

of an English king in the mire of a dungeon and the apparent triumph of the two arch-deceivers, it is hard to resist the sense that England, too, has become hell.

TRAGEDY AND SHARED-GUILT: A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO *OTHELLO* AND *EL PINTOR DE SU DESHONRA*

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The existence of a clear-cut definition of what we should understand by "tragedy" has traditionally convinced many readers and scholars of the inadequacy of considering Calderón's plays, especially his **dramas de honor**, as tragedies. "Honour" has been taken to be, up to the sixties, an especially inappropriate subject for a tragedy, and thus, by virtue of the confusion between *theme and meaning*, plays such as *El pintor de su deshonra* have been denied the status of tragedy. Following Alexander Parker in *La imaginación y el arte de Calderón*¹, when I speak of Calderón's concept of tragedy, I don't refer to "una serie de normas formales, sino a la perspicacia en cuanto a los problemas del sufrimiento y el mal que un gran dramaturgo aporta en su exploración de la experiencia humana"². Parker states the main structural elements that we can find in Calderón's **comedias** and, among others, he comments upon the unreality of the characters and the tragic components in the theme and the form. My point here is that, through an analysis of Calderón's *El pintor de su deshonra*³ and Shakespeare's well known tragedy *Othello*⁴, regardless of formal norms, we can find elements that invite us to admit that there is a coincidence between both plays. If, in *Othello*, being a tragedy according to the traditional standards, we discover a common element with Calderón's play, and this element is among those so relevant to the definition of tragedy as *guilt*, then we have both an unexpected similarity (a starting point for a fuller comparative study) and an interesting criterion for the study of both texts. Modern theory has already established that the tragic hero doesn't have to cause his own downfall: we accept the existence of a primal injustice "in the heart of the Universe" (as Parker put it); the sense of injustice that we can find in Calderonian tragedy has more to do with some sort of *shared-guilt* than with the classical focusing on the hero.

1 Parker, Alexander A. *La imaginación y el arte de Calderón*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1991.

2 Cf. A. Parker, p. 247.

3 Calderón, Pedro. *El pintor de su deshonra en Obras completas*. Vol. ii. Madrid: Aguilar, 1991. All references to this edition.

4 Shakespeare, William, *Othello*. London: Penguin, 1968 (1st ed.). All references to this edition.

All the characters (or the most relevant ones, at least), are somehow guilty, and take part in the final tragic catastrophe. This doesn't seem very difficult to prove in some of Calderón's plays, but we do find some resistance when we want to apply it to *Othello*; Shakespeare's play has been a "tragedy of love and hate" for Elliott, a "tragedy of jealousy" for Campbell, a "tragedy of honour" for Wilson, a "tragedy of self-justification" for Heilman, and racism, metamorphosis, honesty and sheer evil have also been studied in connection with the play by countless others. In this context, I attempt a combination of many of these elements applied to most of the characters of the play, to show that they are, as in Calderón's *El pintor de su deshonra*, guilty in one way or other.

The marriage between D. Juan and Serafina in *El pintor de su deshonra* has an obvious flaw; it is a doomed union from the beginning, and D. Juan Roca himself, in the first ninety lines of the first **jornada**, makes it clear. A convinced bachelor, there are two main reasons behind his sudden decision to get married:

Pues siendo todo eso así,
ya rendido a la atención
de mis deudos, o a que fuera
lástima que se perdiera,
faltándome sucesión,
un mayorazgo que creo
que es ilustre y principal
y no de poco caudal,
correspondí a su deseo⁵.

