The *comedia de privanza* in Spain in the Reign of Philip III

Annabel Rowntree

Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford

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SHORT ABSTRACT

This study examines the *comedia de privanza* in Spain in the reign of Philip III (1598-1621). The accession of Philip III to the Spanish crown saw the raising of the Duke of Lerma to office as the most powerful *privado*, or favourite, in Spain since the infamous medieval *privado*, Don Álvaro de Luna. In response, Spain’s *corrales* saw an explosion of plays that explored every nuance, both political and philosophical, of the nature of *privanza*. This study traces the development of this theatrical genre, focussing on the works of one minor and three major playwrights: Salucio del Poyo, Lope de Vega, Vélez de Guevara and Mira de Amescua. It identifies Salucio del Poyo as the first playwright to pen a *comedia de privanza*, and analyses the literary features that he established and that would become characteristic of the genre. The following chapters will show how each playwright, in his own way, both imitated and innovated upon Poyo’s initial examples in order to suit his own abilities and agenda. It demonstrates the individual traits of each playwright, and the ways in which they each responded to the events they saw unfurl in Philip’s court, but it also attempts to show the overarching development of the genre as Philip’s reign progressed. Therefore, the thesis seeks to answer the following questions: what are the literary and thematic characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* as established in the earliest years of Philip III’s reign by Salucio del Poyo? How do later playwrights develop and innovate on the first examples of the genre? And finally, what was the relationship between these plays and contemporary political thought and events?

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LONG ABSTRACT

This study examines the *comedia de privanza* in Spain in the reign of Philip III (1598-1621). The accession of Philip III to the Spanish crown saw the raising of Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, the Duke of Lerma, to office as the most powerful *privado*, or favourite, in Spain since the infamous medieval *privado*, Don Álvaro de Luna. Events in Spain’s court sparked the interest of writers and political commentators, all of whom sought to explore the role of the *privado*, the limits his power should have, and the nature of the relationship between the *privado* and the king who favoured him. These writings included those by playwrights, and accordingly, Spain’s *corrales* saw an explosion of plays that explored every nuance, both political and philosophical, of the nature of *privanza*. The first half, and especially the first two decades, of the seventeenth century saw the greatest number of *comedias de privanza*. By the 1640s, interest in it had waned, and there are fewer examples. Given, then, that the years of Philip III’s reign were those that saw the greatest number of *comedias de privanza*, and that it was this monarch’s reestablishment of the office of *privado* that sparked the interest of political thinkers and playwrights alike, the years 1598-1621 provide the time frame for the study in question. Within these years, we find some of the finest examples of the *comedia de privanza*, by playwrights who both copy and imitate earlier incarnations of the genre, and those who innovate upon and rework it. The study will analyse one minor and three major playwrights following a broadly chronological structure (although there is some inevitable overlap): Salucio del Poyo (whose plays date 1600-5), Lope de Vega (1599-1610), Vélez de Guevara (1613-15) and Mira de Amescua (1610-25).

The prevalence of the theme of *privanza*, or the use of a *privado* on stage, in the first half of the seventeenth century, has long been recognised by scholars of the *comedia nueva*. However, in spite of this, a comprehensive study exploring the *comedia de privanza* as a genre within its own right does not yet exist. Critics have tended to use the *comedia de privanza* to reflect on broader thematic concerns, such as MacCurdy (1987) who uses it to explore the notion of Spanish tragedy, or Gutiérrez (1975) who uses it to explore the theme of fortune. Alternatively, thanks to the *comedia de privanza*’s tendency to draw its plots from Spanish history, critics have taken it to be a subgenre of other *comedia nueva* genres, such as the *comedia genealógica*

or the *drama histórico*, such as Ferrer Valls (1993, 1998, 2001 and 2004). Again, although *privanza* is often cited as an important thematic concern of each of the playwrights under consideration in this study, and their *comedias de privanza* have been explored in the context of their body of work as a whole, a larger, comparative study, looking at the literary characteristics of the genre as well as its relationship to contemporary events and thought, across playwrights and across the reign of Philip III, does not exist.

