuanto mirando estoy
sobre la faz de la tierra. (32 – 86)

Later, Entendimiento will refer to her as the owner of everything (152), and from this it is clear to the Princess, the rest of characters, and the audience, who she is, and what her attributions are. When the Princess commands the elements of creation to sing, they do so, so there is an explicit cause-and-effect relationship between her desires, commands, and how others react to them (162 – 168).

Later in the play, when Lucero, the Devil, approaches the Princess without disguise, she observes that her innocence, Inocencia, withdraws. The Princess fears Lucero, and she cuts off any type of interaction with him. The audience can see she has agency, that she is aware of her surroundings, that she infers information, and that she makes decisions. Despite her young age, she demonstrates agency, and there is no need for us to say that she is not a toy in destiny's hands. If agency is the human capacity to make choices, the plot needs the Princess to prove that she has agency before making the decision to eat the apple. Without that there could be a reasonable doubt about her agency. But Calderón states very clearly with two approaches of the Devil, one without disguise, the second through Death in disguise, that agency is one of the attributes of the main character.⁵³ The fact that the Devil approaches twice would be a strange decision in terms of plot if it were not necessary to characterize the protagonist in a very defining way—and not only her, but also Inocencia. The fact that Inocencia withdraws with the first approach of Devil also helps the audience to understand the mechanism of change that this will provoke in the Princess, and helps them to understand the change that Inocencia will go through later in the play. With his usual mastery, Calderón does not use this passage of the play only to deliver information that will be necessary to understand later events, but he fills it with content that illuminates

⁵³ As Parker has noted: "En los autos en que aparece un personaje imaginando y evocando la acción dramática, este personaje es el Demonio" (*Los autos sacramentales de Calderón de la Barca* 81).

the character of the Devil, which of course, appears portrayed with the usual traits with which he has been depicted in this tradition: envious, belligerent and arrogant.

Although he comes in the disguise of a shepherd, his words betray him, and the visual disguise is neutralized by the real personality of the Devil on stage.⁵⁴ And let us remember that the Devil has no direct access to human minds.⁵⁵ Therefore he must draw upon another trick, based on the tendency of humans to sin, which he will utilize in his second approach. As for the first approach, because it happens as it happens, the Princess is able to make the right decision and she dismisses him.

The difference between the first illustration of the Princess' agency and her later, fatal decision to eat the apple, is that in her former behavior she is following the path marked by her advisors: her understanding, not present on stage but functioning in her reactions, and her innocence, who by withdrawing gives the Princess hints about the true nature of the Devil. These advisors are attributes given to her by the Creator in order to help her. But the conflict begins as soon as she makes the decision to not follow their recommendations. Once again, we see the principle of delegation: the need to

⁵⁴ On the other hand, the Devil disguised as a sheperd has also an oppositional value, as Alicia Álvarez Sellers explains: "La tradición literaria acoge desde época temprana la transformación del demonio en "mal pastor", disfraz lógico como contrafigura del "buen pastor" o Cristo" (241). The other Calderón's *autos* in which the Devil appears dressed as a shepherd are: *La primer flor del Carmelo*, *Primer y segundo Isaac*, *El arca de Dios cautiva*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, *La semilla y la cizaña*, *El cordero de Isaías*, *El pastor fido*, and *El divino Orfeo* (1st and 2nd version) (249).

⁵⁵ "[...] siguiendo la doctrina tomista, según la cual el pecado está actualizado en el demonio, pero éste no tiene acceso directo a la mente humana, sino tan sólo a la sensibilidad, mientras que el pecado lo tiene porque todo hombre es potencialmente pecador" in words of Cilveti (19-20).

attend to the authority criteria is clearly present even at this point in history, the Baroque period. The psychomachia requires a difficult balance between externalized traits and internalized traits. The fact that Entendimiento is a whole and independent character cannot leave the Princess completely without this trait if she is to function as a dramatic character. In the eyes of the audience, she would be flat. Furthermore, recalling the Theory of Mind, it would be very difficult to relate to her as a human being, especially when the point of the plot is that human beings have understanding as one of their most valuable attributes. Entendimiento is therefore converted into a character for two main reasons. First, to isolate him with the aim to explain better his attributions as a faculty of the soul; and second, because the other proposition of the metaphor requires the Princess to have a tutor. But we will see that the function of the character of Entendimiento works also in semiotic visual dramatic dynamics, as he will not be present on stage in the moment the Princess eats the apple. Did she become less rational at this point of the play? Not really. Rather, she just lacks understanding. Calderón arranges the elements of the plot in such a way as to make understandable why she errs the second time. On that occasion, the disguise will be perfect and complete, especially because the works of the Devil will come from the hand of Death, the character who hands the apple to the Princess.

4.4.1.2. Belief

Beliefs play a very important role in the process of decision-making, and have been an important part of the philosophical discussion about how to cultivate virtue since antiquity.⁵⁶ Beliefs are stored in the memory. They can come from personal experience or from external sources. As we have seen in the chapter devoted to Memory, a certain experience can lead us to think that this cause, generally, has this effect. Our body stores certain reactions, and it is understandable that we will pursue certain experiences that bring us pleasure, and avoid others that cause us pain. And actually, the way the allegory of *El veneno y la triaca* is constructed seems to emphasize personal experience as a source of knowledge. What the Princess will encounter after her wrong decision is plain, terrible pain. As didactic artifacts, the whole point of *autos sacramentales* is to teach their audience how to avoid *a priori*, those pains, but this seems impossible to exemplify without showing the actual consequences of the same. And, as a matter of fact, the genre *Exempla*, so frequent in the Middle Ages, aims to achieve this very same goal. Personal experience is not something that is alien to the Catholic tradition. We have plenty of experiences in the traditional account, and the narratives about ancient and Medieval saints talk about how they experienced first hand the pain of sin, and how that experience brought them to God. The *Confessions* of Augustine depict his personal experience as a source of knowledge. Furthermore, how does

⁵⁶ Rorty, Amelie. "Plato and Aristotle on Belief, Habit, and 'Akrasia'." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 7, no. 1, Jan. 1970, pp. 50-61.

Calderon avoid this personal account in a moment in which Descartes is about to dismiss all previous knowledge in order to have a fresh start from personal experience?

In this moment of history, in which Spain is still thriving to achieve a homogenous population (recall the expulsion of Jews and Muslims), and in which the Catholic world is actively fighting Protestant heresy, rules are not only social apparatuses to rule the community, but also to articulate the identity of the social group. Adhering to these or to those rules will make you part of this or that other group. The problem is that rules, many times, are empty of actual meaning, because knowing how to apply them correctly implies a complete knowledge about the world: something that is reserved for God. This explains the fallibility of human beings, because of its epistemic condition. "Do not sin", which is basically the ultimate message of *El veneno y la triaca* says little about what sinning consists of. This is the abstraction that is typical of *autos sacramentales*, and there are many other sources from this historical period to identify sins. But this is important because what does and does not constitute sin is primarily guided by previous beliefs, basically moral beliefs. Once again we meet the tension between individual responsibility and an inherited set of values. Beliefs are important in the way we make decisions, and this is expressed through the theory of appraisal in emotions: a certain action awakens in us a certain

emotion depending on the belief we had previously about that action.⁵⁷As we have seen, the Princess has no record of what happens when one eats an apple; or, equivalently, she has no record of what it is to sin. But on the other hand, Calderón carefully states her previous beliefs. When the Princess says:

Ya tu inocencia me enfada.
Si el jardinero me dice
que ésta es la fruta más bella,
¿por dejar de comer de ella
dejaré de ser felice? (847 – 851)⁵⁸

she is clearly stating her belief about the action of eating an apple.

To have a belief does not imply having reflected on it, which is even more true in the case of inherited rules. Clearly, one of the faults of the Princess is her poor reflection on her life and decisions. Her beliefs are quite immediate and automatic. This is why Calderón has presented her consciousness about herself, as we have seen. Her beliefs revolve around the idea of lineage and self-appraisal, and these beliefs are encouraged by the surrounding world. This also fits the philosophical notion of beliefs as propositional attitudes: we have a belief about something. Beliefs are therefore

⁵⁷ The theory of appraisal in emotions is present in the works of philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza or Hume, but has been studied more systematically in the 20th century.

⁵⁸ According to Aquinas, will is an innate desire or love for what we think will make us happy.

stances about the state of things that we consider to be true, and of course, beliefs imply a mind able to think, and therefore to believe. The Princess believes two things. First, eating the apple will not change the actual state of things. Second, she is not required to follow precept.⁵⁹ This second proposition marks her disobedience, and thus, her “well-deserved” punishment. We know that she does not believe in the second proposition because when Inocencia warns her, she reacts angrily and considers the warning to have come from Inocencia’s innocence. This is a complex way to play between the meaning of the character and the attributes of the character of Inocencia. This also corresponds to the fact that when our beliefs are threatened by facts we turn to unfalsifiable justifications.⁶⁰ When the Princess accuses Inocencia of being innocent she is pointing out a lack of knowledge. And this lack of knowledge is the ultimate origin of the conflict, because knowledge is an attribute of understanding. Entendimiento is the character that foresees consequences

Pues el día que agradada

estés de nadie, verás

tu inocencia castigada,

⁵⁹ Genesis 2:15-17: “15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, ‘You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.’ ”

⁶⁰ Friesen, Justin P., et al. “The Psychological Advantage of Unfalsifiability: The Appeal of Untestable Religious and Political Ideologies.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 108, no. 3, Mar. 2015, pp. 515-29.

porque al instante saldrás
de palacio desterrada. (117 – 121)
.....
¡Oh cuántas veces, oh cuántas,
temí en mi discurso esta
inobediente desgracia! (1060 – 1062)

and the one that knows how to solve the conflict, as we will see later.

If Calderón seems to have a representational concept of belief, that is to say, a mental representation of what belief is, in the form of memory, symbol, or fact, the predeterminism the play imposes also grants a dispositional attribute of belief. Dispositional beliefs are characterized by the fact that they provoke a certain outward behavior. The immediate criticism of this idea is that the same belief can provoke very different behaviors. But not in theater, and especially not in this type of theater, so codified. *Autos sacramentales* are a variation of a very well-known narrative, the Christian narrative, and the goal is to not change that narrative at all. Furthermore, doing that would make the play unintelligible for its audience, not knowing what would be the moral in that case, and of course, it would make it possible to accuse Calderon of heresy. If it is true that repetition makes us remember better, or even makes us more open to the repeated message, even with the different variations or the different *argumentos*, it is nevertheless required that the message be consistent. This will

help create the belief in the audience, through their experiencing of the situation achieved through watching the theater, and because of the mimetic quality of human beings.⁶¹ It is in this sense that this theater works as a creator of dispositional beliefs, as it tries to automatize the responses to certain stimulus, always producing the same outwards behavior. Lastly, for the audience, the inference of the Princess' beliefs is something that can be considered within the notion of Interpretationalism, a school defended among others by Daniel Dennett. Since behavior is something that happens in the physical realm, an observer can interpret other's beliefs depending on their behaviors. The design stance approach is extremely important in theater when it comes to Interpretationalism. This stance allows the observer to predict a subject's behavior thanks to his understanding of the different parts of his behavior, in order to make the system work properly. In other words, we predict the behavior of a certain item, according to its functional design—it will behave the way it is designed to behave. As we have seen before, the *autos* have a consistent plot installment after installment. This way, the beliefs of the characters can easily be predicted by the audience who know how the psyche of every character should fit the final product. The design stance seems to be more appropriate to study systems, specifically organic systems. If theater can be definitely studied as a system, its deployment responds to very organic needs in order

⁶¹ To know more about mimicry in human beings, see Chartrand, Tanya L., and Amy Dalton. "Mimicry: Its ubiquity, importance, and functionality." *Oxford Handbook of Human Action*, edited by Ezequiel Morsella, John A. Bargh and Peter M. Gollwitzer. Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 458-83.

to be understood. According to Dennett, the best way to predict human beliefs is the intentional stance.⁶² This second type of stance takes for granted that the subject will behave rationally according to her beliefs and desires and her behavior will indicate her beliefs. That is the case of the Princess as her behavior cannot be more rational regarding her beliefs, as we have seen earlier. Here we witness again the gap between her beliefs and the universal beliefs shared by the audience (in general terms), and the ideological system to explain the appearance of this conflict. This gap will be solved in the moment that knowledge equals true belief⁶³, or knowledge becomes a justified true belief. In the case of the Princess, the metaphor that links sin and apple allows the belief to be at the same time internal (in the Princess' mind) and external (in her body as a consequence of an external cause), as the allegory builds a bridge between these two realms. But her belief, which the play states is wrong, is, therefore, not knowledge.

4.4.2. Characterization of the dramatic personae

The action is performed by a character; a character who, as we have seen, has intentions, beliefs, consciousness, and agency. But these attributions need to be supported by a certain psychological characterization. Especially in this period, in which characters respond to certain functions in the plot, we could say they fill

⁶² To know more about the design stance and intentional stance, see Brook, Andrew and Don Ross, *Daniel Dennet*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 16-17.

⁶³ This comes from Plato's theory of knowledge (also known as JTB Theory). In his dialog *Theaetetus*, Socrates explains this justification as *conditio sine qua non* to reach knowledge.

stereotypes or “types” in the proper theatrical vocabulary, and especially in this type of theater, very systematic, in which characters are, to a certain extent, flat representations with few attributions.⁶⁴ It is not the aim of the playwright to define psychologically complicated characters, but instead to provide very well-defined attributes that help the plot to advance. It is a theater based on *action*, or what Pavis calls the “existentialist conception of action”⁶⁵ in opposition to an essentialist conception of action. This way to construct plays is not exclusive to Baroque Spanish theater. As Hardison has stated on his comments on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, in this treatise the Stagiran describes a moral predisposition, based on age, nationality, or occupation, which embodies the *ethos*. This *ethos* is different from the interiority that more recent literary works will deepen in their quest to explore the psychological structures of characters.⁶⁶ On the other hand, while Aristotle states in *Rhetorica* that tragedy is more about action than characters, there is no doubt they both are coordinated (1.12). Stereotypes, from a cognitive point of view, are shortcuts that allow the human mind to interpret reality, always in the context of a system. This type of theater, as a perfectly assembled work, understands its characters

⁶⁴ Pedraza Jimenez explains: “A partir de 1580-90, las piezas mayores del teatro español tendrán siempre tres actos, estarán escritas en verso, alternarán diversas formas estróficas, presentarán unos personajes tipo: galanes, damas, viejos, poderosos, graciosos, criadas... [...]; la acción dramática presentará obligatoriamente variaciones tonales en su discurso y se rematará con una suerte de justicia poética que no arroje al espectador a las angustiosas tinieblas del nihilismo” (*Estudios sobre Rojas Zorrilla* 125).

⁶⁵ Pavis (11).

⁶⁶ Hardison, O. B. and Leon Golden, *Aristotle’s Poetics: A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature*. Florida Atlantic University Books, 1982, pp. 124-125.

as functions of the action. In terms of complexity there is little liberty in the system in order for it to be functional.

The Princess in *El veneno y la triaca*, along with the majority of the characters representing man, is not an exception. With this aim, Calderón uses two types of characterization: one is her age, and the other is her personality. We could say that her age is something essential. As a chronological trait, she cannot change it nor have any control over it. In the same way, we could say that her personality is accidental, as she will change it at the end of the plot, mainly because of the intervention of Christ. But this is exactly what stereotypes are: they merge accidental and substantial qualities, and in the case of teenagers it seems to be more functional than in the case of other characters for purely biological reasons.

4.4.2.1. Accidental characterization

We will refer to this accidental characterization as the traits that are susceptible to change in the Princess. Regarding this topic, the most important of them is pride, or arrogance. In Catholic doctrine, it is the origin of all other faults, and certainly, this is the trait that provokes the fall of Lucifer.⁶⁷ Pride is also what precipitates the expulsion from Paradise. Calderón puts special effort into letting his audience know that this is

⁶⁷ Ecclesiastes, 10:13.

the primary problem of his main character. Throughout the entire play we have hints about this fault of character:

PRINCESA. [...] Y así, el festejo de hoy
su encarecimiento yerra,
si única heredera soy,
de cuanto mirando estoy
sobre la faz de la tierra.

INOCENCIA. No con hermoso desdén
desprecies festejo igual; (82 – 88)

.....

INOCENCIA. Mira bien lo que apeteces,
que hay aquí fruta vedada,
si de un precepto te acuerdas,
y así, antes que la muerdas...

INFANTA. Ya tu inocencia me enfada.
Si el jardinero me dice
que ésta es la fruta más bella,
¿por dejar de comer de ella
dejaré de ser felice? (843 – 851)

The Princess is also presented as being enamored of herself.

INFANTA. Es verdad que de manera
mi hermosura me agradó,
viéndome al espejo yo
desta fuente lisonjera,
que nunca dejar quisiera
de mirarme en ella ufana.
¡Cuál será de soberana
mi vista, si así es la copia!
MÚSICA. Se enamora de sí propia
la Naturaleza Humana. (792 – 801)

establishing vanity as a trait complementary to pride. Pride entails the concept of considering oneself better than another.⁶⁸ In this case, she is better than the rest of the creation, and indeed she has been told so, but she takes this quality to the extreme, not accepting the advice that comes from Inocencia. If pride is a fault that refers to others, vanity, in the narcissist extreme of the Princess, places her on a very arrogant level.

But why has the myth been articulated around this vice? Pride is related with self-value, but from the conception of self-value is derived the concept of knowledge.