His other reason is no less superficial: Serafina's beauty, that will make three men in the play lose control over their actions, and, significantly, will be an unsurpassable difficulty for D. Juan as a painter: "(mi pecho ingrato...) después que vio a Serafina, / tan del todo se rindió, / que aún yo no sé si soy yo." (I, 81-3). This, however, doesn't mean that D. Juan won't love Serafina eventually, but the marriage is unfortunate from the beginning. For Parker, the marriage is unreal because Serafina doesn't love D. Juan⁶, and he links this with the significance of painting as a substitute for reality; I could add that it is doubly unreal, for it links two persons with very different ages and motives for the marriage. The dramatic implications of Juanete's stories are enormous; they anticipate many of the problems that the play develops, and act as a kind of verbal and logic connector that goes through the text. Thus, his story of the "chicken and wine" points at the essential disequilibrium in this actual marriage:

Lo mismo me ha sucedido
en la boda, pues me han dado
moza novia y desposado
no mozo: con que habrá sido
fuerza juntarlos al fiel,
porque él con ella doncella,
o él la refresque a ella,
o ella le caliente a él.

(I, 229-36)

And most important of all, the main flaw of this marriage lies on the fact that Serafina doesn't love D. Juan, and has married him only when she has known that her real love, D. Alvaro, has died ("Viuda de ti me he casado" (I, 604)).

There are many elements here to support our point about shared-guilt; to begin with, we have D. Juan's prejudices to marriage, and his arguable reasons to get married; but more dangerous is Serafina's attitude: she loves another man, but since she has tried to maintain this relation in secret, nobody knows it and, consequently, she has to accept D. Juan. The apparition of Alvaro will create a "divided duty" (not very different to that of Desdemona in *Othello*): to his legal husband, and to the man to whom she promised her eternal loyalty. And Alvaro is also guilty for not letting Serafina free: he won't accept the new situation. So, an excess of prudence on the part of Serafina, selfishness on D. Juan's, and lack of prudence and selfishness also on Alvaro's part, will initiate the chain of errors that will create the tragedy.

Regardless of what many authors have said, it seems arguable to consider that Othello and Desdemona are not deeply in love. Of their relation we only have the account they make, and this only proves that, in spite of being so culturally different, they loved each other. In fact, we know that Desdemona loves and trusts Othello till the end, and that, furthermore, she was "half the wooer" (in Othello's terms) since she realized he could not do it. I cannot agree with Elliott when he claims that Othello's love was not so deep as to give the first step⁷; and to claim that their union was an ill-fated one because of some sort of "disproportion" or rashness (a sedentary woman momentarily attracted by a "wheeling stranger"), seems to me an excess in interpretation. Iago's attack on Othello achieves its maximum effect when it uses the social difference as a weapon, especially his references to the customs of the "Venetian ladies" ("I know our country disposition well, etc..." -III,iii,199-202), and his allusions to the racial (and, consequently here, social) aspects of such a marriage ("One may smell in such a will most rank, / Foul disproportion, thoughts unnatural"

⁵ *El pintor de su deshonra*, (I, 56-64).

⁶ Cf. A. Parker, p. 259.

⁷ Elliott, G.R. *Flaming Minister*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1953; pp. 28 et ff.

(III.iii.230-1)). Social difference constitutes the essence of Iago's plan to divide Desdemona and Othello, and so, by using it, he gives us a clue to where the weakest point of their marriage may be. Eldred Jones, in *Othello's Countrymen*, seems to have hit the nail on the head when he states that Othello, "being a Moor... starts off in a position of social disadvantage in relation to her"⁸. He was socially her inferior, despite his "services" to the State, and this fact was painfully evident for Othello in the constant allusions to his colour⁹. The marriage could have been successful if both, Othello and Desdemona (but especially he), had known each other better, and if Othello had had a correct notion of his honour; if they had been more aware of their difference, and if Othello had acted with more prudence, and Desdemona with more perspicacity.

Difficulty stems from this, and stays as a latent danger, ignored but existent, till it appears with all its dramatic potential to bring about the tragedy. This doesn't mean that, as it happens in *El pintor de su deshonra*, this one is a marriage that should have never taken place. But, as it happens in Calderón's play, an unfortunate marriage, carrying the seed of its own destruction, lies at the heart of the tragedy. The two cases, and the reasons of the failure of both marriages, are different, but the way they condition the action of the plays is very similar; and, more interesting, these failures are a direct consequence of certain faults committed by different characters who, in some way, and as we have seen with relation to both plays, can be said to be "guilty".