This is the critical gap that this study seeks to fill. It identifies the first examples of the *comedia de privanza* by the *murciano* playwright, Damián Salucio del Poyo, and demonstrates within his work how he invents the *comedia de privanza*, and the features that he established that would become characteristic of the genre. The following chapters will show how each playwright, in his own way, both imitated and innovated upon Poyo's initial examples for his own ends, demonstrating the development and increasing sophistication with which playwrights approached the issue of *privanza* and its attendant philosophical and political debates. It will demonstrate the individual traits of each playwright, but also attempt to show the overarching development of the genre as Philip's reign progressed. The study seeks to answer the following questions: what are the literary and thematic characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* as established in the earliest years of Philip III's reign by Salucio del Poyo? How do later playwrights develop and innovate on the first examples of the genre? And finally, what was the relationship between these plays and contemporary political thought and events?

This study will argue that *comedias de privanza* share formal and literary characteristics that make them distinct from other *comedias*: their structures are often shaped by the political careers of their protagonists, and they often feature paired protagonists, whose opposing luck highlights this structure. They share a common set of poetic symbols, images and metaphors that illustrate shifting fortunes and neo-stoic values. Often these images are drawn from nature. Thematically, the plays share a common insistence on the frailty of man, and the necessity for reliance on God: protagonists often only reach this understanding through a process of *desengaño*. This emphasis is brought out through the themes of friendship, envy, greed and ingratitude. Taken together, the presence of these characteristics is enough to suggest that the *comedia de privanza* is a type of play that stands apart from other genres. Many of these characteristics are drawn from Poyo's drama, which, generally speaking, is more philosophical in nature. They use the career of the *privado* to reflect on the fickle nature of man, and the

inevitably mutable nature of fortune. He presents us with varying models of the king/favourite relationship, and this is indicative of a playwright coming to terms with the renewed phenomenon that he saw playing out in front of him.

However, although this study will demonstrate that each playwright under examination here had a proven knowledge of Poyo's work, it will argue that each playwright who copied Poyo's work did so to suit their own needs, abilities and agendas. Critics overwhelmingly agree that Poyo's plays lacked the maturity or flair of many of his literary successors, and so whilst his plays are invaluable as first examples, later playwrights would be more successful in honing his nascent attempts into more assured dramaturgy. Each playwright is therefore examined to identify the ways in which he has copied Poyo, but also, to show where he has innovated and improved upon Poyo's initial blueprint. The aim, then, is to chart development within the genre, and identify those characteristics within each play that mean that it constitutes a *comedia de privanza*, but also to demonstrate the individuality of each playwright.

Lope de Vega's *comedias de privanza*, as we might expect from such a gifted playwright, constitute some of the finest examples of the genre. In literary terms we can see his clear debt to Poyo: he takes several features of the original *comedias de privanza*, but furnishes them with more assured poetic unity, more complex images, and even deliberately subverts elements of Poyo's drama. More strikingly, Lope mixed the characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* with other theatrical genres and conventions. This demonstrates Lope's creativity and innovation and the constantly evolving nature of theatre in Spain's Golden Age. Lope's work is characterised by a clear political engagement with court, born from his position as outsider; his works clearly reflected the time at which he was writing, during the court's move to Valladolid. His work demonstrates his relationship with the court and courtiers at the time, and his plays are inevitably full of a more pointed political commentary.

In contrast, Vélez de Guevara was writing from within the regime itself, as a member of the Sandoval faction (the Duke of Lerma's son, the Count of Lemos, was his patron, and he was *gentilhombre* within his household), and it is known that his *comedias de privanza* were written and performed for Lerma himself. His work therefore shows us how the *comedia de privanza* was used within the court itself, and by those courtiers who were at the heart of the regime. The political nature of Vélez's work is therefore much more intricate. His creation of *comedias de privanza* that appear to be *comedias de capa y espada* shows how individual playwrights'

personal circumstances influenced the development of the *comedia de privanza* as a genre. For indeed, he uses this generic fusion to offer a more subtle political commentary.