⁶⁸ In words of Escudero: “El pecado de desobediencia a Dios, motivado por la soberbia, va a empujar a la infanta a comer el fruto prohibido, pecado de vanidad que versos atrás es repetido y amplificado por la intervención de la música que repite en varias ocasiones ‘En el cristal de una fuente, // viendo su hermosura rara, // se enamora de sí propia// la Naturaleza Humana’”(33).

Being able to perceive and process information in a correct way provides one with a comparative advantage in terms of surviving. Furthermore, in the Western tradition, there is this concern about the epistemological question, What do we know? We could say that knowledge is key to existence. Considering that we generally know less than we believe we know, the problem posed in the play is referred to in psychological terms as the Dunning-Kruger Effect, a cognitive bias that makes some individuals think that they are superior, resulting from a lack of metacognitive skill which would allow them to recognize their own ineptitude.⁶⁹ The creators of this paradigm base it in five faults, three of which are: the inability to recognize one's own lack of skill; the failure to recognize genuine skill in others; and the failure to recognize the extent of one's own inadequacy. As we have seen, the Princess is guilty of all three of these faults. While the Dunning-Kruger Effect refers to skills shared among human peers, we must understand this effect will always be present in reference to God, as he is the only one with a total knowledge of reality.

Pride is often the synonym of hubris, a well-known concept in theater. In classical Greek theater, hubris is also the fault that facilitates the fall of the protagonist. It is the *sine qua non* condition that provokes the *hamartia*⁷⁰ or fatal action. Jean-Pierre

⁶⁹ Formulated by David Dunning and Justin Kruger in 1999.

⁷⁰ "The most widely used term for 'sin' in the New Testament, however, is the noun *hamartia* and its related verb *hamartano*. Similar to the Old Testament word *chatha*, *hamartia* means 'to miss the mark.' According to

Vernant gives us an account of *hamartia* that perfectly fits the way in which this *auto* is built:

Hamartia means, in its proper sense, blindness. That is something which surpasses man, which comes crashing down on him, which keeps him from seeing things as they are, so that he takes good for evil, commits a crime and is then punished by this crime. His blindness, his criminal act and the punishment are not separate realities. It is the same supernatural power – blindness, *ate*, madness, *hubris* – which takes on different aspects while remaining the same” (285-286).

Calderón takes *in verbatim* this idea of blindness, and the Princess will not be able to distinguish Death from a gardener. She will mistake good for evil because she is proud and thinks too much of herself. But as Romans 12:3 advises: “For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.”

Gottfried Quell, writing in the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, the word refers to ‘an offense in relation to God with emphasis on guilt.’

“The New Testament usage of *hamartia* describes the human predicament as a complex situation. Similar to the central Old Testament understanding of the human malaise, *hamartia* can refer to sin as a specific act. But in addition, the New Testament authors speak of a power of force operative in the human sphere. As an alien reality which has us in its grasp, sin holds sway over individuals not merely externally, but also internally. Consequently, *hamartia* also denotes the defective, internal dimension of the human person. “Both the Old and New Testaments, despite subtle differences in emphasis, view sin fundamentally as failure. As both *chatha* and *hamartia* suggest, sin is primarily ‘missing the mark’ or ‘falling short.’ It entails our inability to be what God desires us to be, our failure to fulfill God’s intention for us.” Grenz, Stanley J. *Theology for the Community of God*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000, p. 184.

What is pride? Pride is considered an emotion of the second level. This means that it is not a primary emotion as happiness or sadness can be. Pride, in both its positive and negative connotations, is an emotion that requires a certain type of monitoring. In its positive value it refers to a positive evaluation of one's own or others' actions. It is a qualitative appraisal of personal value. Pride in its negative connotation, the way that Christianity understands it, is integrated by happiness and contempt, and can only be felt in relation to the self. Happiness is provided by the self-evaluation, and contempt is directed towards the surrounding elements. The Bible is quite clear in its war on pride (which even in its positive aspect is considered a fault), and against pride recommends other traits such as humility, the love for one's own weaknesses, obedience, and the refusal or lack of need to search out vindication and praise, all virtues that are absent in our Princess.⁷¹ Her self-monitoring is flawed and leads her to a wrong belief. This comes from the fact that one's own value is not to be judged by the subject, but by others in reference to a specific context. Others can value us as proud (again in its negative connotation), and we can only come to that very same conclusion when the confrontation with reality has lowered our beliefs about ourselves. The apple

⁷¹ Matthew 18:4: "Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." 2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Philippians 2:5-8: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." 1 Peter 5:8: "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time." Proverbs 27:2: "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips."

will be not only a mental re-evaluation for the Princess, it will actually lower her physical status as she will lose her preternatural gifts, giving her fewer reasons to be proud of herself, or more appropriately explained, teaching her her own value through the physical experience.

4.4.2.2. Substantial characterization

There are several things that the Princess cannot change. For instance, the fact that she is the daughter of the Creator, or the fact that she is beautiful; that is the way she has been created and how she is perceived by the rest of characters and herself. The first attribute corresponds to the function in the allegory; the second one, to the rules of the type. In this case, however, the most important of these attributes is the fact that she is a teenager, or at least, that she is young. We have seen already that age is a very important factor in order to create the theatrical type. But, while there is not an individualized study of her psychology, there is a striking knowledge about the general psychology of the type.

We know about her young age for several reasons: first of all, she is portrayed in a referential context where there is a father, of whom she is the daughter (45). So, this kinship relationship locates her in a lower level of agency or knowledge⁷²; second, she is the pupil, and Entendimiento is her tutor (38), with which we find the exact same

⁷² This seems to be intuitive knowledge, but as Lakoff and Johnson have stated, it is also a metaphor in which moral authority equals paternal authority and what supports this type of narrative (*Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* 301-303).

effect; third, she is characterized as beautiful (93), which in this context it is a trait of young characters⁷³; and fourth, and most important, her psychology corresponds to that of a teenager.

Literature, as a biomimetic artefact, mimics and follows the nature of reality or of the perceived reality. Old characters are not in the same disposition toward learning as young ones are. They are supposed to have stored different experiences, contrasted with reality, which have taught them truths about life. But young characters are still in a process of learning. This is why in traditional literature, main characters are young, as they are the ones confronting the conflicts for the very first time, while old characters represent mostly advisors and figures of power. They act as helpers or obstacles in the hero's vicissitudes. Depending on the genre these obstacles will act against the valid quest of the protagonist, trying to impede his fall. Besides this, in this allegory, this idea of the young daughter, failing to meet the expectations of her father, and therefore of her tutor, also reflects the idea of human beings as imperfect beings prone to err because of their lack of knowledge.⁷⁴

⁷³ This comes from an ancient tradition, known by the topos of *descriptio puellae*, used mainly by Petrarca, and widely used as well in the Spanish Early Modern period. It is also related to the topic *tempus fugit*, which is related to the idea of beauty fading with time, among other ideas such as the *carpe diem*.

⁷⁴ Erring is a very human trait according to the Judeo-Christian doctrine: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). But as Simut has pointed out, Christian doctrine understands the fallibility of human beings as a consequence of the original sin, which makes the myth of the fall of man unsteady, as the error occurs before the original sin (103). So, Adam and Eve were fallible before the original sin.

What are the traits of a teenager's mind? Let's start by saying that they lack experience. This is a material trait. They cannot have the same experience as an older person for the simple reason that they have had less time to experience life. If, as we have seen, experiences develop in time, this is undeniable. But, contrary to Hamlet, whose behavior has often been interpreted as teenage angst, we can see that our Princess is a very different type of teenager. She is not paralyzed; rather, she acts without reflection. This is the moment in life when all efforts go towards inner and outer exploration. Curiosity is an intrinsic motivation to learn, and as it enhances the memories of the learned subject, it is an invaluable tool for learning.⁷⁵ No one questions why teenagers usually cut ties with their parents or tutors, as we see in *El veneno y la triaca*. But that exploration can have fatal consequences. On the other hand, we know that heroes act without reflection.⁷⁶ They act and they reflect later. But the Princess is not a heroine. The hero is Christ, the one that will save her in an act of extreme altruism.⁷⁷ Therefore, as a character, and following the message (goal) of the play, she needs to reflect, and not react impulsively.

⁷⁵ Gruber, Matthias J., et al. "States of Curiosity Modulate Hippocampus-Dependent Learning via the Dopaminergic Circuit". *Neuron*, Oct, 2014, pp. 486-96.

⁷⁶ Rand, David G. and Ziv G. Epstein. "Risking your life without a second thought: Intuitive Decision-Making and Extreme Altruism". *Plos One*, Oct, 2014. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁷⁷ As one of the main characteristic of the hero is his or her extreme altruism, especially in the Christian context, marked by the idea of sacrifice.

This is why we could say, that among the five principal traits of personality (openness, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion)⁷⁸ Christian doctrine is not constructed to encourage openness towards the world.⁷⁹ Openness here means openness to experience, but exploration is highly discouraged as the dominant ideology of the *autos* involves the need for constant suspicion, because evil, as an individuality of abstraction, can be disguised in any object or subject, as in the subject of temptation and sin. Evil needs to be disguised to achieve its goals.⁸⁰ The disguises that the Devil and Death use in this play, shepherd and gardener, are coherent with the allegory set in the *locus amoenus*, or pleasant place, in which Paradise is often represented.

⁷⁸ Five factor model of traits of the personality. To know more about this taxonomy of the human psychological personality, see Wiggins, Jerry S. *The Five-factor Model of Personality: Theoretical Perspectives*. Guilford Press, 1996.

⁷⁹ Our contemporary social circumstances, following an ever-changing material scenario, encourage a more open behavior in order to adapt to the continuous changes that our society offers. Although the Baroque period was a changing period in comparison, for instance, to the Middle Ages, the external circumstances were still steady enough as to encourage an excessively exploring society. Although the Spanish Baroque is considered a period of changes, those changes were not so noticeable in the life span of a person, as it can be now, under the effects of the acceleration of history, and furthermore, as Maravall has pointed out, there was an intention to perpetuate the status quo, so individual changes are certainly not well received: “[...] la estructura social española se mostraba con una estructura mucho más rígida, que esclerotizó las posibilidades de crecimiento que en esa misma cultura del Barroco se daban. Sin duda, en el Barroco había una tendencia a lograr una inmovilización, o cuando menos, a imponer una dirección a las fuerzas de avance que el Renacimiento había puesto en marcha” (*La cultura del Barroco* 77).

⁸⁰ “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies” (John, 8:44). This is one of the examples in which the Devil appears as a liar in the Bible. The Devil needs to deceive man, as part of the doctrine of good being equal to truth. The epistemological problem of failure as a lack of knowledge, as we have seen, is one of the main premises of *El veneno y la triaca*.

About openness, it is necessary to remember here that the moment in which *autos sacramentales* are written is one of rigid social interaction in which deviations from the established rules could have very negative consequences⁸¹; therefore, emphasis is placed on the social (and religious) rituals that would show the community that the appropriate behavior was being performed internally and externally.⁸² The society becomes a theater in which everyone performs the role that has been assigned to her. There is no need for updating, as changes occur very slowly (both in the ideological and material realm), but there is recurrent repetition of the previously known culture, and an implicit obligation to adherence to that culture. Furthermore, this is a moment in which the psychology of the young is socially hardly distinguished from adult psychology, and we will have to wait until the nineteenth century and Rousseau for the discovery of infancy and the acceptance of the fact that children are a different species from a so-called "little adult."⁸³

⁸¹ As García Martín explains: "El horizonte cultural del siglo XVII lo definen el *Barroco* y el *Racionalismo*. De entrada, la respuesta católica de la Contrarreforma consistió en una postura dogmática y de una rigidez moral, que instauran la intolerancia como norma de comportamiento, respondida en iguales términos por calvinistas y puritanos. Es en este clima de cerrazón en el que se aplican las Decretales Tridentinas en los países católicos. En particular destaca la sociedad cerrada e incontaminada de Felipe II -la "tibetización" de España como la llamó Ortega y Gasset-, porque conlleva una intolerancia y un reforzamiento de los controles sociales. De ahí el apogeo de la Inquisición y la evangelización de las masas. Este punto de inflexión marca el paso de una sociedad abierta a la rígida ortodoxia y el monolitismo ideológico" (2012).

⁸² Rossano, Matt J. "The essential role of ritual in the transmission and reinforcement of social norms." *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 138, no. 3, May. 2012, pp. 529-549.

⁸³ Rousseau explores these ideas in *Emile*.

The first thing that must be said about the teenage brain is that planning and foreseeing consequences is a task that takes years to develop. The different parts of the brain connect to each other through synapses. These synapses are insulated and protected by a substance called myelin, which develops through the years.⁸⁴ This process of myelin creation starts at the back of the brain and moves forward as the teenager grows older. This means that the frontal and prefrontal lobes, the parts of the brain where insight is generated, are the last parts to receive well-established synapses. In other words, the frontal part of the brain is the last part to be perfectly connected.⁸⁵ It is also in this part of the brain in which abilities such as executive functioning, risk-taking, and self-control are located. This is why in popular language the prefrontal cortex is considered the “braking system”.⁸⁶ But the idea that adolescents are completely unable to exercise self-control must be nuanced. They can exercise self-control when the benefits or rewards are immediate and easily foreseen. This is why teenagers are very capable of controlling themselves when it comes to rules among

⁸⁴ Blakemore, Sarah-Jayne, and Suparna Choudhury. “Development of the adolescent brain: implications for executive function and social cognition.” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 47, no. 3, 2006, pp. 296–312.

⁸⁵ Johnson, Sara B., et al. “Adolescent Maturity and the Brain: The Promise and Pitfalls of Neuroscience Research in Adolescent Health Policy.” *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 45, no. 3, Sep. 2009, pp. 216–21.

⁸⁶ Lieberman, Matthew D. “The brain’s braking system (and how to ‘use your words’ to tap into it).” *NeuroLeadership Journal*, vol. 2, 2009, pp. 9-14.

peers.⁸⁷ They generally will not do anything that would harm their status among their equals, which usually is an immediate consequence. But, when rules are imposed from superior stances, usually with long-term consequences, rules intended to “form character”⁸⁸, they fail to follow them.⁸⁹ The failure is propitiated by the lack of motivation, and the lack of motivation responds to a very delayed reward.⁹⁰

The teenage brain looks constantly for stimulation. Puberty also is the period in which the limbic system is activated. This system is associated with strong emotions, sensation seeking, and impulsivity.⁹¹ The fact that Calderón places the offerings of the seasons in the middle of play makes it impossible for the Princess to resist the poisoned apple. This stimulation, a new one for the Princess, responds to the apparition of new circumstances in the play, further stimulation that will change the status of the plot: because it is an immediate reward.

⁸⁷ Chein, Jason, et al. “Peers increase adolescent risk taking by enhancing activity in the brain’s reward circuitry.” *Developmental Science*, vol. 14, Mar. 2011, pp. F1–F10.

⁸⁸ In Aristotelian terms, the habit makes the character, an idea developed in *Ethics*.

⁸⁹ Steinberg, Laurence, et al. “Age Differences in Future Orientation and Delay Discounting.” *Child Development*, vol. 80, no. 1, Feb. 2009, pp. 28-44. Casey, B.J., et al. “The Adolescent Brain.” *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 1124, Mar. 2008, pp. 111-26.

⁹⁰ This fact is explained by the famous experiment held by Walter Mischel in Stanford University between the late 60’s and early 70’s, in which five-year olds resisted the temptation to eat a marshmallow under the promise of being given two marshmallows. Mischel, Walter. *The Marshmallow Test: Mastering Self-Control*. Little, Brown and Company, 2014.

⁹¹ Laurence Steinberg, *Age of Opportunity: Lessons from the New Science of Adolescence*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014, p. 70.

This stimulation originates in a lack of self-control as the “braking system” is not fully developed. Self-control has been one of the most cherished traits to build character since the Greeks, especially if we think of the Stoics. But Christian tradition also refers to it in a very clear way: “Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled” (Titus 2:6); “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22–23); “Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:2); “but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined” (Titus 1:8); “And as he reasoned about righteousness and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, “Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you” (Acts 24:25). Does it mean that in Christian doctrine every human being is an adolescent? It seems so, if we pay attention to the metaphor of men as children of God: “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.” (1 John 3:1).⁹² Here we encounter the didactic spirit of these texts.⁹³ Christian self-control involves both “control over one’s behavior and the

⁹² George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have explained very well how the metaphors we live by shape our outlook on life. *Metaphors we live by*. The University of Chicago Press, 2008.

⁹³ From Greek *didaktikos* “apt at teaching.” Traditionally, children are the subjects of learning.

impulses and emotions beneath it”⁹⁴ as Towner claims (252), meaning that it not only involves external actions, but also our states of mind. Finally, also in Aristotle’ thought, self-correction and self-regulation bring *eudaimonia*, and are a direct consequence of virtue (*Ethics Nichomaeae*, 1100b22-1101a8). The allegory that Calderón proposes points out to an outward action, but it is heavily supported by states of mind, or traits of character as we have seen.

4.4.3 How the first decision is actually made in *El veneno y la triaca*

We have seen the basic mental operations of the Princess’ mind, as a human being, and we have seen how she is characterized at substantial and accidental levels. Now, we will see what cognitive tools are involved in her decision-making and how they shape the dramatic structure of the play. In this section we will study desire, attention, the trigger of action, the halo effect (and uncertainty), and framing.