I mentioned above Othello's incorrect notion of honour as one of the reasons for the failure of his marriage. Obviously, and as E. M. Wilson, among some others, has pointed out, honour is relevant for many other reasons in *Othello*. For Wilson, the sense of honour is the foundation of the play, and "Othello acts in the same way as Calderón's savage husbands"¹⁰. All the important characters in the play have some sort of relation with honour, and a great part of the action of the play (perhaps all of it) can only be correctly understood if we analyse this concept¹¹. Cassio exemplifies the subjection to the code of honour, or to the

strict rules of an honourable life in (II, iii, 255-7). Iago plays with the concept, showing a different view depending on who he is speaking to, and ignoring it in his relation with all the characters, as his monologues show. He neither believes in honour, nor can understand why others respect it to the extreme of risking their lives; paradoxically he is considered as an honourable man by almost everyone in the play, and this will be one of the reasons of his partial success: a man unconcerned with this topic and consequently free to perform the most dishonourable actions. Brabantio is worried by what Kenneth Muir has called "parental honour"¹² (I, i, 161-3) and Desdemona refers to her "honesty" (IV, ii, 64). Finally, Othello acts to recover the honour he thinks he has lost. Thus, he is afraid of being a "...fixed figure for the time of scorn / To point his slow unmoving finger at!" (IV, ii, 53), and explains his deed as an obligation imposed on him by his condition of man of honour:

An honourable murderer, if you will:
For naught did I in hate, but all in honour.
(V, ii, 291-2)

El pintor de su deshonra does also contain an enormous amount of references to this topic, by different characters and applied to situations similar to those that we find in *Othello*. There are general allusions to conventional behaviour: greetings, obligations and courtesies, between D. Juan (who is thus characterized as a Spanish nobleman, with all the connotations that this has) and other characters (namely, D. Luis, D. Pedro, and the Prince of Ursino) (I 1-5; 108-12 and 296-9). Serafina, D. Alvaro and D. Juan seem especially concerned with the concept, and their actions will be conditioned in different ways by the pressure that public opinion makes on them. Serafina equates Honour with Existence and Life, as the loss of the first implies the loss of the other two (I, 1001-4); she explains the battle that takes place within her between honour and pain, and her obligation to hide her feelings in the name of her reputation (I, 1039-48). D. Alvaro ignores the constraints that this concept imposes, or is meant to impose, on him, and thus he will bring about the tragedy; like in the case of Iago, here a lack of respect for honour is the cause of part of the tragedy. He is reproached by Serafina:

.... Tú mismo sabes
mi honor, mi altivez, mi brío;
y pues nadie como tú
examinó en los principios
lo ilustre de mis respetos,

8 Jones, Eldred. *Othello's Countrymen: the African in English Renaissance Drama*. London: Oxford University Press, 1965; p. 94.

9 See *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*. Vol. 7. (G. Bullough ed.). New York: Columbia University Press, 1973; es. pp. 207-18.

10 See Wilson, Edward M. "A Hispanist Looks at *Othello*" in *Spanish and English Literature of the 16th and 17th Centuries*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980; esp. pp. 204-6; see also Watson, C.B. *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honour* (1954).

11 "I only refer here to the most relevant examples connected with honour and related to the most important characters. I do not mention, for example, Iago's "honesty", Bianca's virtue/lack of virtue, Emilia's digressions on these topics or the many allusions to Othello's military reputation, his so-called "services" to the state.

12 Muir, Kenneth. "Introduction" to *Othello*; pp. 7-44.

lo honrado de mis desvíos,
 lo atento de mis decoros,
 lo noble de mis designios,
 a ti mismo te examina
 en mi favor por testigo,
 porque [si] a ti mismo tú
 no te vences, será indicio
**que de ti mismo olvidado,
 no te acuerdas de ti mismo.**

(II, 1391-1404)