Finally, Mira de Amescua returns to Poyo's initial blueprint in more traditional *comedias de privanza*. However, his imitation allows us to discern the ways in which the genre has developed in the years between Poyo's first *comedias de privanza* and Mira's later attempts. His presentation of friendship in court represents the finest exploration of the issue in the *comedia de privanza*, thanks to his multi-faceted approach, where he contrasts various models of friendship. In addition, he uses these friendships to expose the neo-stoic themes that his *comedias de privanza* emphasise. Moreover, in his handling of the imagery of the genre, we see how Poyo's first attempts have come to full poetic maturity by the end of Philip's reign. Equally, he recrafts Poyo's *Don Álvaro del Luna* work. In so doing, he presents a more mature dramatic offering: his nuanced crafting of his characters, including the king's erosion of self, and Álvaro's perfect process of *desengaño*, is far more dramatically effective than Poyo's originals. Moreover, it is remarkable how in his manipulations of the source material, Mira has managed to reflect the tensions of Philip III's own court at the end of his reign, where Poyo reflected those at the start. Mira's work, especially when compared to Poyo's, shows how the *comedia de privanza* is defined by its close relationship with contemporary political events of Philip's reign.

This latter point highlights the third research question this study attempts to answer: the nature of the relationship between the *comedia de privanza* and contemporary politics. This study will argue that the *comedia de privanza* is intimately linked to its moment of creation. A striking feature of the genre is the very clear reciprocity of ideas it shares with contemporary political thought, as expressed by such thinkers as Juan de Mariana, Francisco de Quevedo and Juan de Santamaría. Moreover, in their manipulation of their source material, the authors under scrutiny here change details and add emphases in order to better reflect events in contemporary politics. That playwrights were attempting to create concrete parallels to specific events cannot be proved: in any case, the often uncertain dates of composition of the plays prevent this argument being made definitely. However, it is essential to note that if playwrights were using the stage to reflect contemporary events, this was not necessarily with the aim of either criticism or approval. It would be more accurate to state that playwrights of the *comedia de privanza* were using current events in order to capture the attention of their audiences. Drawing out these parallels with contemporary events and thought demonstrates that the *comedia de privanza* is

an acutely political genre, that cannot help but inform our understanding of *privanza* and its reception in Spain in Philip's reign. The stage, as well as the tract or the archive, can give us insight into how Spaniards viewed their own political situation and the intellectual concerns it raised. These plays represent an important part of the intellectual thoroughfares of Philip III's reign. Whilst many critics are minded to read historical parallels between the *comedia de privanza* and contemporary history as reductive, this study's contention is that attempting to understand them in isolation from either the ideas of political thinkers, or the events in court at the years of their creation, is to deprive them of important context and to rob them of their considerable force; it is in their ability to participate in these dialogues that their meaning is found.

This study's originality, therefore, comes from being the first of its kind. The sheer volume of *comedias de privanza* demands a dedicated study which teases out their formal features and thematic concerns. This is what this study attempts to do. In tracing its development from its first inceptions, it shows the unity of the genre, but it also shows how each individual playwright adapted these generic features to suit their own dramaturgy. Moreover, it highlights the tight relationship between this genre of *comedia* and the political events that inspired it. It combines literary analysis with historical insight in the hope that in so doing, it offers a new perspective on a much neglected, but rich, area of the Golden Age *comedia*.