4.4.3.1 Desire

Desires, along with intentions and beliefs, are another type of state of the mind. They are propositional, that is to say, we desire something. This desire affects the way we think, the way we act, and the way we feel. A desire, contrary to beliefs, for

⁹⁴ Philip Towner. *Letters to Timothy and Titus (New International Commentary on the New Testament)*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2006.

instance, implies a disposition to act, and this is its most essential attribute.⁹⁵ Intention is also related to action, as we have seen many actions require intention, but in a weaker way than desire, which we could consider, in many cases, as the fuel of action. As Anscombe says “The primitive sign of wanting is trying to get” (68). This doesn’t mean a desire guarantees an action, but in *autos sacramentales* there is a clear relation between them both (as the ultimate dramatic device of the autos is the faulty action). For this reason, desires are defined as a powerful force difficult to resist, resistance being the key to the final message of the play. The characters might have several desires, implicit and explicit, but the narrative of the fall of man requires an explicit desire, stronger than the rest, that it be satisfied. The attention of the audience is brought to this desire and the entire plot shifts around it. Theater, because of its physical limits, especially time, cannot depict fully developed characters anyway, therefore more than in other genres it is required to focus on those traits which will change the course of the plot. We can guess that the Princess also desires to stay healthy (although this desire is embodied not by her, but by the character of Entendimiento.)

⁹⁵ This is called Action-based theory and it is one of the explanations for desire along with pleasure-based theory, feeling-based theory, and learning-based theory. Action-based theory also implies that we must judge by actions and by on the virtuosity of the agent. This is a cornerstone of Christian ethics.

The difference between staying healthy (a standing desire) and eating an apple (an ocurrent desire), also helps us to draw the line between desires for objects and desires for *states of affairs*, and explains why it is easier to exemplify desire with a concrete object that works as its proposition, than with more abstracts concepts, because achieving them can be diffused in time (and they don't turn out to be so physically representable on stage). While one can have instrumental desires, that is to say, as a mean to an end, eating the apple falls into the intrinsic type of desire: eating the apple for the sake of eating it, which certainly diminishes the transcendence of the desire. This desire will still have transcendent consequences, but not born from the transcendence of the desire itself. And there is not in this play a desire of the realizer type, the one that would restrain us from acting on a first-order desire, in order to keep our state of affairs the way we want. In the same line, and as Harry Frankfurt has pointed out ("Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person"), while there are desires of the first order (in this case eating the apple), there are also desires of the second order (in the realm of the conative) which nuance our first-order desires and make humans out of us. The desire of not getting sick could nuance the desire of eating an apple, and here we see how Calderón leaves the first-order desires for the character of the Princess, while the second order desires correspond to the character of Entendimiento.

The other component of desire seems to be pleasure. Desires always aim for something that brings us pleasure. This is a key component of this type of theater as well, since concupiscence is an emotion despised in this emotional community. Concupiscence, more than being related to sexual matters, talks about the lack of self-control in this context. The component of pleasure in desire also addresses the anticipation of the satisfaction proportional to the object of desire when achieved. There is no doubt the Princess is able to anticipate the joy of eating the apple. However, as we have seen, her belief is a mistake. The neural component of desire has been explained by Carolyn Morillo⁹⁶, who has proven that desire activates the brain reward system, and this also happens as the initiator of action. On the other hand, while for some philosophers desire equates to judgment of goodness, in Christian tradition, they are completely different matters, as the longing for goodness, (for instance, to be in communion with God), is never represented as a desire in the same category as desire for the apple. Without doubt, the judgment of goodness also prompts us to actions, but these will be named *good deeds*. The difference is that these actions are more sustained in time, driven by a constant motivation as opposed to being a one-time action. They are different processes inside the character. Being in communion with God is never an occurrent desire but a standing one, born from knowledge, in opposition to occurrent desires. If good deeds express themselves in the form of a one-time action, they usually

⁹⁶ Morillo, Carolyn. "The reward event and motivation." *Journal of Philosophy*, no. 87, 1990, pp. 169–86.

are a lack of action: the refusal to act to avoid bad consequences. True virtue is characterized by consistency or a steady state, while evil seems to be something that happens randomly in characters that are subjects of redemption.

The fact that the metaphor of the apple qualifies our desires as occurrent, strong (as they shadow other desires), first-order, and non-conative, not only characterizes the desire for the apple itself, but also how the ideology behind these plays qualifies the desires that provoke the conflict. It is not that all desire is bad; it is that certain types of desires, because of their characteristics, are harmful. This is why we could apply a neo-humean perspective to this problem, as this school states that behind every rationalized action there is a desire (often physical and irrational) that is disguised as rational. As we have seen, if the Princess does not exactly use rational arguments to justify her eating, she uses them to defend her non-not-eating:

¿por dejar de comer de ella

dejaré de ser felice? (850 – 851)

This is what we call in cognitive studies subjective validation.

4.4.3.2. Attention and trigger of the action

Attention is the process by which in a certain moment we gather some information and ignore other information. Attention is another component of desire, since we pay more attention to what we desire, and we desire that which is more present to our attention. In other words, and in the case of this plot, the Princess desires

what she sees, as she sees the apple. Sight is the sense that is directly stimulated in this play.⁹⁷ Sight is a sense whose product is immediate, while hearing requires a duration of time, which allows for reflection.⁹⁸

Calderón catches the Princess' attention through the cognitive biases of framing and the halo effect. These two phenomena not only help to call the attention of the Princess, but also influence her decision to eat the apple. First of all we have a framing effect that, in proper terms means the possibility of influencing decision through presenting options in terms of gains or losses, in this case is more related to the fact that the apple is preceded by other elements of the same category. If Muerte (Death) hands the poisoned apple to the Princess, we must keep in mind that this happens right after other seasons have also offered her gifts: Ivierno (Winter) offers water, which symbolizes holy water, Primavera (Spring) offers flowers, which represent the Virgin's purity, and Estío (Summer) offers wheat spikes, which symbolize the Eucharist.

⁹⁷ It is a common opinion that sight was the most important sense for the Greeks, for whom knowledge was the equivalent to what was seen, an idea that we find in Plato and Aristotle among others. We find the opposite case in the Hebraic culture, more inclined to the word and to the sense of hearing. The Christian Middle Ages will value especially hearing and touch more than sight. It will not be until the seventeenth century when sight will make a return as the most important sense. For more on this subject, see Jay, Martin. *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-century French Thought*. University of California Press, 1993.

⁹⁸ "The very contrast between eternity and temporality rests upon an idealization of "present" experienced visually as the holder of stable contents as against the fleeting succession of non-visual sensation. In the visual presence of objects the beholder may come to rest and possess an extended now." Jonas, Hans. "The Nobility of Sight: A Study in the Phenomenology of the Senses." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 14, no. 4, Jun. 1954, pp. 513-514.

Immediately after, Otoño (Fall), offers his fruits.⁹⁹ What doubt could be raised about the last gift, the apple? In rhetoric, this would equal the figure of parallelism, which implies that all the paralleled terms are equal in importance. In the same vein, if the Princess' vassals give all the gifts, and they have always been loyal to the Princess, all gifts are presented in terms of gain. In his case, Muerte claims the apple will make the Princess more intelligent.

[...] aumentarás
tu perfección, pues serás
aún más discreta que hermosa. (834 – 836)

There is a transfer effect of properties, in this case of outcomes. The Princess takes the water, the flowers, and the wheat with no loss. Parallelism¹⁰⁰ is a well-used rhetorical figure used by Conceptism, and one of the most important rhetorical styles of the Spanish Baroque along with Culteranism.¹⁰¹ And the logic observable in all Calderón's writing explains why he deploys the plot in this way¹⁰². Parallellism is

⁹⁹ This is consistent with Aquinas' doctrine, where evil has no power over the human mind, but only over the human senses.

¹⁰⁰ To know more about rhetorical devices in the light of cognitive studies, see Fahnestock, Jeanne. "Rhetoric in the Age of Cognitive Science." *The Viability of Rhetoric*, edited by Richard Graff. State University of New York Press, 2005, pp. 159-79.

¹⁰¹ Conceptism is related to the concept, the expression of wit with words that can hold different meanings or levels of understanding: "A style in poetry or prose characterized by ingenious or precious ideas. [...] concerns the expression of thought in literature". (*Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* 175).

¹⁰² Calderón uses parallelism on many levels of the dramatic writing and dramatic structure as Felipe B. Pedraza has noted. "Notas sobre la técnica dramática calderoniana." *Calderón desde el 2000 (Simposio*

thoroughly discussed by Aristotle in the third book of the *Rhetorica*, remarking on the importance of the paired cola or paired sentences or phrases. This would create a sense of equivalence in the listener's decoding.¹⁰³ This structural parallelism can also be considered an analogy, which is one of the most important devices of the mind. Analogy allows the inference from one domain to the other, replicating known structures, and is the core for case-based reasoning. The structure-mapping theory, as formulated by Dedre Gentner, requires a structural alignment between the two situations to be related and the projection of inferences between them both. These relations must be one to one, so there is a connection between every element in both maps, with a similar relation between arguments of corresponding predicates, which is the parallel connectivity. So the analogies from the original map and the target map are born out by the structural completion. In sum: "It has been proposed that parallelism

Internacional Complutense), edited by José María Díez Borque. Ollero & Ramos, 2001. See also Jesús G. Maestro: "En efecto, el aristotelismo de Calderón pasa ante todo por la lectura de santo Tomás de Aquino, atiende más a la lógica de la retórica que a la libertad de la poética, y pretende, a través de fórmulas escolásticas, la confirmación de determinadas posiciones morales. Como sabemos, para los humanistas, la escolástica, paradigma al que se sometían todas las disciplinas, de la gramática a la teología, pasando por la matemática, era un método caracterizado por concentrarse en asuntos minúsculos (quaestiones), sujetos a una discusión aparatosa (disputatio), y regidos con las herramientas de la lógica y la especulación, para encaminarse finalmente a la formulación de conclusiones metafísicas y absolutas. (306).

¹⁰³ Ken Kennedy, George A. *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 243.

effects reflect the use of the first structure as a template that guides the processing of the second.”¹⁰⁴

The other cognitive bias playing a role in this action is the Halo Effect, defined as the influence of a global evaluation on evaluations of the individual attributes of a person.¹⁰⁵ Muerte presents himself as a gardener, as he claims to be an expert on this topic.

Yo, señora, el jardinero
de tus jardines he sido;
como tal, he conocido
el fruto más lisonjero.
Aquesta poma es hermosa;
come de ella; (832 – 837)

The global evaluation of the gardener is that he must know his job. Moreover, in this case, the influence of the disguise, so cherished by the Baroque Spanish theater, is very important. The use of a uniform causes the audience to infer qualities that might not be there, especially the quality of legitimacy, as Bickman studied in his experiments collected in his article “The Social Power of an Uniform.” This criterion of

¹⁰⁴ Poirier, Josée, et al. “The role of parallelism in the real-time processing of anaphora.” *Language and cognitive processes*, vol. 27, no. 6, Jun. 2012, pp. 868–886.

¹⁰⁵ Nisbett, Richard E., and Timothy DeCamp Wilson. “The Halo Effect: Evidence for Unconscious Alteration of Judgments.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1977, p. 250.

authority encourages the Princess to believe the gardener. If that apple is the most beautiful one, and the gardener recommends it, then she must eat it. Furthermore, according to Paul Bloom, the pleasure we get from the things we like is to a great extent informed by their perceived origins. According to this psychologist, we respond to things according to what we think they really are, where they came from, what they're made of, and what their hidden nature is.¹⁰⁶ So, this whole process of framing and “haloing” that Calderón sets through parallelisms and disguises creates in the Princess a belief about the essence of the apple and calls her attention to it.

Definitely Death is able to call the attention of the Princess to the apple. Inocencia exerts another stimulus reminding her about the precept that forbids eating the fruit.¹⁰⁷ However, the Princess chooses not to follow that train of thought.

INOCENCIA. Mira bien lo que apeteces,
que hay aquí fruta vedada,
si de un precepto te acuerdas,
y así, antes que la muerdas...

INFANTA. Ya tu inocencia me enfada.

Si el jardinero me dice

¹⁰⁶ Bloom, Paul. *How Pleasure Works: The New Science of Why We Like What We Like*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.

¹⁰⁷ Aquinas, in *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 90 a. 1. : “Law is a rule and measure of acts, whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting.”

que ésta es la fruta más bella,
¿por dejar de comer de ella
dejaré de ser felice? (843 – 851)

The Princess interrupts Inocencia, and lets her know that this piece of information is annoying her. So, Calderón is portraying an exercise of attention that is clearly related to consciousness and agency; which could not be any other way, as the whole point of the play is to emphasize the exercise of free will, which is not only related to the outbound action, but also to the inner mental life. This way, the whole problem of the play could be a problem of attention. If the Princess had paid attention, voluntarily, as she does, to the important truth, she would not have eaten the apple; because attention is the first step of action.¹⁰⁸ In words of Raquel Lázaro Cantero commenting on Descartes:

La posibilidad de no ser dueño de las propias voliciones acontece cuando en lugar de actuar según la libre y espontánea determinación volitiva, el hombre sigue el objeto de sus pasiones sin discriminar si eso es bueno o malo, conveniente o inconveniente, gozoso o doloroso, y sin poder evitar la falta de atención hacia el objeto propio de la razón o hacia lo útil que nos conviene (255)¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁸ William James would say that directive attention is “the nucleus of our inner self” and that “volition is nothing but attention”, pointing out attention as an important factor in the production of behavior (*The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1, 1890, p. 447).

¹⁰⁹ Lázaro Cantero, Raquel. “Descartes y las pasiones del alma”. *La filosofía de las pasiones y la Escuela de Salamanca. Edad Media y Moderna*. Edited by Manuel Lázaro Pulido, José Luis Fuertes Herreros and Ángel Poncela González. Instituto Teológico de Cáceres, 2013, pp. 247-56.

The difference between paying attention to the memory of the precept and paying attention to the apple that is before her eyes corresponds to two different ways to acquire information. It is the difference that exists between what is materially present, giving information to our perceptual system, and what is only present in our memory, from which we have to make the effort to retrieve and actualize it. The remembrance of the precept and the possible punishment it entails is only a concept in *potens*, while the apple is something *actual*. That is the way the metaphor works, not only for the audience that can actually see the apple, but also for the character of the Princess. The fact that Calderón, in his intricate system of intertwined metaphors contained in this allegory, does not choose to also transpose the precept into a material reality, highlights the fact that, naturally, we pay more attention to what is exciting our external perceptual system, or at least, that when we do that, we are making a mistake. The whole meaning of the play, delaying rewards, using our rationale apparatus instead of the more impulsive primal one, is communicated through how the allegory is constructed and which terms of the metaphor are transposed and which are not, as we have noted. Calderón could have chosen to exemplify the consequences of the violation of the law in an abstract way. Everybody could have turned their back on the Princess and she could have felt sad instead of actually feeling sick. But he is very careful about which terms are transposed. These choices not only make things clearer and more direct for the audience, they also are given a deeper message about the modes of

mental activity that the play advocates, modes which are much more associated with the frontal lobe than with other parts of the brain. The fact that Calderón divides mental operations between different characters makes more explicit for the audience how these mental operations are working. Inocencia, with her warning about remembering the precept, is reminding the Princess to retrieve the correct information from the memory, but the Princess prefers instead to retrieve it from the actual information derived in real time from the senses. The intervention of Inocencia tries to break the Princess' train of thought and shift her attention to another source of information, or in other words, to delay the action and reconsider what is the real aim. So, Calderón is posing real obstacles to the action, which are at the same time part of the deep message of the play. Dramatic narrative is composed of objects to be reached and obstacles that impede one from reaching them. Inocencia is providing one of those obstacles, but it is an easy one to overcome, as it exists only as a probable mental operation (not a material external operation) that the Princess prefers to ignore. This way an inner struggle becomes a clash between characters and provides a material obstacle, as there are two visible forces in direct conflict on stage.

This brings us to the idea of the trigger of the action. In this case, considering what we have seen before, *viz.*, the psychological characterization of the Princess, her prior beliefs, the framing of the action, and the use of the allegory, the trigger is

something external. Instead of being a mental state such as a memory or a desire, it is a material object that the Princess sees; a material object external to her mental life.

William James called this the “accommodation or adjustment of the sensory organs”, as we direct one, or several, of our senses to the object to which we are paying attention (1890: 434 Vol. 1). This is related to the idea of emotion. The Princess anticipates good emotions after eating the apple, which determines her behavior, or in other words, makes her take the action of eating it.

The other fact that we observe in Calderón’s account is that the apple is described by aesthetic considerations, which imply a value judgment about its physical properties. The Princess refers to the apple as “hermosa y bella¹¹⁰” (841). This seems to be a special apple, which connects with the idea of the “super stimuli”¹¹¹, which states that all animals prefer improved versions of nature, even if they are fake.¹¹² This is the importance of the apple as being “hermosa y bella.” It triggers a deep mechanism in the Princess’ brain, which makes it much more appealing than a regular apple.¹¹³ But these

¹¹⁰ Augustine says in *Confessions*: “I loved these lower beauties, and I was sinking to the very depths” (IV-13).

¹¹¹ This is equivalent to what in semiotics we understand by *hyperreality*, a term coined by Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulacrum*. It is also related with the aesthetic ideas of Vilayanur S. Ramachandran and William Hirstein, who suggest that art can be an attempt to create this “supernormal stimuli” (15-91).

¹¹² Choi, Nak-Eon, and Jung H. Han. *How Flavor Works: The Science of Taste and Aroma*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015, p. 205.