Obviously, the concept of honour that Serafina is handling here has a lot to do with the honour that Othello and Cassio value most, the one that Cassio referred to as: "the immortal part of myself" (II; iii, 256); this concept was frequently studied by moral essayists in the XVI and XVII centuries, and Ashley in *Of honour*, among others, characterized it (following Aristotle) as "the reward of vertue", which is the most typical expression used to imply that this concept of honour is related to an honest and virtuous life¹³. This honour was considered as a positive quality by philosophers, and consequently it was appreciated by all kind of moralists both in England and Spain, in direct opposition to other meanings of this same term. Dishonour, then, from this view, means that virtue has been lost, with the obvious consequences of the loss of social consideration, and, consequently, of identity (D. Juan's "pues no soy mientras vengado / no esté;" -III, 2643-4-) (14). The lack of adherence to a behaviour socially considered as "honourable" or "virtuous" is common for D. Alvaro and Iago; Alvaro ignores the fact that Serafina is married now, and first compromises her fame and later destroys it by his impulsive actions. Iago doesn't ignore reality, but "creates it out of his discourse" (as Sinfield puts it), and equally destroys Desdemona's reputation, if only in her husband's eyes. Thus, both characters are, although for different reasons, equally dangerous and responsible for the tragedy: they are active or passive agents of enormous consequences in the play.

Quite a different matter is the honour that we find when we study Othello's and D. Juan's discourse. If Cassio, Serafina or Desdemona use this "honour as virtue" notion, these two characters (from many points of view, the most

13 Ashley, Robert. *Of Honour* (San Marino (Ca.): The Huntingdon Library, 1947); p. 38. For a brief introduction to this topic the following readings are aessential: Aristóteles, *Ética a Nicómaco* in *Obras completas* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1968); Cicerón, *Sobre los deberes (De officiis)* (Madrid: Gredos, 1987); Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named the Gouernour* (London: Everyman's Library, 1937); Fray Antonio de Guevara, *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* (Madrid: Clásicos Castellanos, 1928); and Lodowicke Bryskett, *A Discourse of Civill Life* (London: 1944).

important in their respective plays), although being also aware of this concept of honour, show a special concern for honour as "reputation", connected with the sexual behaviour of the women directly dependant on them (in this case, their wives). This second notion of honour is derived from the classical one we have just analysed briefly, but departs from it since it stresses public opinion and ignores a man's deep trust in his own merits (virtue, braveness, magnanimity etc...). This is the honour that obliges a man to defend his wife's chastity and good name at all costs, that imposes the duel, and private and public revenge to restore reputation, and that places dignity not in one person's actions but in the concept that the community has of that person (as Peristiany and Caro Baroja have explained). This savage rule is not willingly accepted by Juan Roca or Othello, but they must conform to it. D. Juan protests bitterly against this obligation:

¡Mal haya el primero, amén,
 que hizo ley tan rigurosa!
 Poco del honor sabía
 el legislador tirano,
 que puso en ajena mano
 mi opinión y no en la mía.

(II, 84-89)

D. Juan refers, quite appropriately, to a law, and this is exactly the image that Shakespeare gives and the role that Othello assumes: he sees himself as Justice, being at the same time Defence, Prosecutor, Judge and Executioner in the "It is the cause" speech (V, ii, 1-22). For Othello, "A hornèd man's a monster and a beast" (IV, i, 62); and the argument that finally makes him forget the difficulty of killing someone he loves so much ("the pity of it" -IV, i, 194-) is Iago's "...if it touch you not, it comes near nobody". (IV, i, 197-8). D. Juan also sees clearly that he won't have honour until he kills his wife and her lover (whoever he may be), being this something that only affects him: "Dadme, / ¡cielos!, o muerte o venganza." (II, 2090-1). Here, then, we have total adherence to honour, in direct contrast to what we saw in relation to Alvaro and Iago, but in this case it is adherence to a wrong concept of honour; it is this acceptance of the obligations that a certain notion of honour imposes on them that completes the tragedy in both plays. Paradoxically, but logically also if we accept a certain reading of these plays, lack, and an excess, of adherence to honour (although to different kinds of honour), makes different characters share the guilt of the tragic events: Alvaro and Iago, Othello and Juan Roca, and also Desdemona, Serafina or Brabantio, allow the tragedy to happen through their different and complementary attitudes towards honour.