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INTRODUCTION

The turn of the seventeenth century was chaotic and turbulent: economic and social unease paired with the accession of Philip III marked a new era of politics. Most strikingly, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, later to become the Duke of Lerma, was raised by the new king to the office of *privado*, or royal favourite, becoming the first such minster in over a century. The early years of the seventeenth century saw an explosion of plays looking at the theme of *privanza*, especially examining the mechanism of the rise and inevitable fall of a political career. It is generally accepted that Damián Salucio del Poyo's work on Don Álvaro de Luna (as explored in Chapter 1 of this study) constitutes the first examples of such plays, after which the greatest playwrights of the age followed suit, including Lope de Vega, Vélez de Guevara, Mira de Amescua, Guillén de Castro, Tirso de Molina, Pérez de Montalbán, Rojas Zorilla, Ruiz de Alarcón, Quevedo and Calderón de la Barca, amongst others[1]. However, by the middle of the century, the theme's popularity had waned once more, corresponding with Olivares' 1643 departure from Spanish government, and increasing doubt over the efficacy of *privanza* as a mode of rule (Malcolm 2017: 2).

Usually, these *comedias* take historical examples from the kings of medieval Iberia, dramatizing the political careers of their favourites, often real or sometimes fictionalised; indeed, frequently drawing from the ballad tradition[2] in which *privanza* is a recurrent theme, these plays often dramatize popular legends that were already known to the play-going public. However, these playwrights tend to manipulate their medieval sources either to improve the poetic or aesthetic harmony of their drama, or better to fit the more modern intellectual concerns of an Early Modern *privanza*. These plays always demonstrate overriding

[1] Both Cauvin (1957) and C. George Peale (2004) provide detailed lists of works that they consider to be *comedias de privanza*. Cauvin lists some 49 titles, and Peale offers 65.
[2] The work of Daniele Crivellari (2010, 2017) explores the role of the ballad tradition in the *comedia de privanza*; see Chapters 1 and 3 of this study for more on this.

philosophical concerns, frequently using the shape of the *privado*'s career to reflect on the broader issues of Fortune and its arbitrary nature, stoicism and *desengaño*.

However, in spite of its popularity amongst the playwrights of the day, the *comedia de privanza* has enjoyed relatively little attention amongst *comedia* scholars: Margaret Wilson (1989) only mentions *privanza* in passing; McKendrick (1989), although citing Mira's *La próspera fortuna de Álvaro de Luna* as an outstanding work, neglects to recognise it as part of a larger body of similar plays; Wilson and Moir (1971) dedicate a page of their study to the *comedia de privanza*, recognising it as an important subgenre and listing some significant works, but fail to go into much detail. Moreover, the qualities listed above have led the *comedia de privanza* to be often neglected as a genre in its own right. Indeed, there are very few dedicated book-length studies on the *comedia de privanza*. Mary Cauvin's 1957 PhD study attempts to categorise and group together those plays that deal with the *privado* theme in a large-scale literary survey. Later, Jesus Gutiérrez (1975) looked extensively at the *comedias de privanza* as explorations of the theme of "fortuna bifrons". Meanwhile Raymond MacCurdy (1987) looks at the *comedia de privanza* with the specific intention of examining the question of tragedy within the *comedia nueva*. C. George Peale (2004) stands alone in contending that the *comedia de privanza* constitutes a free-standing genre. Whilst *privanza* has been seen as prevalent in the early years of the seventeenth century, often it is viewed more as a thematic sub-genre, either within the work of a given playwright[3], or within more recognised *comedia nueva* genres. Those genres that most frequently subsume the *comedia de privanza* are the *drama histórico* or the *comedia genealógica*, thanks to the *comedia de privanza*'s overwhelming use of Spanish history as source material[4].

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[3] See, for instance, Halpern's study of Alarcón (1993), Caparrós Esperante's study of Poyo (1987), Ferrer Valls' studies of Lope (see note 7 below).