¹¹³ I refer to the Princess’ brain, aware of the fact that the Princess is a character, but a character that is mimicking human physical and mental events.

aesthetic considerations underscore the presence of consciousness and self in the plot. The desire of the Princess goes beyond being hungry or a glutton. Her desire is more elaborated than the physiological function of eating. It has other undertones that inform her conscious process of volition. And this is true especially because the two stimuli the Princess is exposed to, eating the apple because it is beautiful, or not eating it, because it is forbidden to do so, are mutually exclusive. They are not two stimuli with different content, but both of them are referring to the same action, one in a positive way, the other in a negative way. But essentially, this is a problem of dual-tasking, as one implies looking, and the other one implies remembering—in other words, exogenous and endogenous attention. Between exogenous and endogenous cues, it seems that we are able to ignore endogenous cues, but not exogenous, and that exogenous cues have bigger effects than endogenous cues, at least in this plot, as the apple is the more exciting stimulus, as it is the new one, in opposition to the memory retrieved. This explains the allegory, and in this case the competing stimuli, which perfectly fits how the plot is deployed. *Autos sacramentales* are articulated to a great extent into binary options¹¹⁴, and this structure is replicated fractally in all aspects.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Following the tradition of the Old and New Testament writers who along with “Christ himself in his utterances, had viewed human life in terms of good and evil, flesh and spirit, service of God and service of self.” Knowles, David. “Thomas Aquinas.” *A History of Christian Doctrine*, edited by Hubert Cunliffe-Jones. A&C Black, 2006, p. 272.

¹¹⁵ The Baroque period is also considered a period where the contrasting expression reaches its peak. The same existence of man in the Christian account is a contrast in itself insofar as man has a special dignity from being the preferred creature of God, but also is miserable in his own essence. The same contrast

The aforementioned framing effect can also be related to the attention process. According to the “selection-for-action theory,” humans pay attention to those stimuli that allow them to maintain a coherent course of action.¹¹⁶ Even though this theory is related to one single action, we can still build on a superior level of action, and consider the action to accept the gifts from the seasons as a whole course of action divided in four installments. If we saw previously that it makes sense to accept the gift of Otoño as a coherent action following the acceptance of the previous gifts, it also makes sense to pay attention to Otoño’s gift, more than paying attention to the retrieved memory of the forbidden precept.

The fact that two different types of information are provided, the apple and the precept, leads us to the idea that while both of them are in the Princess’ consciousness, definitely the memory of the precept is a lesser mode of consciousness, as the Princess does not fully understand in that moment what the precept means, i.e., what ought to

between soul and body will mark the works of this period, though in *El veneno y la triaca* the allegory defuses that contrast, which will be very present in other *autos* by Calderón such as *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*. This dualism is clear, as we have said, in Descartes, but at the end of his life he will nuance this extremism by admitting that there is a link between them both, which makes man what he is, as Laporte explains (250), and which is the stance of Calderón. Malebranch and Leibniz will defend also this extreme dualism.

¹¹⁶ “The need to discard certain inputs comes not from any particular inherent capacity limitations in the brain’s perceptual or cognitive system themselves, but rather from the practical demands of control. Attention is the cognitive process of ensuring that situationally relevant inputs are paired with appropriate outputs in order to achieve the subject’s more important goals”. Weiskopf, Daniel, and Fred Adams. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Psychology*. Cambridge University Press, 2015, p. 197.

be done, or the consequences that it implies.¹¹⁷ She inhibits further the process of paying attention to the prohibition. As we have said, the fact that Calderón choses a conscious mode for both of them is necessary to illustrate the idea of volition. As Iris Murdoch has pointed out, there are forms of attention that are *sine qua non* for the practice of virtues.¹¹⁸

4. 5 Mirror neurons, allegory and theater

Finally, we will study how the use of the metaphor of an apple influences the cognitive processes of the audience through the study of how mirror neurons work. We have seen that the allegory presents the apple as one of the main metaphors for sin. A conceptual object is materialized then in a material object.

When a person observes someone performing an action, mirror neurons fire in his brain in the same way as the corresponding neurons in the actor's brain that fire while he performs the action; i.e., they mirror the activity of the corresponding neurons in the actor's brain (in the case of hand movements, this motor neuro-firing would be located in the ventral premotor cortex).¹¹⁹ This allows the observer to understand, or

¹¹⁷ I am referring here again to Descartes' idea that full attention is required for a distinct idea to be realized to its full potentiality.

¹¹⁸ In his article "Attention, Self, and The Sovereignty of Good", Christopher Mole analyzes the relationship between attention and moral virtue that is to be found in Iris Murdoch (72-84).

¹¹⁹ Rizzolatti, Giacomo, and Laila Craighero. "The mirror-neuron system." *Annual Review of Neuroscience*, vol. 27, no. 1, Jul. 2004, pp. 169–192.

even better, to feel the action that the actor is performing.¹²⁰ This is what Vittorio Gallese calls embodied simulation in “Embodied simulation: From neurons to phenomenal experience” or the fact that we do not understand just with our cognitive apparatus, but with our entire body. But the performance of mirror neurons does not stop there. They allow the observer as well to understand or replicate in his own brain, the intentions and emotions that accompany a feeling.¹²¹ This is related again to the idea of Theory of Mind, or the human ability to read others’ minds. But while Theory of Mind proposes that we reflect the mental operations of others, the theory of the mirror neurons states that we are actually performing those operations on a brain level. Although it is not yet proved that mirror neurons work the same way in all humans, as experiments have been performed only on primates, it seems probable that they work the same way in human beings, and in this case, it would certainly explain how and why theater has an effect on its audience, along with explaining the use of allegory in theater. This would provide a more effective way to explain concepts, especially in this

¹²⁰ For a further discussion on mirror neurons and their role in observing performance (goal-orienting mirroring and facial and emotional mirroring), see Brown, William. “Is Acting a simulation of Being? Acting and Mirror Neurons.” *Theorizing Film Acting*, edited by Aaron Taylor. Routledge, 2012, pp. 107-99.

¹²¹ Kaplan, Jonas T. and Marco Iacoboni. “Getting a grip on other minds: Mirror neurons, intention understanding, and cognitive empathy.” *Social Neuroscience*, vol. 1., no. 3-4, Feb. 2006, pp. 175-83. Gallese, Vittorio. “Being like me: Self-Other Identity, Mirror Neurons and Empathy.” *Perspectives on Imitation: Mechanisms of imitation and imitation in animals*, edited by Susan L. Hurley and Nick Chater. MIT Press, 2005, pp.101-18.

type of theater, *autos sacramentales*, which involve difficult notions to grasp, such as the notion of sin, so involved as it is in both moral and emotional considerations.

Mirror neurons not only fire along with the action itself, but also depending on the intention of the action. Grabbing an apple can have many different intentions, eating it being just one of them.¹²² But in this case, and because of the context, as we have seen previously, the audience can decode that the Princess' intention as being nothing other than eating it. This leads us to the idea of Common Coding theory, which states that perceptual representations and motor representations are linked.¹²³ So, this would mean that there is a continuum between an object and the action associated with that object, and viceversa.¹²⁴ According to Roger Sperry, this continuum is inherent in our nervous system.¹²⁵ The question now is if the audience decodes in such a way that they suffer for the Princess, as they know what the outcome of that action will be, or, complementarily, the audience also feels guilty, as they are mimicking in their brains

¹²² Marco Iacoboni has studied how mirror neurons fire differently if one grasps a cup of tea with the intention to drink or to clear the table. Iacoboni, Marco, et al. "Grasping the Intentions of Others with One's Own Mirror Neuron System." *PLoS Biol*, vol. 3, no. 3, Feb. 2005, doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.0030079. Accessed 5 junio 2017.

¹²³ Prinz, Wolfgang. "Modes of linkage between perception and action." *Cognition and motor processes*, edited by Wolfgang Prinz and Andries F. Sanders. Berlin, Springer, 1984, pp. 185-193.

¹²⁴ This also is linked with ideomotor theory of William James, vol. 2, 1890, p. 522

¹²⁵ Sperry, Roger W. "Neurology and the mind-body problem." *American Scientist*, vol. 40, no. 2, 1952, pp. 291-312.

the action that symbolizes sinning. It is too early to say this, as scientists are not sure if mirror neurons are the base of empathy or not, but if this mechanism also works for humans, at least we know one of the advantages of the use of allegory, in this case, with the presence of a material object, in theater.

Will, beyond the importance attributed by the different philosophers of the Christian history, is key in the development of the dramatic art, as characters are required to act and not to be acted upon, in order to create a real, attractive, deep conflict. The eating of the apple in Paradise is the seminal decision/conflict of the Western tradition, and for this reason, Calderón plans carefully the exposition of the Princess' decision. First of all, he writes about her agency in order to make her responsible, to make her an acting character, and not the opposite. He defines her autonomy and individuality in order to make the decision feasible. *El veneno y la triaca* also presents the Princess' beliefs in order to explain her choice and chooses its protagonist in a way that the organic value of the character reinforces the possibility of that choice. Calderón specifies the components of the action, that is to say, desire, attention, and the trigger of the action and solves dramatically the incoherences of the myth around the requirement of knowledge for the execution of free will.

5. Understanding

The reason for this is that the proper object of an act of choosing is the means to an end.¹

The ultimate goal of any *auto sacramental* is to be understood. We have before us works of art which appeal to the senses, to the emotions (to a great extent), but which also want to deliver a message. It can be doctrinal, political, social... The complexity of this message is considerable, and it is transmitted basically by making the main character, the hero, the protagonist, understand what happened. This is why the narrative understanding happens at the end. Although understanding, intellect, must have been used throughout the entire work, the ultimate understanding, the lesson learned, can happen only at the end. As Kierkegaard says, "Life can be only understood backwards; but it must be lived forwards."²

The history of Christianity has been a continuous struggle to reconcile reason and faith. Although at the beginning of Christianity many Christian philosophers wanted to radically separate truths learned through reason from those acquired through revelation, Augustine, among many others, made this new synthesis between

¹ *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 83, a. 3.

² Cited by John Varughese in *Truth and Subjectivity, Faith and History: Kierkegaard's Insights for Christian Faith*, 2012, p. 36.

faith and reason gain importance in the Christian world.³ Augustine placed faith over reason, but devoted a great part of his work to analyzing what intellect is.⁴ For him, understanding is the faculty of the soul which distinguishes humans from beasts. In particular, understanding helps us distinguish the just from the unjust, and truth from error.⁵ This faculty has several expressions in Augustine, corresponding to levels of being. The lowest is the sensitive soul, which requires the body to be actualized. It refers to worldly knowledge and it does not generate science but opinion.⁶ Over it is the *ratio inferior* which perceives the universality of the sensitive reality, deriving patterns of the world; this type of knowledge generates science, but still requires the changing world to be actualized. At the top of the scale we have the *ratio superior*, called by Augustine wisdom, which refers to immutable truths, or ideas. These ideas are in God's mind, and humans perceive them by what Augustine calls *illumination*. In *De Trinitate*, Augustine explains that this illumination is like a sun, but instead of working

³ This was a popular idea among ancient thinkers that regained popularity in the Middle Ages thanks to Augustine.

⁴ Augustine believed that Faith was enough for a good Christian, but he also thought that reason was beneficial for faith.

⁵ Augustine. *Expositions on the Psalms*, 46. 6. www.augustinus.it/spagnolo/esposizioni_salmi/esposizione_salmo_057_testo.htm. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

⁶ For Augustine, an informed and rational type of knowledge.

on corporal objects, it lights up ideas. Humans do not see this light but the objects that it lights, that is to say, the immutable and eternal ideas.⁷

Aquinas still believed that all truth came from God, but for him faith and reason were not as separated as for Augustine. For him, the truths proved by faith were true even if they appeared false through philosophy.⁸ But for this philosopher, faith and reason are not opposed, as reason leads to truth, and truth leads to faith. Aquinas writes about the intellect as one faculty, and in his writings he asserts the existence of two types of intellect; one that allows us to create abstract ideas and one that allows us to derive information from sensitive experience. While the first operation is active, the second one is passive.⁹ In *autos sacramentales*, thanks to the device of allegory, these two types of intellect will be present, as the *asunto* is the abstract idea we need to learn from the play: follow God's law; and the *argumento* is the plot itself, which can be easily grasped by the senses, and by an immediate understanding. In the same vein, the *asunto* corresponds to the Augustinian *ratio superior*, while the *argumento* corresponds to

⁷ Schumacher, Lydia. "The 'Theo-Logic' of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination." *Augustinian Studies*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2010, pp. 375–399.

⁸ This idea is called the "two-fold truth."

⁹ "All things which are of one species enjoy in common the action which accompanies the nature of the species, and consequently the power which is the principle of such action; but not so as that power be identical in all. Now to know the first intelligible principles is the action belonging to the human species. Wherefore all men enjoy in common the power which is the principle of this action: and this power is the active intellect. But there is no need for it to be identical in all. Yet it must be derived by all from one principle. And thus the possession by all men in common of the first principles proves the unity of the separate intellect, which Plato compares to the sun; but not the unity of the active intellect, which Aristotle compares to light" *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 79, a. 5.

the two lower levels of intellect. About the relationship between will and intellect, Augustine is the first philosopher who explicitly formulates the distinction between them, when he compares the three faculties of the soul as equivalent to the Holy Trinity (*De Trinitate*). Augustine posits the inseparability of will and intellect, but he presents intellect as more important, as for this philosopher, knowledge cannot be separated from love, and one cannot love that which he does not know. Aquinas states that choosing is something related to will, but its form and order come from understanding¹⁰, going so much further in the superiority of understanding over will. Aquinas remarks that free will is a part of the will, but understanding is the driving force of free will, as in order to choose we need its advice.¹¹ The execution of free will has to be addressed toward the future; thinking just about the present is a type of thinking characteristic of the impious:

The wicked say,
Come on, then, let us enjoy the good things of life, and live in this world
the way we did when we were young and free of care! Let us drink the
most expensive wines and use the finest perfumes. Let us not miss a single
flower in the springtime! Before the roses wither, let us pick them and
wear them in our hair! Let us all join in and leave signs everywhere of our
carefree revelry! Life owes us that much!¹²

¹⁰ Suma, I-II, q. 13, a. 1.

¹¹ It is also traditional in Catholicism to consider that free will is inclined to evil without the assistance of grace.

¹² *Wisdom, Book of Solomon 2, 6-9*. This very same idea is depicted by Calderón in some *autos sacramentales*, for instance in *El nuevo hospicio de pobres* in which Atheism says: “siendo mi vientre mi dios, // lo que coma y lo que beba/dure o no dure la vida;// pues no hay más gloria ni pena// que nacer y morir” (515–519), or in *El año santo en Madrid* when the Epicureans are quoted saying: “Comamos, pues y bebamos// hoy alegres y

In sum, understanding is the quality that allows us to make decisions in a wise fashion, related to a goal, coinciding with the teleological aspect of Christian doctrine. The definition of the relationship between understanding, revelation and grace changes throughout history, the weight of each of them varying in the final result, but traditionally understanding has always been considered a principal attribute of mental operations. This is why it is considered one of the faculties of the soul, and this is why it is an important part of Christian literature.

5.1 Understanding in Calderón de la Barca

Besides *El veneno y la triaca*, Calderón de la Barca uses Understanding as a character in the following *autos sacramentales*: *La nave del mercader*, *El cubo de la Almudena*, *Los encantos de la culpa*, *La divina Filotea*, *La vida es sueño* (second version) and *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*. The concept itself appears nevertheless in many *autos* penned by this author. But as a character, it appears in the aforementioned *autos*, marked by his elderly quality. In *La vida es sueño*, it is explicitly characterized as an old man. In this play Man and Understanding exchange this dialog:

HOMBRE. ¿Cómo el primer día

tan cano estás?

festivos, // que mañana moriremos" (591–593). The body will express the same idea in *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*: "dios a nuestro vientre hagamos, // comamos hoy y bebamos // que mañana moriremos" (1100–1102).

ENTENDIMIENTO. Ese es claro indicio
de que las canas del juicio
amanecen más temprano
que las del poco saber. (878 – 883)

stating that good judgement is something that appears with age. In *La divina Filotea*

Entendimiento says:

que ahora que te vi me acuerdo
cuando nos criamos juntos
en nuestros años primeros
en natural ley debajo
de sus dos altos preceptos.
y si hago más memoria,
nos apartaron los genios:
tú a inventar y yo a elegir,
a cuya causa nos dieron
de Entendimiento a mí el nombre
como a ti el nombre de Ingenio. (827 – 837)

implicitly acknowledging that a long time has passed. It is also enlightening how the three faculties of the soul are presented in *La nave del mercader* (1674). In this *auto sacramental*, Calderón makes the three characters, Will, Memory and Understanding,

talk successively, relating them to different ages. Will refers to itself as the earliest faculty, as it is present since childhood (750–751); Memory says “Yo que la Memoria soy, // siguiendo a la edad su estilo” (762–763), which implies it is more related to adulthood; finally Understanding presents itself saying: “Yo que en más perfecta edad // soy el que ambas encamino” (776 – 777), alluding to old age, and also to his role as director of the other two faculties. In *El pleito matrimonial del cuerpo y el alma*, Calderón changes this order, making the Memory the first that is known by man, followed by Will, and lastly by Understanding, who says: “La última potencia soy, // porque a tu capacidad, // tras memoria y voluntad // siempre a conocer me doy” (425–428). Understanding not only remarks that he is the last faculty to appear on stage, but this idea also connects with the fact that understanding is the last of the faculties to appear in man, as it is the one that requires more time to be perfected¹³.

There is a long tradition of the identification of wisdom with old age. It is an archetype in literature, a stock character¹⁴, and in literary criticism often appears categorized as “senex” or “sage”.¹⁵ Cognitive research points out that the aged brain

¹³ This means that understanding is the last ability to appear in the cognitive development in the person, the idea that gaining wisdom takes time.

¹⁴ A stock character is a character that is recognized by the audience as he always has the same narrative arch in a certain narrative tradition. In words of Northrop Frye: “All lifelike characters, whether in drama or fiction, owe their consistency to the appropriateness of the stock type which belongs to their dramatic function” (172).