E.M. Wilson stated in "Towards an appreciation of *El pintor de su deshonor*"¹⁴ that **prudence** was the main concern of Calderón in this play. Certainly, a great part of what I have presented above can be reduced to the opposition prudence vs. lack of prudence in the behaviour of the most relevant characters, not only in Calderón's tragedy but also in *Othello*. In "A Hispanist looks at *Othello*" Wilson introduces this idea in Shakespeare's play: **As long as Iago acts cautiously, acts with worldly prudence, his schemes succeed;... When he has to stake all on a single throw -the death of Cassio- he comes to grief**¹⁵. It doesn't seem difficult to state that Cassio acts without prudence in his unorthodox petition to Desdemona to intercede for him with Othello, and she does the same accepting to act as an intermediary. Othello obviously acts imprudently when he kills his wife, although according to the code of honour the imprudence lies on the fact that he killed her without proof of her guilt. Alvaro gives, as I tried to prove above, the best example of an imprudent behaviour; as a consequence of this, a married woman is wooed and later abducted. The prince's sudden passion, D. Juan and Serafina's unfortunate marriage, plus secrecy, self-deception and a certain degree of selfishness, are other elements that should be analysed in full detail, for they help to have a clear idea of the way guilt in the tragedy is shared between different characters.

I have presented a certain reading of these two plays trying to highlight different elements connected with their tragic structure. Unlike in classical or traditional tragedy, we have seen how guilt is not within the nature of one single tragic hero, but rather we can find a whole series of main and secondary characters sharing different degrees of responsibility for the tragic resolution. *Honour and prudence* seem to be two common topics, which, while presenting some differences in Shakespeare's and Calderón's plays, seem to fulfill similar functions and lead to the same end: the production of a very specific type of tragedy. Comparison, then, is possible on these premises, as a starting point that allows a fuller study in common of plays by these two authors.

EL LAÚD EN EL RENACIMIENTO INGLÉS

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Gracias a la posición históricamente predominante de la religión podemos conocer con bastante exactitud la música sagrada del pasado. No ocurre así con la música popular coetánea de la que poco se conoce. Distintas fuentes nos hacen referencias a este tipo de música o a los instrumentos que intervenían en su ejecución, pero de una manera un tanto vaga e imprecisa. El estudio de los instrumentos antiguos que aparecen en códices, esculpidos o en manuscritos desde la Edad Media hasta entrado el Renacimiento es un tema complejo. Habrá que tener en cuenta que, más que de instrumentos aislados se trata de familias de instrumentos unidos entre sí por características definitorias.

En las líneas siguientes procederé a analizar la música Renacentista en general y la inglesa en particular, girando, principalmente, en torno al laúd, instrumento que relacionaré con otros dos de la época, la guitarra y la vihuela.

Durante el Renacimiento se producirá principalmente un cambio en la concepción de la música, motivado sobre todo por la aparición de un nuevo concepto de público. En la Edad Media no había separación entre *quién* ejecutaba la música y a *quién* iba dirigida, al ser integrados ambas funciones en la liturgia. Con el desarrollo progresivo de las formas profanas, y con la laicización de la música se origina esta escisión. La consecuencia fundamental de todo esto será una nueva exigencia en los compositores: agrandar al público, satisfacer sus gustos pero sin perder en ningún momento el equilibrio, la serenidad y la mesura renacentista.

Se pondrá especial interés en las palabras a las que ponen música y los compositores empezarán a fijarse en la prosodia del lenguaje hablado a la hora de musicarlo. Se puede encontrar en esta tendencia un intento de representar las emociones por medio de la música, de conmover al alma que nos recuerda las doctrinas damonianas y aristotélicas del *ethos*.

El compositor se ve obligado a buscar melodías que atraigan al oyente ya que ahora no les mueve el fervor religioso que antes aseguraba su presencia. Los instrumentos se vuelven cada vez más complicados y perfectos, lo que obliga al ejecutante a una mayor instrucción para conseguir un perfecto dominio.

14 Cf. E. Wilson, pp. 65-90.

15 Cf. E. Wilson, p. 218.