[4] The use of the term "genre", especially in Golden Age studies, is complicated. For more on the theory of genre generally, see, Rosmarin (1985), Staiger (1966) and Guillén (1971). The question of genre within *comedia* studies

The use of history in the *comedia nueva* has been richly explored by critics of the Spanish Golden Age[5]. Francisco Ruiz Ramón suggests that the presence of the medieval epic and of Spanish history, both ancient and modern, is one of the defining features of Spanish drama (2000: 128). Meanwhile, Kurt Spang (1998) provides a detailed theoretical definition for historical drama in the Spanish context. However, the frequent manipulations of history by Golden Age playwrights have provoked contrasting critical responses. Serrano (2004) and Arellano (1994 and 1995) nuance the presence of history in Golden Age drama, specifically stating that playwrights did not have as their aim the dissemination of accurate history, but rather used historical sources as a point of departure[6]. Serrano (2004: 10-11) insists that Golden Age writers based their work on strictly Aristotelean values, which for the most part placed poetic concerns above historical ones. Certainly within the *comedia de privanza*, playwrights had recourse to the alteration of their historical sources for poetic or political reasons. Spang defines historical drama thus:

> El drama histórico es una construcción perspectivista estéticamente ordenada de situaciones documentables a caballo entre la ficción y la referencialidad, una construcción dirigida por un determinado autor a un determinado público en un determinado momento (1998: 26).

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is famously challenging. Jonathan Thacker makes it clear that "within the Golden Age itself there is little evidence that dramatists dwelt upon distinctions between genres, let alone sub-genres… Genre was being constantly abused, parodied and reinvented as a part of the essential cycles of the *comedia* that we can only partially re-construct from this distance" (2010: 145). Critical investigation of the question of genre in *comedia* studies tends to be dominated by the question of the *comedia nueva* as tragedy (a succinct discussion of which can be found in Parr (1988)). However, several studies exist which explore the notion of genre within the Golden Age: Rivers (2009), Newels (1974), Parr (1991), Vitse (2003) and Arellano (1999) are especially helpful. This study will use the word "genre" to refer to the *comedia de privanza* in order to demonstrate that it has characteristics that set it apart from other recognised types of *comedia*, and to demonstrate its independence from such groups. However, its use is tentative, as it recognises that the boundaries between such categorizations inevitably become somewhat blurred. Indeed, this study will show that *comedias de privanza*, like all *comedias nuevas*, constantly refashioned themselves.

[5] A detailed bibliography on history within Spanish drama can be found in García García (2001).

[6] Modern critics, such as Spang and Ruiz Ramón, have been quick to take exception to critics such as Torrente Ballester, who contends that playwrights' manipulations of history had to do with a desire to trick the play-going public into a more sympathetic view of their own history, with political motivation (1982: 392). Pfandel extends a view similar to this, suggesting that the name "drama histórico" should be applied not to those that necessarily tell historical truths, but those that celebrate people, acts or sentiments as "común patrimonio nacional" (1933: 433).

The *comedia de privanza* fits this definition in its use and manipulations of history. In this sense, we could define it as a sub-genre of the *drama histórico*, a genre whose parameters, by the above definition, are extremely broad. However, this study will use the term "genre" to refer to the *comedia de privanza* due to its conviction that these plays stand apart from historical drama. Firstly, they did not have as their primary motivation a desire to simply retell Spanish history. Although they use history as a point of inspiration for their dramas, they do more with these historical sources than simply to refashion past events: their very specific engagement with a contemporary political issue (*privanza*) sets them apart. Use of history is one characteristic of the *comedia de privanza*, a genre that has concerns that are unique. In the same way that *Fuenteovejuna* or *El alcalde de Zalamea* are both *dramas históricos* as well as *dramas de honor*, so this study contends that the plays under consideration here can be both *dramas históricos*, thanks to their use of history, and *comedias de privanza*, belonging to a genre which has enough defining features to set it apart from mere historical drama.