¹⁵ The examples of wise senex or sage are uncountable in literature, but in the topic we are studying it is worth mentioning Ambrose as a wise senex in Augustine’s *Confessions*.

has attributes not present in younger brains. Or in Aristotelian words, an aged brain has better *phronesis* or practical wisdom, which would allow us to make better decisions balancing our interests and the interests of the community.¹⁶ Aristotle also distinguishes between *sophia* and *phronesis*. While *phronesis* is the mentioned practical wisdom, *sophia* involves reasoning about universal truths. In the allegory of *El veneno y la triaca*, the character of Entendimiento encompasses them both. Not only is he able to understand the dynamic of first, grace, and then the fall¹⁷, he is also the one with the practical wisdom to call for a physician who can heal the Princess.

But what is wisdom? In words of Stefan H. Gugerell and Franz Riffert, wisdom “is a complex, multifaceted concept which at least touches such vast and diverse topics as knowledge, emotion, self-regulation¹⁸, motivation, social practice, and ethics as well

¹⁶ Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* talks about this type of wisdom or intellectual virtues, differentiated from *episteme*, a justified true belief, or *techné*, or craft (especially in Book VI).

¹⁷ In this case the fall of the Princess, but as she represents Human Nature, also the fall of mankind.

¹⁸ Self-regulation, as we have seen, is exactly what the Princess lacks. After biting the apple, the Princess pronounces this speech in which the lack of emotional self-regulation is explicit.

Entendimiento, señor,
si tú no hubieras llegado,
me hubiera desesperado
deste monte mi furor,
porque este mortal rigor
un hechizo es que me injuria;
es un veneno, una furia;
es un frenesí, un delirio;
es una pena, un martirio;

as the complex interconnections between all these facets” (226). Baltes, one of the most renowned researchers on the topic of wisdom, writes: “We define wisdom as an expert knowledge system in the fundamental pragmatics of life permitting exceptional insight, judgment, and advice involving complex and uncertain matters of human condition” (76). While many functions of the brain decline with age, like the episodic

es un tormento, una injuria,
que ha trocado mi hermosura
en una horrible fealdad,
en estrago mi deidad,
en sombra mi lumbre pura,
en desdicha mi ventura,
en tristeza mi alegría,
en silencio mi armonía,
en muerto olvido mi fama,
en vil pavesa mi llama
y en triste noche mi día.
El sol se me ha oscurecido,
la luna se me ha eclipsado,
los brutos se han rebelado,
los pájaros se han huido,
las fuentes se han suspendido,
hánseme armado las flores,
y para penas mayores,
para mayores violencias,
los tiempos en inclemencias
se han vestido de rigores.
Mas ¿para qué sutaliza
más mi discurso, si llevo
a conocer que hubo fuego,
donde agora no hay ceniza?
Un dolor me martiriza
el corazón con tirana
fuerza, con saña inhumana:
mortales, venid a ver,
que en quien no es hoy lo que ayer,
no será lo que hoy mañana. (1019–1058).

memory of the executive function, cognition based on knowledge and experience remains steady, that being the function that influences the aforementioned insight, judgement and advice.¹⁹ As we have seen in the previous chapter, the structures of the pre-frontal cortex, those in charge of foreseeing consequences, are completely developed in early adulthood, and with those structures still functional, old age and wisdom are also related to the ability to anticipate results.²⁰ This is what Entendimiento does when, after seeing how desperate the Princess is after biting the apple, he says:

¡Oh cuántas veces, oh cuántas,
temí en mi discurso esta
inobediente desgracia! (1059 – 1061)

Dilip V. Jeste and Thomas W. Meeks have studied a possible neurobiology of wisdom, finding that altruism activates the medial pre-frontal cortex, and that moral decision-making is a combination of functions: rational (located in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex, important in sustaining attention and working memory), emotional/social (medial pre-frontal cortex), and conflict detection (anterior cingulate cortex).²¹ All of this is related with wisdom and old age through a phenomenon called

¹⁹“A Metaheuristic (Pragmatic) to Orchestrate Mind and Virtue Toward Excellence.” *American Psychologist*, vol. 55, no.1, Jan. 2000, p. 128.

²⁰ And which the Princess is not able to do.

²¹ Meeks, Thomas. W. and Dilip V. Jeste. “Neurobiology of Wisdom: A Literature Overview.” *Archives of General Psychiatry*, vol. 66, no. 4, Apr. 2009, pp. 355-65.

HAROLD, or Hemispheric Assymetry Reduction in Older Adults.²² This phenomenon consist in the increase of activity in old age of half of the prefrontal cortex that is less active in yourger years. This means that all these activities that we have seen that are related with the attributes of wisdom will be increased in old age. This will create a link between the archetype and literature beyond mere cultural factors, contributing a biological interpretation.

Besides being old, Eugenio Frutos says that in Calderón's *autos* Understanding usually appears as "venerable", with the exception of the auto *Amar y ser amado: la divina Filotea*, in which Understanding will desert Man and move to serve the Devil (155).²³ As the same Frutos clarifies, the object of Understanding is Truth, and it serves as the guiding light for man, becoming the most important of faculties (157). In *El veneno y la triaca*, Calderón requires Entendimiento (Understanding) to be the first one to speak on stage. The play starts off with the character of Understanding presenting the set and the characters. The fact that Understanding has that role explains his importance in the play.²⁴ He is the introductory narrator, the one that has the knowledge and authority needed to frame the story; in a sense, this framing announces

²² Cabeza, Roberto. "Hemispheric asymmetry reduction in older adults: the HAROLD model." *Psychol Aging*, vol. 17, no. 2, Mar. 2002, pp. 85-100.

²³ Which gives a hint of the appreciation for this faculty.

²⁴ The very same play states that he reigns over the two other faculties: "Que si las potencias// son tres y aquéste avasalla// a las dos, [...]" (1270-1272).

to us that we are going to witness a story from his point of view, or at least from his normative conception of the story. Rights and wrongs will be coincident with his criteria. It is important to notice that in this period the *captatio benevolentia* and the *attentum parare* still are important parts of the narrative.²⁵ Thus, the first intervention marks an important role for the character, as he is the one calling the attention of the audience. Also, because of the primacy effect, there is a cognitive bias which makes the recipient of the information remember better what happens at the beginning than what happens afterwards.²⁶ Calderón could have chosen any other character to open the play, but choosing Understanding reinforces the importance he will have at the moment of solving the conflict. Later, Calderón will make it explicit: “El Entendimiento, rey// de las potencias del alma” (1266–1267). The first intervention of the Princess will also be addressed to Understanding, explaining to the audience his importance in her life, and her first line is none other than *árbitro docto* (32). While *docto* implies educated and intellectual, *árbitro*, here with the meaning of judge, refers to its duty of distinguishing good from bad, the true from the false.

In Calderón, faculties usually appear in the order Memory, Will, and Understanding, as second causes, derived from the first cause which is the soul as

²⁵ *Captatio benevolentia* is a rhetorical device to gain the goodwill of the audience. *Attentum parare* is another rhetorical device which tries to capture the attention of the spectators.

²⁶ Related to the recency effect in which it is easier to remember what happens at the end of a series of items. Both are included in the serial position effect.

Frutos points out (147). Although Memory and Will are clearly delimited, Understanding appears in Calderón under different forms, which Frutos lists as understanding, wit, thought, natural reason and discourse. And while Frutos considers Understanding a cognitive essence, and therefore, passive (160), nevertheless, in *El veneno y la triaca*, this character or faculty has a very active role. Understanding is the one who puts the solution in motion, linking this event with Aquinas' idea of understanding as the motor of the will. Not in vain, in Calderón, Understanding is in charge of the pragmatic sense of the person, as he himself states in *Amar y ser amado: la divina Filotea*: "procura reducir el pensamiento// a práctico sentido" (1503–1504). As we have seen, this is related with the Greek phronesis, but also with contemporary definitions of wisdom, which include the practical aspect in decisión-making.

Calderón usually gives Understanding precedence over Will, but this is not consistent in his work, as Will appears sometimes as the faculty related with love, an idea of Augustinian origin.²⁷ In *El veneno y la triaca*, the fact that Understanding is the only one personified in this allegory gives it a supreme importance over the other two, especially when the will of the Princess, not personified but present in the plot, is what triggers the conflict. But Understanding, being a character, also denotes how Calderón considers it the most important faculty in order to achieve grace. This does not mean

²⁷ The human will for Augustine is both the faculty of choice and the seat of love Peters, James R. *Logic of the Heart, The: Augustine, Pascal, and the Rationality of Faith*. Baker Academic, 2009, p. 66.

that supernatural help is not needed, rather that reason is impossible without faith. Nevertheless, the character of Understanding, after calling the physician, in the face of Inocencia's doubts, defends the intervention of this physician and his healing with the words: "I believe" ("Yo lo creo" 1453). Augustine posited that faith is incomplete without the assistance of reason, so human beings need to have faith in order to understand (in an inductive exercise) and Aquinas insists on the same idea but giving it a twist, saying that we need to understand in order to believe, as he thought any person could have a basic knowledge of God through natural reason.²⁸ These ideas, opposed to previous stances about faith and reason, like Tertullian's who thought that faith alone was the path, facilitate the creation of the metaphor in which Calderón bases *El veneno y la triaca*, using medicine, a very empirical science, as a transposition of the phenomenon of faith. This is an "ejemplo visible", easily grasped by reason, as Calderón called it, through the character of Wisdom, in *El nuevo hospicio de pobres*: "de que en ejemplos visibles// lo no visible se entienda" (189–190). This "I believe" pronounced by Entendimiento, works as the ultimate justification of his decisión, establishing a clear hierarchy. Faith is over reason even in the character of Understanding.

²⁸ Aquinas' thought is very close to the concept of "hermeneutical reason" which asserts that the whole cannot be understood apart from the parts, and the parts cannot be understood apart from the whole. In the context of reason and faith, it asserts that one must believe in order to understand and simultaneously one must understand in order to believe.

Although strictly speaking faith is not an emotion, but rather a belief, in the case of religious faith, which is our case, faith involves an emotion. James Kellenberger explains that Protestant theologians tend to see faith as an emotional state, while Catholic theologians tend to see it as an assent to certain propositions. He also distinguishes the difference between having faith in God as opposed to belief that there is a God. According to Kellenberger “faith in God is always affective” as it “presupposed the affective state of trust” (31). Understanding’s “I believe” corresponds to this affective state of trust. If in the previous chapter we talked about the theory of appraisal, in which beliefs shaped our emotions, here we see the reverse: our emotions affect our beliefs. Aristotle pointed this out in his *Rhetorica*: “Secondly, persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgements when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile” (*Rhetorica* I, II.5). This idea is what has been preeminent historically, and this is why the regulation of emotions has been advised in the West since the Stoics.²⁹ For his part, Hume argued that it is not reasons which make us act, but the emotions behind our reasons, and he therefore made his famous statement “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them” (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, III.III.3.4). All these ideas converge in the character of Understanding, no matter how reasonable he is; he still needs the affect,

²⁹ This regulation of emotions is known nowadays as “emotional intelligence.”

the emotion, in this case faith, in order to act. This is true from a doctrinal perspective, but also from a human-like perspective. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio also asserts that emotion is essential for action: “Well-tuned and deployed emotion, as I see it, is necessary for the edifice of reason to operate properly”.³⁰

Etymologically, passion (the word used to name emotions in the past), comes from the Greek *peithos*, *pathos*, to feel. Emotions have been seen historically as something passive that happens to us.³¹ In the cause-effect structure of *autos sacramentales*, emotions are something that happens to us as a consequence of our actions. The moral of the story is to a great extent addressed to the emotions derived from actions. But on another level, the need to make characters functional obliges them to have emotions as their own “doing”. For instance, the “I believe” of Understanding shows that although faith is a gift from God, it also requires the will to be actualized; it becomes an action. The will is enlightened by grace, but ultimately, “believing” is an act of the will. In the words of Aquinas: “The intellect of the believer is determined to one object, not by the reason, but by the will, wherefore assent is taken here for an act

³⁰ Damasio, Antonio. “A second chance for emotion.” *Cognitive Neuroscience of Emotion*, edited by Richard D. Lane and Lynn Nadel. Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 14.

³¹ “I have described emotions as strategies, strategies for living well, even if a great many emotions are rather short-sighted and thus not very good strategies. But to say emotions are strategies, as Jean-Paul Sartre suggested more than seventy-five years ago, is to say something very much at odds with the current and traditional view of emotions. It is to say that our emotions are to some extent our “doing,” and not just something that happens to us.” Solomon, Robert C. *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us*. Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 190-191.

of the intellect as determined to one object by the will."³² And why is believing related to the will? Because believing derives from lasting positive emotions. The plot of *El veneno y la triaca* is directed toward this assertion. Because it is not only that the play has a *happy ending* including marriage, it is that the Princess will feel *good* (morally and physically).

However, in the whole structure of the play, in the main conflict, emotions are always provoked by the actions, or are a consequence of our actions, and therefore, there is no control over them. In the universe of the play, emotions only work as an index of the appropriateness of the characters' actions. So, in this case, emotions are something that happen to them, but that help them understand what has really happened. And I say really because of the differentiation between *felicitas* and *beatitudo*. While *felicitas* is a temporal type of happiness, *beatitudo* is the type of happiness every Christian should search for. Eating the apple brings the Princess ephemeral happiness in the form of anticipation, *felicitas*. But recovering grace will bring her real *beatitudo*. Emotions are amplified in the anticipation more than they are in the actual event and Calderón uses the anticipation effect phenomenon to justify the bite of the apple: the fact that the anticipation of an event also brings the emotion adscribed to the event. Although the very same bite does not bring happiness, anticipation brings it. According to psychologist George Kelly's personal construct theory, individuals are

³² *Summa Theologiae*, II, II, Q. 1.

not led by (hard-wired) inner forces or desires of self-realisation, but by anticipation.³³

The person seeks validation for their predictions about the world and their behaviors are the attempt to validate those predictions. This theory perfectly fits the cause-effect structure that reigns in these plays.

Regarding the different types of emotions these characters experience, there is something that characterizes this theater: characters know perfectly how they feel, which is not the case in life, or in other forms of art in later centuries. Their self-knowledge or first-person authority is always correct.³⁴ Therefore, there is no need for further investigation about their psyches. They always know how they feel, although they usually do not know where their *hamartia* lies, i.e., if how they feel is actually good for them or not. In the same way, there are never any unjustified emotions in these plays. The audience accepts the character's emotions as true, since they are perfectly justified by their actions. It is necessary to clarify that this is the case when these emotions are consequences and not anticipations. As we have seen, when the Princess decides to eat the apple, she does not anticipate the cessation of her happiness.³⁵

Although she does not anticipate happiness in an explicit and positive way, the negative

³³ Kelly, George A. *The psychology of personal constructs*. Routledge, 1991.

³⁴ Using Descartes' vocabulary.

³⁵ Charpentier, Caroline J., et al. "Models of Affective Decision Making. How Do Feelings Predict Choice?" in *Psychological Science* Jun. 2016 vol. 27 no. 6763-775.

anticipation (she thinks she won't cease to be happy) reveals that she anticipates this apple will contribute only to her happiness. But the important emotions in this story are the ones that come later, because they are the evaluative ones that can be shared by the audience. This arises from the nature of a theater based on actions and not on the study of the characters' psychology.

5. 2 Understanding the play

What is required for a story to have a good structure? In the case of *autos sacramentales*, we have linear narrative structures. Events are presented in chronological order, with analepsis and prolepsis. Analepses are basically included in the extended monologues of characters, for instance in *El veneno y la triaca*, when Lucero explains his fall because of his love for Human Nature, in a subplot designed to explain his character and motivations (354–523). Prolepses are usually references to future events, as when the pilgrim says: “que ya sé que penas, ansias, // fatigas, hambres y sedes, en este mundo me aguardan” (319–321), announcing the passion. These analepses and prolepses help us to understand the characters while also serving as references to elements of the story known by the audience but not relevant to the plot. But among the elements which configure the particular plot of the play, a good structure is determined by the relationships between causes and effects; they need to be clearly stated in the plot, and the audience must be able to grasp them in real time while they are watching the show. The audience has to understand why things happen the way

they do in an immediate way without the need for further exploration or background knowledge. This has to do with our fear of uncertainty. Uncertainty refers to imperfect or unknown information, which diminishes our ability to predict future events, and furthermore, it diminishes our capacity for decision-making. To help arrange these relations at a cognitive level, to make them understandable, the plot plays with the cause-effect setting, the allegory, and the balance between uncertainty, anticipation, and suspense.³⁶

5. 2. 1. Cause and effect

In *Poetics* Aristotle defines the plot as the primary constituent of the tragedy. For this philosopher, the plot is the way that the incidents of the story are arranged. Actually, for Aristotle, it is better for a plot to depend on a chain of cause-effect relationships than on the characters' personalities.³⁷ Early Modern Spanish theater follows this concept, as the characters are types, and not individualities, although this does not mean plays do not explore their psychology and cognitive apparatus. Aristotle also states that the beginning must start the chain of events, followed by the climax, and finally the resolution, with other aspects of the play being coincidental with this tripartite structure. The causes previous to the starting incident, and the effects resulting from the resolution must be downplayed to respect the unity of action. Therefore

³⁶ Calderón explores the cause-effect relationship in his *auto sacramental A Dios por razón de estado*.

³⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, Section 1, Part VI. classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.1.1.html#234. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

Calderón only deploys small allusions to the passion, and confines the story of the fall of Lucero to one speech.

Stories are made of cause-effect relationships because in words of Keil: “Causal relations make it vastly easier to remember the features that make up a concept as well as to make inductions about new instances.”³⁸ Even more:

It is important to note here that cause-effect relationships may not exist in objective reality (whatever that means), but our brains make it so. Just as the brain’s design allows us to perceive and respond to difference (change in a stimulus pattern), cause-effect perception is made possible by a property of brain function we refer to as *parallel-sequential compression* of sensory experience. Specifically, in order for conscious awareness to occur with such clarity and “wholeness” that cause-effect relationships can be discerned, the brain’s simultaneous incorporation of billions of pieces of sensory experience (stimulus patterns) must be organized and represented in a sequential linear format. While we are well aware that this reorganizing process must cause the loss of immediate conscious accessibility of a significant amount of external experience, it may not be so obvious that our very ability to perceive cause and effect is dependent upon such compression and reorganization of sensory information.³⁹

In other words, creating a dramatic structure is mimetic and a more concise and concentrated version of the way our brains process information with a reorganization of sensory data in which elimination is the key element. Creating a narrative, and therefore a plausible cause-effect relationship depends to a great extent on the selection of the incidents shown on stage (or in the narrative medium). Not all incidents

³⁸ Keil, Frank C. *Concepts, kinds, and cognitive development*. MIT Press, 1989, p. 280.

³⁹ Furman, Mark Evan, and Fred P. Gallo. *The Neurophysics of Human Behavior: Explorations at the Interface of Brain, Mind, Behavior, and Information*. CRC Press, 2000, p. 42.

happening in the real action, the one that the play is imitating, are necessary to convey the meaning desired for the play. In words of Allen Tilley: "The narrative world of *myth* is organized in such a way that every event is ultimately meaningful, and every event causally implies every other event" (17).

This is an important point when the psychological roundness of Early Modern Spanish theater characters is discussed. Throughout his work Alexander A. Parker discussed this topic, from the acknowledgment of how action is more important than characters in this type of theater, to the assertion that material limits and goals pursued made a more "rounded" psychological characterization unnecessary⁴⁰; because

⁴⁰ Alexander Parker in his work "An approach to the Spanish drama of the Golden Age" famously reckons that "The generic characteristic of the Spanish drama is, of course, the fact that it is essentially a drama of action and not of characterization. It does not set out to portray rounded and complete characters, though certain plays may do so incidentally. Some of the misunderstanding from which the Spanish drama has suffered, more particularly the plays of Calderón, has been due to the regret critics have felt at the absence of fully developed lifelike characterization. We must, however, waive any preconceptions and accept the fact that the Spanish drama works on the assumption –which after all has the authority of Aristotle behind it – that the plot and not the characters is the primary thing. We can then judge the action in its own right and see what it has to offer us in terms of human values. This does not mean that the characters are unimportant. What it does mean is that since the dramatists are out to present, within a strict limitation of time, an action that is full of incident, they generally have no time to elaborate their characters, and must confine their characterization to brief touches" (42-43). Later Parker will insist: "A point that no longer needs stressing is that unreality in Calderón's thought is coupled with unrealism in his characterization, which used to be even more of a stumbling-block to his understanding. The commonest criticism that was made of Calderón was that his characters were too unlikelike to engage our sympathies. Presumably readers of poetic plays will always prefer "rounded" characters, whose personality appears to be complete and entirely real, to "type" characters, who are restricted to displaying only the single trait that their part in the play requires, e.g. a miser, a hypocrite, a hypochondriac, and so on. These and similar psychological qualities are just as human as those of the rounded characters but, since these are only what the characters are required to represent in the plot, "roundness" is unnecessary. T. S. Eliot, when discussing dramatic poetry, made an important distinction that is very relevant to Calderón. He said that "whereas in Shakespeare the effect is due to the way in which the characters *act upon* another, in Jonson it is given by the way in which the characters *fit in* with each other. In other words, in a Calderonian play, each character is, so to speak, a piece in a jigsaw puzzle: he has only the shape required by the theme." An

narrating is actually selecting. The Princess represents the human genre--she is one of us--therefore, even mediated by the allegory, she belongs to the *low mimesis*. Allen

Tilley observes:

From the seventeenth century until only recently (if a change has indeed occurred), low mimesis⁴¹ has seemed to describe the fundamental nature of reality for most guiders of our culture. The causal modality of low mimesis is proximate. Events are related through the classical cause and effect relationships: contiguity in time and space, adequacy of the cause to the effect, precedent of the cause, and the necessity of the cause to the effect. Meaning arises from human intention within the conditions imposed by causal chains. In low mimesis we are defined by our social identity: we are what we are in relation to others. [...] Low mimetic process depends on the ability of the characters to act in accordance with their desires or fears (126).

This insistence on the cause-effect chain does not mean that the selection of the events on stage does not depict a certain interiority of the characters. But for Calderón and his contemporaries, it is not important to show everything, rather only what contributes to the plot and its meaning, with less emphasis on the characterization of the characters. A good example of this is the act of eating the apple that takes place on stage. Can we define the act of eating as an act related to interiority? Definitely. But the interiority of the act of eating will not be displayed in *El veneno y la triaca*. As a matter

Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age." *The Tulane Drama Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, Sep. 1959, pp. 16.

⁴¹ Tilley is using here the vocabulary used by Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Low mimesis or low mimetic mode is that of which the hero is one of us, belongs to the common humanity.

of fact, the Princess almost has no time to chew. Between the first bite and her verses announcing she has fallen sick, there are only a few lines of other characters to allow the actress to express corporally the start of the disease. Only a few stages of the act of eating will be referred on stage. Why is this? Because it is not important for Calderón to describe how it feels to eat. As an *auto sacramental* is a type of theater that explores over and over the idea of agency, for Calderón it is important to describe how “me wanting this” feels, and how “the consequences of me wanting this” feel. For this reason, we will see that all stories that follow this matrix, and which share the same narrative goals, when it comes to the act of eating, will emphasize one particular sense: the sense that unleashes the cause-effect chain. All senses are involved in the act of eating, and actually this experience is considered as “organoleptic”, “multi-modal”, as tasting as we experience it would be impossible without the performance of all our senses. Intuitively it seems that the sense of taste would be the most important of them all, and of course the taste of food can give us much information about it, and encourage us to keep eating or to stop. But so does touch—texture can give us information about the condition of the food or change the intensity of its flavor, as the more hard the food is the less flavor we perceive in it.⁴² And also hearing—telling us through its crunchiness how fresh our food is. Smell is not only involved in making food desirable, it is also a

⁴² Tournier Carole, et al. “A study on texture–taste–aroma interactions: Physico-chemical and cognitive mechanisms.” *International Dairy Journal*, vol. 19, no. 8, Aug. 2009, pp. 450-458.

big part of our ability to actually taste it; this is why we pinch our noses when we have to eat something that is extremely ill-flavored.⁴³ And finally, we have sight, which definitely plays a big role in making us want to eat something.⁴⁴ For instance, certain foods are perceived rotten if they have a bluish color. The way food is presented can influence our taste.⁴⁵ Different colors can shape our expectations and therefore our taste of food.⁴⁶ From all these senses, the only one that the audience is going to share with the Princess as she experiences the apple is the sense of sight. This is the way the narration is shaped not only by cultural factors, but also by the need for the story to be understood and with the specificities required by theater, that in this period fundamentally appeals to the audience's visual and auditory senses. In Genesis 3, the Bible describes the forbidden fruit saying: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it." And Calderón de la Barca in *El veneno y la triaca* says through the character of Death, disguised as a gardener: "Yo, señora, el jardinero// de tus

⁴³ Actually, the smell of food can change how it tastes. Stevenson Richard J., and Caroline Tomiczek. "Olfactory-induced synesthesias: A review and model." *Psychological Bulletin*, vol. 133, no. 2, Mar. 2007, pp. 294-309.

⁴⁴ Aristotle opens his *Metaphysics* saying: "All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight." (Book I.) For Freud sight is the sense of desire.

⁴⁵ Zellner Debra A., et al. "Neatness counts. How plating affects liking for the taste of food." *Appetite*, vol. 57, no. 3, Dec. 2011, pp. 642-648.

⁴⁶ Spence, Charles. "On the psychological impact of food colour." *Flavour*, Apr. 2015, vol. 4, no. 21. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

jardines he sido;// como tal, he conocido// el fruto más lisonjero.// Aquesta poma es hermosa;" (832–836). "This is a beautiful apple".⁴⁷ So, the only necessary cause-effect event in the act of eating the apple is to see—to bite—to fall sick. This is not a failure in the characterization of the act of eating an apple. It is the selection of attributes in order to emphasize the plot, and it works in the same way with characters and actions.

Cause-effect relationships are developed in a time line, which is the way the human brain understands them and the way these plays are designed.⁴⁸ Movement is another cue to infer cause-effect relationships, which in the case of falling sick from eating the poisoned apple, gives clear information about how these two events are related, specifically because of the immediacy between them. The problem with cause-effect relationships in reality is that inferring their existence is often difficult, and because of this, psychological science talks about the "illusion of explanatory depth". This illusion describes the fact that humans tend to think they understand things in a deep way, when in fact their knowledge is only superficial. The problem is that

⁴⁷ This is important considering that theater in this moment is not interactive in the sense that there is a clear division between audience and stage. So there is no possibility of touching, and as Barbara Baert comments "Where touch is banned, sight is stimulated. This seems to become the important paradigm of *Noli me tangere*", which makes special sense in the case of theater. Baert, Barbara. "An Odour. A Taste. A Touch. Impossible to Describe: *Noli Me Tangere* and The Senses." *Religion and the Senses in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Wietse de Boer and Christine Göttler. Brill, 2012, p. 119.

⁴⁸ Lagnado, David A., and Steven A. Sloman. "Time as a guide to cause." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, vol. 32, no. 3, May 2006, pp. 451-60. Also, in *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume defined causation as requiring three conditions: contiguity in time and space, priority in time, and constant conjunction between the cause and the effect.

familiarity is confused with knowledge.⁴⁹ Being familiar with something does not mean you understand it. This explains the constant repetition of messages that configure the structure of a society, or more to the point, the fact that *autos sacramentales* repeat their deep meaning, the *asunto*, at every opportunity. This creates a familiarity with the topic that does not necessarily mean that the audience fully understands it, but definitely helps to reinforce certain rules as explanatory of life. If the audience sees a certain cause-effect relationship expressed on stage, they might not understand it perfectly or accurately grasp it, but they become familiar with it. Furthermore, one of the differences between reality and mimesis is that the cause-effect relationship is not inferred, it is created. Therefore, there is no possibility that the idea that eating the apple made the Princess sick could be wrong. In the reality of the play, it is simply a fact that eating the poisoned apple made the Princess sick. The way this cause-effect relationship translates to reality is problematic, not only for the mediation of mimesis, but also for the second-order mediation that serves as the metaphor. This metaphor takes place in the brain, but actually, the causal explanation is in front of the audience. They see⁵⁰ the Princess fall sick when she eats the apple, and therefore infer that the

⁴⁹ A very canonical example of this is Augustine's confession: "But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly, than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asketh, I know not". *Confessions*, 11:14:17.

⁵⁰ This is what Rozenblit and Keil call "environmental support." This environmental support supposes that the individual knows how something works, but he only knows it because he is seeing it work. As soon as this visual support disappears, the subject is unable to explain how things work. Rozenblit, Leonid, and

apple made her sick. The audience thinks they know that the apple makes the Princess sick, but they don't actually know it. They are just seeing it. They have no way to explain why the apple makes her sick. What they know is how the second term of the metaphor, sin, can make her sick, and that is the only knowledge that is in their minds. When it comes to what is happening on stage, the audience just accepts that the apple makes her sick, because that is the way the cause-effect relationship is laid in the plot. The same could be said about the medicines that the Princess takes to recover her health. It is an induced cause-effect relationship that is accepted by the audience because they are seeing it before their eyes. Of course, this is possible thanks to the suspension of disbelief, but let us not forget that this is a transposition of another cause-effect relationship, the Eucharist, that the audience takes for real.⁵¹ While in real life humans are many times forced to seek the cause of an effect in a retrospective way, in an attempt to attribute an origin to an event, in this type of theater—because it repeats a very well-known pattern—, the audience perceives a sequential cause-effect chain, understanding immediately the forthcoming effects of every cause. *Autos Sacramentales* work with what is called “negative logic”: this cause X had this effect Y, and

Frank C. Keil. “The misunderstood limits of folk science: an illusion of explanatory depth.” *Cognitive Science*, vol. 26, no. 5, Sep. 2002, p. 522.

⁵¹ So real that the reality of the transubstantiation was one of the main arguments between Catholics and Protestants, and *autos sacramentales* work as propaganda for the Counter Reformation.

furthermore, this effect Y could not have happened without this exact cause X.

Therefore, a careful choice of events is presented on stage for a unequivocal cause-effect relationship.⁵² It is a dramatic simplification of the complexity of life, but it responds to the principle of cognitive economy which is “the tendency for cognitive processes to minimize processing effort and resources.”⁵³ This simplification works in terms of how the information is provided and helps us to understand the text. It has been proven that the less clear the cause-effect relationship is between two sentences, the more times one has to reread the second sentence to grasp its meaning.⁵⁴ The same happens with the visual grammar of theater, heightened by the fact that the speed of exposition is not set by the receiver/reader/spectator but by the deliverer/actor. The more contiguity there is in the delivery of information via speech and gesture, the easier it is for the audience to infer cause-effect relationships. In the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, because the information is related on a level close to physical experience, the main source of information will be the gesture. Eating and falling sick in a few seconds leaves no room for questioning what was the cause. This is important because in this

⁵² Actually, the only way to arrive at a true causal assesment in a complex system is through experimental manipulation with a control condition eliminating multiples causes to find the true one, as it is well known in the scientific method. In this sense, theater is a controlled environment in which, to avoid ambiguity, only one possible cause is permitted.

⁵³ Colman, Andrew. M. *A Dictionary of Psychology* (4 ed.) Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁵⁴ Keenan, Janice M., et al. “The effects of causal cohesion on comprehension and memory.” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, vol. 23, no. 2, Apr. 1984, pp. 115-26.

play cause-effect is primarily derived from gesture, symbols, and indexical factors⁵⁵, or, in other words, what can be seen (and which brings us back to what is shown about the act of eating an apple). In the case of *El veneno y la triaca* we have the symbol, the apple; we have the indexical factors, explicit in deictic words such as “this” or “here”:
“Aquesta poma es hermosa” (836), “que aquí hay fruta vedada” (844), “ésta es la fruta más bella” (849); and we have the gesture indicated in the stage direction, “Come de ella y se estremece” (she eats the apple and shudders)—a stage direction that is explicitly divided into two parts to make even clearer the cause-effect relationship: eating and shuddering.⁵⁶

In sum, in words of René Wellek:

In reading with a sense for continuity, for contextual coherence, for wholeness, there comes a moment when we feel that we have ‘understood’, that we have seized on the right interpretation, the real meaning. It is a process that . . . proceeds from attention to a detail to an anticipation of the whole and back again to an interpretation of the detail (419).

5. 2. 2. Allegory

An allegory is a “sistema trabado de metáforas”, an “intertwined system of metaphors”, in which there is a relationship between two terms, and in relating those two terms several metaphors are developed. The way these two terms and all their

⁵⁵ As Keir Elam has studied in *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*. Routledge, 2003.

⁵⁶ We can relate this process to the Mirror Neuron Theory we have seen in Chapter 3.

attributes are related can be explained through the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, developed by Lakoff and Johnson in 1980. This theory states that metaphors are not only decorative elements, but also cognitive tools of the mental processes of comprehension. Conceptual Metaphor Theory relates two different conceptual domains, which are coincidental in their entities, attributes, processes and relationships. This coincidence happens in the mental process. As we have seen, in the case of *El veneno y la triaca* the two main terms that are related are disease and sin, which derive from the metaphor of Christ as a physician. In this equivalence, *disease* is the source domain, that is to say, the conceptual domain chosen to explain an idea. *Sin* is the target domain, or conceptual domain of the concept to be understood. The target domain is usually abstract, while the source domain is concrete, and provides the lexical sets to explain the conceptual sets of the target domain. It is true that any concrete domain becomes abstract for those who never experienced it, but the source domain used in *El veneno y la triaca* can be considered concrete for the target audience of this play, and for most people in the Western World as it follows Western allopathic medicinal procedures. Even more, if the use of the target and source domains has the goal of mapping new abstract experiences on known concrete experiences, it is also safe to say that none of the terms used in this allegory are unknown to the audience.

Basic conceptual metaphors are part of the common conceptual apparatus shared by members of a culture. They are systematic in that there is a fixed

correspondence between the structure of the domain to be understood (e.g., death) and the structure of the domain in terms of which we are understanding it (e.g., departure). We usually understand them in terms of common experiences. They are largely unconscious, though attention may be drawn to them. Their operation in cognition is almost automatic.⁵⁷

The main metaphor in *El veneno y la triaca*, the one present in the title⁵⁸ and the one that drives the plot, is the identification of sin and disease. But before studying that metaphor let us see the other matrix Calderón develops to create the allegory. Because one of the terms is abstract, as it is the divine experience, we have an ontological metaphor; because there are many overlapping elements; it is also a structural metaphor.⁵⁹

Table 1. Relationships

Internal relationships		
Family	Empire	Divinity
Father ⁶⁰	Emperor	God

⁵⁷ Lakoff, George and Mark Turner. *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor*. University of Chicago Press, 2009, p. 51.

⁵⁸ For a detailed account of the concept of venom and “triacá” in history and English and French literature, see Ricardo Arias, Arias, Ricardo. “‘El veneno y la triaca’ de Calderón: antecedentes del auto.” *Hispanófila*, vol. 102, 1991, pp. 31-45.

⁵⁹ Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. The University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 219.

⁶⁰ In this matrix we will point out their elements and not the relationships among them.

Daughter	Princess	Human Nature
Tutor	Tutor	Understanding
Maid	Maid	Innocence
Servants	Servants	Seasons
External relationships		
Interpersonal	Social	Divine
Suitor/hero	Prilgrim/Physician	Christ
Suitor/anti-hero	Emperor's enemy	Lucero
Suitor's adyuvant	Enemy's accomplice	Death

Table 2: Space and time

Space		
Physical	Social	Divine
Garden	Empire	Paradise
Rocks	Plebeian space	Earth
Time		
Physical	Social	Divine
Absence of time	Unconscious State	Innocence State
Time, seasons passing	Conscious State	Sin State
	Repentant State	Grace State

Table 3: Sin and disease

Sin and Disease		
Physical	Social	Divine
Health	Innocence	Grace
Disease	Guilt	Sin
Physician	Physician	Christ
Pathogen agent	Apple	Pride and disobedience
Medicaments	Sacraments	Dispensation of grace through sacraments.
Cure	Marriage	Grace

The intertwined metaphor system includes family conceptual domains, social conceptual domains, time and space conceptual domains, and political domains. In the words of Margaret R. Greer: “la misma naturaleza de la alegoría exige que tales verdades [doctrinales] se formulen en términos de estructuras significantes y humanas [the same nature of the allegory demands those truths to be formulated in terms of human and significant realms]”, and all those realms are significant and human.⁶¹

⁶¹ Greer, Margaret R. “Cazadores divinos, demoníacos y reales en los autos de Calderón de la Barca.” *Divinas y humanas letras: doctrina y poesía en los Autos sacramentales de Calderón: Actas del congreso*

In the previous chapter we talked about how the apple was poisoned, no matter how the Princess perceived it, and we have seen the simultaneous insistence of this type of text on the noumenic character of man, disregarding the *homo phenomenon*. But the plot requires an independence of the real world from the character's mind, in order to work on all the levels of the metaphor. In the same way the wheat and the water are the elements able to heal her independently of her perception of them. This happens in the physical terms of the allegory, and it happens with certain elements in which the association between their materiality and their moral value already has the status of symbols. But there are other elements of nature that seem to depend on the spiritual state of the Princess.⁶² Beyond the fact that this happens at a physical level because of

internacional, Universidad de Navarra, 26 Febrero-1 Marzo, 1997, edited by Ignacio Arellano, Blanca Oteiza, María del Carmen Pinillos. Reichenberger, 1997, p. 220.

⁶² The Princess explains how Nature is hurting her:

Hermoso luciente sol,
que ayer tanta luz me diste,
¿cómo hoy en pálida y triste
noche envuelves tu arbol?
Luna, trémulo farol
de la noche, astro inconstante,
que ayer con blanco semblante
me iluminaste luciente,
¿cómo hoy, si todo el creciente,
padeces todo el menguante?
Flores, que ayer a mis ojos
blancas, purpúreas y bellas
fuisteis humanas centellas,
¿cómo hoy todas sois abrojos?
Fieras, que ayer en despojos
me rendisteis mil halagos,

the loss of the praeternatural gifts, this loss also is a metaphor about how moral discomfort influences the way we perceive the world and how we react to it.

Moral discomfort habitually creates two types of emotions among many others: shame and guilt. While shame is a relational emotion, as it has to do with our position in society, it is related to “who am I”⁶³, guilt is more related to our own responsibility

y quedándose en amagos
vuestra saña suspendida,
fuiesteis lisonja a mi vida,
¿cómo hoy todas sois estragos?
Aves, que auroras y siestas
érades dulces, y graves
músicas ayer suaves,
¿cómo hoy todas sois funestas?
Fuentes, que en estas florestas
ayer érades espejos
guarnecidos de bosquejos,
¿cómo mirándoos estoy
a todas tan turbias hoy,
sin visos y sin reflejos?
En todo mudanza veo.
¡Con qué extrañeza lo admiro!
¡En todo novedad miro!
¡Con qué de asombro lo creo!
Saber si en mí la hay, deseo.
Aunque estés tan turbia, en ti,
fuente, he de verme. ¡Ay de mí!
Un yerto cadáver es
el que llevo a mirar, pues
nada soy de lo que fui.
Aunque esto que soy no sea,
desde este peñasco al mar
hoy me he de precipitar. (969–1011)

⁶³ Related to the “Yo soy quien soy” statement so recurrent in the Spanish *comedia*, and representative of a rigid place in the social order. In his work *Teatro y literatura en la sociedad barroca* (1972), José Antonio Maravall expresses how this utterance relates to the subjugation of the person/character to their expected social role.

and answers the question “what do I do”. The Princess does not explicitly express shame or guilt, although her soliloquies address the idea of “¿Quién soy?” (922). Paradoxically that “who am I” is related to the change that guilt causes in her, more than to the perception the others have of her, which is more related to shame. Because she falls sick, there is not an explicit message about the feeling of guilt, but Calderón prefers to show the consequences of guilt: the disappearance of beauty, the pain, the damage to her by the creation through the effects of the seasons, in sum, the expulsion from Paradise. The playwright describes a very stressful situation, and stress can change the way we perceive the world to the point of causing depression.⁶⁴ That the creation participates in the sin of the Princess works as a metaphor of how our perception of reality is linked to our emotional well-being.

This sin-disease correspondence is the main metaphor in the allegorical system of this play, but it also includes the Princess’ understanding of what has happened. She has to change and learn to meet the goals of the narrative. Hasty endings are a trait of the *Comedia Nueva*, following Lope’s precept:

pero la solución no la permita

⁶⁴ Praag, Herman van. “Can stress cause depression?” *World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2005, pp. 5-22.

hasta que llegue a la postrera escena;
porque en sabiendo el vulgo el fin que tiene,
vuelve el rostro a la puerta y las espaldas
al que espero tres horas cara a cara⁶⁵. (234 – 238)

In *El veneno y la triaca* we find this rule applied with rigor. The entire play consists of 1665 verses, but the administration of medication, healing and ending happens in the last 200 verses. The Princess will take the sacraments and after that, Calderón only allows her one more entry in which she explains her understanding of what has happened:

Jeroglífico hermoso, en quien se vierte
una copia de fruta guarnecida,
una cruz bella en púrpura teñida
y un cadáver postrado a su error fuerte,
un pan, que en carne viva se convierte,
un vino, que ya es sangre su bebida:
¡hazme antídoto docto de mi vida
el veneno ignorante de mi muerte!
Tendré, si el árbol fruto da divino,
si la cruz rojo humor corre sangriento,

⁶⁵ Lope de Vega's *Arte nuevo de escribir comedias de este tiempo* (1609).

si el cadáver recibo, peregrino,
si pasman vino y pan mi Entendimiento,
en fruta, cruz, cadáver, pan y vino,
salud, consuelo, vida y sacramento. (1566 – 1579)

Calderón does not use many verses to focus on the Princess's process of understanding. Rather, he prefers to use this process to insist on the sacramental meaning: "un pan que en carne viva se convierte, // un vino, que ya es sangre su bebida" (1570–1571). Her understanding is stated in the rhetorical opposition of *docto* (learned) and *ignorant*. The lesson is learned when ignorance is eliminated: "¡hazme antídoto docto de mi vida // el veneno ignorante de mi muerte!" (1572–1573). The playwright uses again the metaphor to imply this new knowledge, linking *erudite* and *antidote*, and opposing them to the binomial pairing of *ignorant* and *venom*. Moreover, once again Calderón plays with Entendimiento as a character, but also as a faculty of the soul, and therefore, the Princess' understanding, when she says: "si pasman vino y pan mi Entendimiento" (1577). Wine and bread have not only cured her; they have also amazed and enlightened her. As the only truth is God, having met him through grace dispensed through the sacraments has helped the Princess to gain knowledge. Calderón had the Princess end her last entry with a recollection in this speech of terms previously distributed, including concepts like health and consolation: "en fruta, cruz, cadaver, pan y vino, // salud, consuelo, vida y sacramento" (1578–1579).

Because, what is a sin? The catechism of the Catholic church says that sin is “an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as ‘an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.’”⁶⁶ Sin, as a violation of a law, God’s law, is primarily interpreted as a judicial matter, but the fact that it self-injures the person is also related to the lack of understanding. That is the ultimate structural support of the metaphor sin-disease. According to this system of beliefs, both of them damage the human being.

Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics* reasons that every activity must aim toward the ultimate good, and that the ultimate aim of human life should be living well or happiness. This happiness can only be attained through the cultivation of virtues. And virtues can be learned through the method of repetition and correction, which makes them a practical discipline. Aristotle also reminds us that this cultivation can only be successful through the application of the *phronesis*, the practical wisdom we mentioned before.

⁶⁶ Augustine, *Contra Faustum Manicheum* 22: *Patrologia Latina* 42, 418; Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 71,6. Cited in www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a8.htm. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

Virtue is therefore a well-monitored practice aimed at the ultimate good.

Aquinas identifies sin as something contrary to virtue, therefore sin is contrary to good.⁶⁷ He adds:

But it must be observed that the nature of a thing is chiefly the form from which that thing derives its species. Now man derives his species from his rational soul: and consequently whatever is contrary to the order of reason is, properly speaking, contrary to the nature of man, as man; while whatever is in accord with reason, is in accord with the nature of man, as man. Now "man's good is to be in accord with reason, and his evil is to be against reason," as Dionysius states (Div. Nom. iv). Therefore human virtue, which makes a man good, and his work good, is in accord with man's nature, for as much as it accords with his reason: while vice is contrary to man's nature, in so far as it is contrary to the order of reason.⁶⁸

Does the Princess understand the lesson of the play? We have seen her last words. But we also know that she recovers from her disease, and that she is happy, as the play ends with the convention of the marriage between both protagonists. Calderón does not want to insist on the second term of the allegory, the one relating to the spiritual truth, because in his sources the idea of goodness, reason and virtue, as opposed to sin are so intricate, he does not need to insist on it; neither from a philosophical point of view, nor from a dramatic perspective. The self-damage has been ended. The sin-disease has been repaired thanks to the intervention of Understanding,

⁶⁷ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 71.

⁶⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I-II, q. 71.

and the recovery of health-reason can only result in the Princess' understanding of the event.

5. 2. 3. Uncertainty, Anticipations and Suspense

Cervantes write in chapter 48 of *Don Quixote*: "Hanse de casar las fábulas mentirosas con el entendimiento de los que las leyeren, escribiéndose de suerte que, facilitando los imposibles, allanando las grandezas, suspendiendo los ánimos, admiren, suspendan, alborocen y entretengan. [Plots in fiction should be wedded to the understanding of the reader, and be constructed in such a way that, reconciling impossibilities, smoothing over difficulties, keeping the mind on the alert, they may surprise, interest, divert, and entertain, so that wonder and delight joined may keep pace one with the other.]"⁶⁹ Calderón understands that even in such a well-known story, suspense has to be present. As we have seen, one of the main differences between reality and narrative mimesis, or at least conventional narrative mimesis, is the fact that in mimesis, uncertainty is kept to a minimum. If it exists at all it is part of the literary device. Sabine Gross says: "any certainty in narrative fiction is an effect within a fictional construction, neither factual nor verifiable."⁷⁰ Religion can be considered a narration in which the relations between cause and effect derive from certain rules,

⁶⁹ Translated by John Ormsby, vol 2., p. 376.

⁷⁰ Gross, Sabine. "Get Real: Narrative and Uncertainty in Fiction." *Time and Uncertainty*, edited by Paul Andre Harris and Michael Crawford. Brill, 2004, p. 60.

which allow us to control the outcomes of our lives. The Bible is a narration in which the different behaviors have different outcomes, ending in the final outcome of the Judgement. In this sense, religion is a device that allows us to cope with the uncertainty of life.⁷¹ We could qualify the history of Christianity as an attempt to clarify those points in which the seminal texts seem to contradict themselves or fail to present a very clear cause-effect relationship. It is also an attempt to create a universe of the most perfect possible knowledge in which the system reaches the maximum steadiness, through the relationships between the pieces of information, which is known as systematic theology in Christian theology. In the same way, most of the history of literature has tried to convey these steady universes, with their own inner rules that allow prediction, which is crucial not only for understanding the text, but also to accomplish the pedagogical value of the work.⁷²

As we know, there is little uncertainty in *autos sacramentales* for the reasons we have explained: inherent and essential control of the author over the events of the plot, the attempt to present a coherent universe in which it is easy to anticipate consequences because the rules are clear, and the repetition of a plot that always ends

⁷¹ For more information about theories contemplating religion as a coping device, see chapter "Religion and the Mediation of Death Fear", subepigraph "Religion as a means of coping" by Michael R. Lemming in *Handbook of Death and Dying*. Edited by Clifton D. Bryant. SAGE Publications, 2003.

⁷² Recently, this quest for certainty in literature tends to disappear as C. Namwali Serpell has studied in *Seven Types of Uncertainty*. Harvard University Press, 2014.

the same way, with the (almost always present) redemption of the protagonists as a fundamental part of the message. However, as Nikos Miltsios proposes:

even if the readers' uncertainty concerning the main events of a story is removed when the outcome is well known or after it has been foreshadowed or foretold to them or all of the above, it is the anxiety the readers feel about the smaller and separate episodes that arises and can be identified" (484).

This is called the "paradox of suspense", when the ending of the story is well known but still the audience feels suspense. This responds also to the necessary balance between entropy and redundancy that every story has to present to still be attractive to the audience. Suspense is related to expectation, anticipation and prediction, and depends on areas of the brain related to social cognition and predictive inference.⁷³ For this reason, the audience has to be able to recognize general patterns that allow them to infer possible outcomes, but at the same time, it has to be unusual enough to surprise the audience and prevent boredom. This is where suspense has a significant role in this type of story. According to Ortony, Clore and Collins, suspense is created by fear, hope, and uncertainty (131). Fear is the displeasure caused by the expectation of an undesirable event, intimately linked to a state of cognitive uncertainty, and hope is the pleasure derived from the expectation of a desirable event. As we see in *El veneno y la triaca*, there is fear and there is uncertainty, but there is also hope, particularly for the

⁷³ Lehne, Moritz, et al. "Reading a Suspenseful Literary Text Activates Brain Areas Related to Social Cognition and Predictive Inference." *PLoS ONE*, vol. 10, no. 5, May 2015, doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0124550. Accessed 5 Jun. 2017.

double identification of the audience with the Princess. The Princess is the heroine, but she is also an explicit alter-ego of every spectator.

There is not much room for suspense, however, as the *autos sacramentales* are short plays in which the necessary events in the cause-effect chain occupy the text without space for other considerations. Calderón uses this intensification of the smaller episodes not only to create suspense but also to expand the scope of his allegory. Calderón follows the chronological order of the events in the plot and anticipates first the negative events, and later the positive events. There is no inversion of linear time, not even in its anticipations. Nevertheless, Calderón uses the character of Inocencia, as a facet of the Princess to create those anticipations, adding meaning to the message. This character is important because Man in Paradise was actually in a state of innocence⁷⁴, and it will be his innocence that is destroyed with the first sin. On the other level of the allegory, Inocencia is the handmaid of the Princess, but as she is the first attribute damaged by the sin, she will be the one carrying the foreshadowing in the play. The first anticipation is when Entendimiento tells her:

Pues el día que agradada
estés de nadie, verás
tu inocencia castigada,
porque al instante saldrás

⁷⁴ Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, I, q. 94.

de palacio desterrada. (117–121)

Later Entendimiento reinforces this idea. This character foreshadows what is going to happen on stage; he anticipates that innocence will turn into malice.

Cortarás mi piedad,

si de inocencia el estado

trueca en malicia [...]. (130–132)

This is the main prolepsis in the play (about the events to occur in the play), in which Calderón literally announces what is going to happen and he uses the future tense. The audience knows very well what they are going to witness because of two factors. First is the recurring knowledge the audience has of the story as we have seen; they know the Biblical account, and they know the genre of the *autos sacramentales*. Second is these prolepsis or anticipation in which the authors foretell the actual events that will happen in the story. Spectators recognize the cues. These events will have the shape that this *argumento* requires, no matter if the *asunto* is always the same. However, Calderón keeps working on creating suspense. Suspense is a discrepancy between the knowledge of the characters and the knowledge of the audience and is related to fear. Also, “neuroscientists have switched to a redefinition of the phenomenon of suspense as: a) an affective state associated with conflict, dissonance, instability and uncertainty, selected to b) create resolution and homeostasis, c) grant an emotional meaning to

events, d) direct anticipation and predict events".⁷⁵ There is great fear involved in this *asunto* because, in these cultural coordinates there is an intense identification between the character of the Princess and the audience. If every hero or anti-hero looks for the audience to feel identified with him or her as a fundamental part of the story-telling essence, in this case, there is an implicit message, extradiegetic, that the Princess tells the (pre)history and the history of every human being. It tells their pre-history because the Princess is telling the story of Adam and Eve, who are the ancestors of every spectator; it tells their history, because every spectator is a sinner who will need redemption by the hand of God. They have been raised in that belief and that is the expectation they have about themselves. The identification is emotional because the audience is participating in the sorrow of this story, but it is also cultural, because there is a long cultural tradition, which requires the audience to understand this plot as their own story. As Hall argues, the audience brings to the performative experience their own cognitive schemas born from personal and cultural identities.⁷⁶ Or as Margaret Greer has pointed out

We must also look to the semiotics of theater for help in understanding how spectators make sense of what they see. Although the creation and communication of meaning in theatrical performances have yet to be satisfactorily described, we can state at least one basic fact: even in the most

⁷⁵ Calabrese, Stefano, and Sara Uboldi. "Suspense is the Key. Narratology, Cognitive Neurosciences and Computer Technology." *Enthymema*, vol. 13, 2015, p. 66.

⁷⁶ Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding." *Culture, Media and Language*, edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe, and Paul Willis. Hutchinson, 1980, pp. 128-38.

realistic performances, the audience sees the stage events with a special kind of double vision, which at once accepts and denies their reality. It views the action as a possible reality –not as the actual experience of the actors, each of whom leads a different life under the name of, say, John Gielgud or Cosme Pérez, but as another “possible world,” “a spacio-temporal elsewhere represented as if actually present for the audience” (Elam 99). The possible world of the drama is made accessible to the audience by over-lapping the spectator's actual world (Eco, “Possible”; Elam 104); hence, this other possible world is necessarily conditioned by the particular experience of the spectators in whose minds it is constructed (Eco, “Semiotics” 115-17).⁷⁷

So, after the prolepsis, Calderón creates suspense with an attempt at creating conflict. Lucero is in love with the Princess and wants to woo her.⁷⁸ With this purpose Lucero approaches Inocencia and she reacts with fear.⁷⁹ There is a part of knowledge in her, however, which is presented as intuition. As she is still Inocencia and not Malicia,

⁷⁷ Greer, Margaret R. “Art and Power in the Spectacle Plays of Calderón de la Barca.” *PLMA*, vol. 104, no. 3, May 1989, p. 333.

⁷⁸ “La alegoresis de la demoníaca oposición al plan divino en términos de enamoramiento súbito por un retrato, celos y rivalidad amorosa reaparece en *La cura y la enfermedad* o *El veneno y la triaca*. El procedimiento es tan osado como eficaz a la hora de que actor y espectador recompongan la solidez unívoca de la lección doctrinal; pero obsérvese como esa capacidad estratégica que Calderón planifica para el personaje, y que sabe que será reforzada por las capacidades técnicas ya asimiladas por el actor, desestabiliza por unos instantes de manera tan compleja como apasionante el mundo aparentemente ortodoxo, sin fisuras, de Dios en escena. Esto sucede porque, al menos mientras el actor encarna esa suposición o hipótesis escénica extraída de otro registro o género dramáticos, se produce una separación o hiato entre la materia sensible y el significado de la alegoría, abriendo espacio a la subjetividad, a las intenciones paralelas y a veces contradictorias con lo puramente canónico. Como ha dicho Viviana Díaz Balsera (71) nos encontramos ante un posible indicio de lo que luego dirá Walter Benjamin: la crisis de la metafísica y del lenguaje que es, en no poca medida, una característica distintiva de la modernidad occidental.” Rodríguez Cuadros, Evangelina. “Deconstruyendo a Dios: el actor frente al auto calderoniano.” *La rueda de la fortuna. Estudios sobre el teatro de Calderón*, edited by Carmen Pinillos and Juan Manuel Escudero. Reichenberger, 2000, p. 103.

⁷⁹ Inocencia expresses her fear in several instances: “De hablar con vos tengo miedo, // que con ninguno hablar puedo;” (251–252); “¡Ay Dios! A espacio, que me dais temor.” (267–268); “Huyendo deste pastor, // que ha dado en que le he de oír, // y desde que le miré // tan gran miedo le cobré, // que aun no sé por dónde huir” (281–285).

she behaves like Christ who was also able to know or perceive the hearts of others (Matthew 22:18). There is something in Lucero that frightens her, but she does not clearly know what it is. This happens because, as Escudero says:

el mismo texto señalará después como, ante la tentación diabólica, demonio (Lucero) e Inocencia son incompatibles, tanto desde un plano conceptual (pues el demonio necesita de la malicia para vencer al Hombre), como desde la propia perspectiva del juego escénico, en una oposición visual de encuentros y desencuentros (27).

Her fear is also made explicit by the character, and it coincides with the fear of the audience: being banned from Paradise: “Porque si os hablo, saldré// desterrada de palacio;” (268–269). Calderón uses this first (and frustrated) attempt at temptation, as a theological device, to show how innocence and evil are incompatible⁸⁰, but also to create the feeling of suspense in the audience. Inocencia rejects Lucero, because of fear, and later, the Princess will do the same because of the arrogant attitude of Lucero. But because Inocencia reacts with fear, perceiving Lucero as a fiery man (242) based on her emotional appraisal (it is no coincidence that the etymology of the word intuition is “knowledge from within”), this is when the suspense is created.

Intuition is a form of knowledge that corresponds to the fast-thinking system, which is rapid, automatic, involuntary, and opposed to the slow-thinking system,

⁸⁰ This does not belong to the cognitive performance of the characters as characters, but to their compability as concepts. One is Inocencia, the other is Evil, showing the constant switch of the terms of the allegory which is necessary to make it functional. Their essential incompatibility is explained by the Princess when she says: “temo con justicia// que éste viene con malicia,// pues huye dél la Inocencia” (311–313), as well as the scenic movement in which Inocencia withdraws when Lucero approaches and the opposite.

which is sluggish, deliberate, and voluntary.⁸¹ This means that Inocencia is experiencing an emotional response based on some knowledge she has and which is not processed rationally. Therefore, the audience knows who Lucero is explicitly, Inocencia knows who Lucero is intuitively, but when the Princess arrives, she does not know who he is. There is a lack of Understanding, and an implicit opposition between Entendimiento and Inocencia, when it comes to this dual thinking process.

The moment when the Princess does not know is the moment in which uncertainty is created, as the first reaction of the Princess is positive towards Lucero. Later, in his arrogant speech, Lucero creates a negative response in the Princess, and the conflict is solved. This rejection is what will cause the revenge of Lucero who will plan with Death how to deceive the Princess.

In the previous definition by Calabrese, we see that suspense is an affective state related to conflict, dissonance, instability and uncertainty. There is conflict, because conflict consists in the clash of two forces, in this case Lucero and the Princess. There is instability because this can become a turning point that changes the course of the story. There is uncertainty because the audience does not know how this event will be solved. There are reasons to believe the Princess will accept Lucero, as the audience knows she sins, and they can make this prediction. There are also reasons to

⁸¹ This idea of two thinking systems stems from William James, but it has been psychologist Daniel Kahneman who has differentiated these two systems in intuition and reasoning, equivalent to fast and slow thinking systems. Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, fast and slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

believe she will reject him, as Inocencia advises against him. As we know, the Princess will reject him because of his arrogance. Before that, Calderón places the suspense in this dialog between the Princess and Inocencia.

INFANTA. Sin razón te has retirado,

Inocencia, que el que ves,

gallardo y discreto es.

¿Por qué temor te ha causado?

Inocencia: No sé; de haberle mirado

le he aborrecido no más;

no haremos paces jamás.

INFANTA. ¿Quién eres (nada te espante),

di?

INOCENCIA. Pues si él pasa adelante,

daré yo otro paso atrás. (344–354)

Later and for more than 200 verses, the same verses in which Lucero explains his past, and he shows his arrogance (354–561), the Princess will learn why Inocencia has rejected him, and the audience will be relieved by the Princess' reaction. This reaction will be preceded by the Princess' gestures as a reaction to Lucero's words even before the explicit uttered rejection from her (which happens in verses 562–619). This first attempt of seduction has caused suspense in the audience. In the last successful

attempt, Calderón does not need to create suspense since he is moving towards the resolution. He makes sure he presents all the necessary information to clarify that the Princess will fall in Lucero's trap this time. It is not only that she accepts every gift, it is also that she is being deceived. Nevertheless, the pure doctrine forces him to introduce again the conflicting information which creates the uncertainty in the audience:

Inocencia warns the Princess again not to eat the forbidden fruit. Again the intuitive system is in charge of this task, while Understanding, the reasoning system, will be in charge of the solving endeavor. As a slower system, Understanding appears last in life, and late in the play.

Despite *autos sacramentales* being a very emotional genre, Calderón de la Barca specifies the importance of rational understanding, personifying it and giving it a prevalent role in the plot. The characteristics of this character are subject to biological traits, not only physical, but also in the manner of processing the information, that have contributed to the creation of an archetype.

The playwright articulates the plot around the well known myth in a way that the audience can understand what happens in real time. This happens by establishing very clear cause-effects relationships and through a selection not only of the events seen on stage, but also of the aspects of those events that help the action to move forward. These relationships appeal to the intellect of the audience, as the cause-effect is processed in a rational way, but often they express themselves through a network of

symbols, signs and meanings that appeal to a more sensitive or emotional perception. Nevertheless, Calderón writes different stories, the medical story, the social story and the spiritual story, in which the cause-effect relationships are coincidental. This helps the audience to easily understand the plot, but the playwright doesn't neglect the inclusion of suspense (entropia in the process of understanding) to keep the story appealing.

6. Conclusion

Autos sacramentales constitute a Spanish Catholic religious genre whose more sophisticated expressions were written in the era of the Counterreformation. These are plays in verse in one act that usually exalt the redemption of sinful man by Christ's sacrifice. The genre reaches its peak in the works penned by don Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681). Among his more than 80 *autos*, we have chosen to center this study on *El veneno y la triaca* (written before 1644), which recreates the myth of the expulsion from Paradise through the allegory as sin as a disease, and the consequent portrayal of Christ as a physician. This *auto* delves into the anthropogenic traits of this myth, explaining the existence of pain and death and the feeling of helplessness and at the same time, it offers a clear example of the coincidental levels on which an allegory, a system of intertwined metaphors, is constructed. Although simple in the deployment of the structure, the allegory depicts several levels: 1- medical: health-disease-recovery; 2- social: belonging-banishment-reintegration; 3-spiritual: grace-sin-recovery of grace. It also depicts a familiar conflict and a love conflict. Calderón is able to integrate all those overlapping levels of the plot in the tripartite structure of order-conflict-restoration of order. Thanks to that we can see how certain concepts from religion, such as a "state of grace" have permeated other fields like "state of health", although the correspondence is not exact. But also thanks to the fact that *El veneno y la triaca* is a psychomachia, that is to say, a plot in which mental properties "fight", we can see how certain mental

faculties work in Calderón's view, as well as how the deployment of those faculties in a dramatic dynamic and in the audience's reception describe phenomena described by contemporary cognitive science.

In order to study the enormous field into which any depiction of cognitive processes must enter, this study follows the Augustinian description of the faculties of the soul: memory, will and understanding. Although mental properties are not limited to these three, and even these three are integrated and influenced by many others, reducing our fundamental mental operations to the three is something common in Catholic doctrine, and Calderón himself will use them as highlighted characters accompanying the soul. In the center of all is, man, the soul, or as in the case of *El veneno y la triaca*, human nature, who in this play takes the form of a Princess, daughter of the Emperor, God, accompanied by her tutor, her Understanding, her maid, her Innocence, and her vassals, the seasons of the year. Confronting her stands, the spiteful lover, the Devil, who in the company of his assistant, Death, will scheme against the Princess, who will fall ill because of an apple. Finally, the Prince, the hero, Christ, who in the form of a physician cures the Princess and marries her. The fact that Understanding is the only faculty of the soul singled out as a character, and the one who comes up with the solution in such a basic conflict, denotes the importance that Calderón gives to the intellect as a way to solve conflicts and as a way to believe rightly. But the other two faculties of the soul are also present in the dramatic structure

as essential to making it understandable and moving, both as mandatory characters of the pedagogical and pathetic *auto sacramental* genre.

When it comes to memory, such a seminal myth in the calderonian version depicts a basic property of narrative: the hero cannot have memory of the conflict. A conflict is not a conflict if the hero has learned how to solve it beforehand. Therefore it has to be a completely new situation. Because the expulsion of man from Paradise is fundamentally the first event in the history of man according to Christian doctrine, in this context there is no better plot to exemplify this property. Calderón underscores this trait, highlighting how this very first decision of the Princess, eating the apple, sets time in motion, and showing that there is no previous memory of anything like that having happened before, thereby staging her confusion over the very new experience of sin and pain and death that come along with it in this cultural lieu. Memory is excuted in its positive and negative expressions. Its negative expressions are the lack of an embodied experience of the conflict; the Princess has never felt sick before, has never had the experience of food poisoning. It will take a while for her to figure out what has happened. But at the same time, the plot also needs positive expressions of the memory to be functional: the Princess has to be able to compare her current state with her past state to derive meaning of what she is experiencing. Similarly, some types of memory (autobiographic, semantic, or working) will be primed in the dramatic plot in order to make it empathetic, while others will be supressed in order to allow the conflict to exist

through the elimination of information. Because gaps are inevitable in narrative, as a mean of condensation, meaningfulness and maintenance of suspense. Also, the author must be aware of what his audience remember from the myth, what must be stated, and how the information in the play must be repeated in order to allow spectators to follow the narrative in real time without the possibility of turning back to the previous scene of the play.

With regard to Will, because *El veneno y la Triaca* refers to the first human decision in this anthropogenic cultural tradition, it refers to many aspects of this decision, especially the requirement of autonomy. This autonomy is reflected by the emancipation from the father, but also in the portrayal of an autonomous individual with autonomous perceptions of reality, consciousness and agency. The individual takes action which cannot happen in any other realm than time and this is why Calderón puts so much emphasis on the idea of history (and time) set in motion with that first decision. This action follows the Aristotelian clasification of causes: the material cause is the apple; the formal cause is that apples are made to be eaten; the efficient cause is the change itself: the apple is eaten; and the final cause, the apple is eaten so Christ can redeem the sinner. But besides that, there is the characterization of the character and her plausibility in the axis of reality of the plot. The conflict arises when we consider the knowledge that the Princess has to claim that decision as her own. The Princess doesn't know that the apple is poisoned, she is ambushed, but

Calderón solves that conflict through negative knowledge; that is, making her refuse to follow the command she knows very well: not eating the forbidden fruit. Still, the playwright needs to dissect what would make a character make that decision, and Calderón makes sure the play states her beliefs, her desires, displays her accidental characterization (an arrogant princess, whose words remind us that pride is the mother of all vices in Christian thought), her substantial characterization (a teenager), and how her attention is manipulated and her action triggered. In this study, all these factors have been compared with current cognitive studies to determine to what extent this narrative is coincidental with the current state of research.

Finally, the third faculty studied is understanding, which as we have said, is fundamental in Calderón's vision. The cognitive properties deployed in this character explain why the archetype of the senex or wise elder, or how the advisor of the hero usually is an old person, illustrating the idea that art mimics nature, that there are mental matrices and that they make some narratives more successful than others because they allow a more direct organic identification than others, besides their cultural context. In order to understand, to derive meaning, there must be a tight relationship between causes and effects in some chain of events, even in the ones narratively portrayed. This also must happen or must be able to be located in a time line. The caveat to this is that sometimes individuals think they understand certain cause-effect relationships that they don't really understand, but that they take for

granted because of their familiarity with them, which would explain the repetition of certain tropes across the centuries. Nevertheless, *El veneno y la triaca* knits a tight fabric of causes and effects and supports them with word and gesture, in a timely manner so the audience can link those phenomena and keep deriving the meaning of what they are witnessing on stage. It is also fundamental that the Princess understands those relationships in order to create a successful plot. Not only because she is the heroine with whom the audience identifies, but also because through the allegory, she is representing on stage every human being according to Christian doctrine, as she is “human nature.” With this aim, *autos sacramentales*, and in this case *El veneno y la triaca* depict a very Newtonian universe in which there is a correspondence between actions and consequences, which reinforces the idea of a normative universe, that not only works to implement the rules of the Catholic doctrine, but that at another level, alleviates uncertainty as one of the less cherished states of the human psyche. Although Calderón plays with that uncertainty to keep his drama appealing and alive, by the means of conventional dramatic art, he knows that the end of the play has to arrive at a new steady order, that in this case is a happy one, in order to achieve the exaltation of the doctrine.

In sum, *El veneno y la triaca*, in its perfect simplicity, reveals itself as a magnificent text not only to exemplify the basic tenets of the dramatic art, but also as a valuable resource to study how decisions are made by humans, and therefore

represented in fictional humans. It incorporates many fundamentals of the Western philosophical tradition, and thanks to current research it helps us to understand the network of influences among the different Western epistemological approaches to understanding human behavior at a cognitive level.

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Biography

Alejandra Juno Rodríguez Villar was born in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, Spain. She got her B.A in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and her PhD in History of Theater in the Universidad of Santiago de Compostela en 2005. Besides that, she holds a Master in Cinema and Theater Studies in the University of A Coruña (2007). She has published two scholar articles: “El triple desarrollo de Segismundo ontogenia, filogenia y determinismo social” in *Anuario Calderoniano ACAL 5. Iberoamericana* Vervuert. Madrid, 2012, and “A cyberpunk version of *Life is a dream* at Duke University” in *Comedia Performance*, 2014. She has received several grant and fellowships, among them: Competitive Dissertation Fellowship 2013-2014 - Duke Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies – MEDREN; the DIBS – Duke Institute of Brain Sciences training fellowship, 2013; the Romance Studies Department fellowship, Duke University, 2013; the Summer Research Fellowship. Graduate School. Duke, 2013; the Duke University Center for International Studies Graduate Awards for Research and Training, 2013; and a Travel grant for the SLSA Conference, 2012. She was Organizer Assistant of the PERC (Performance and Embodied Research Colloquium) at Duke University, 2009-2012 and the Research Assistant of the Neurohumanities Research Group at Duke 2012-2014, including two Summer Courses in Paris. She is member of Member of AISO, Asociación Internacional Siglo de Oro; Member of AITENSO, Asociación Internacional Teatro Español y Novohispano de los Siglos de

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