Teresa Ferrer Valls similarly suggests that the *comedia de privanza* is a subgenre of the *comedia genealógica*[7], which she understands to include those plays that recount the histories or legends of wealthy or influential Spanish families[8]. Recognising the *encargo* that often went hand in hand with these plays, she analyses the links between the *comedia de privanza* and the noble families whose lineage is aggrandized by the plays' plots. This approach has led her to neglect some of the finer nuances of the *comedia de privanza* as a set of plays that function beyond the telling of a family story. Her contention fails to take into account that not all *comedias de privanza* elegize the line of a single family: many take up *privados* that are entirely fictional. She fails to take note of the literary characteristics that set these plays on *privanza*

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[7] See her 1998, 2001 and 2004 articles for a complete and detailed explanation of the *drama genealógico*, as well as her 1993 *Nobleza y espectáculo teatral (1535-1622)*.
[8] See Tropé (2010) for more on the relationship between Lerma and writers in Philip III's court.

apart. Whilst they may often disseminate genealogical content, they often do more than this alone: their aim, and overall thrust, is not just to promote the history of a particular family.

Existing criticism on the *comedia de privanza*, therefore, is limited. Moreover, the little scholarship that exists on these plays tends to be overwhelmingly negative, perhaps due to the persistent view of the *comedia de privanza* as a propaganda tool for wealthy families. This is especially the case for those few critics writing on Poyo: although critics recognise that his work represents the first of its kind, they almost unanimously contend that his drama is of a lower quality than many of his Golden Age contemporaries (see Chapter 1 of this study for more on this). Indeed, even Lope's *comedias de privanza* met with the criticism of Menéndez Pelayo, who regarded his *comedias de privanza* to be amongst his less accomplished work (see Chapter 2 of this study). This study recognises many of the shortfalls that other critics have identified within many of these plays, but will seek to show how the *comedia de privanza* is still a genre capable of great theatrical merit, and moreover, that in spite of many technical deficiencies, these plays retain a great deal of historical, political and poetic merit. This study, therefore, seeks to redress several gaps within existing scholarship. It will reasses the *comedia de privanza* as a genre in its own right, with characteristics beyond the mere inclusion of a *privado* character, the use of a historical setting, or the promotion of a single family's lineage. It will be the first to analyse the *comedia de privanza* as a literary genre with unity across the many playwrights of the early seventeenth century.

The plays under examination in this study are extremely little-known, thanks in part to the limited critical attention the *comedia de privanza* has received. This study, therefore, is one of the first to look at many of these plays in greater literary detail. It will argue that the *comedia de privanza* had several defining characteristics on a structural, poetic and thematic level that set it apart from other genres. The first of these is the *comedia de privanza*'s use of the rise and

fall of the *privado* as a structuring principle, whereby the protagonist's political career mirrors the shape of the *comedia* itself. This is often intensified by the use of two paired characters, often the *privado* and a court enemy, or more unusually, the *privado* and his friend. These two characters will have opposing trajectories: where one rises, the other falls, with their contrasting fortunes often demonstrating the arbitrary nature of fortune in court.

Secondly, in poetic terms, the most striking feature of the *comedia de privanza* is the use of imagery drawn from nature to reflect growing and declining fortunes. The most notable example is the waxing, waning and eclipsed moon (in the case of plays telling the Álvaro de Luna story, this will often be a running pun on the name of the protagonist). Other recurrent examples include the tides of the sea, the seasons of the year and day and night. In the case of the latter, the natural cycles of day following night will also play into a scheme of light/dark imagery that will correspond to the king as sun, and where light will represent royal favour and darkness, its absence (correspondingly, the *privado* will often be seen as the moon, who reflects the king's rays). Other common images include the mirror[9], whereby either the *privado* will become the image of his king, or vice versa (this extends to include the portrait), crumbling masonry (again a conceit to reflect on growing and declining fortunes) and images emphasising transience such as smoke, dust and the wind. Clearly, the use of these images is not unique to the *comedia de privanza*, and indeed, this thesis will highlight examples of where these images correspond with other seventeenth-century poets and authors. Indeed, the separation between the *comedia de privanza*'s poetic characteristics and those of broader seventeenth-century literary production is inevitably blurred. However, this study does not attempt to suggest that the use of natural images to reflect the transitory nature of fortune is unique to the *comedia de*

[9] For more on the notion of the *espejo de príncipes* tradition, see Chapter 2 of Ronald Truman's *Spanish Treatises on Government, Society and Religion in the Time of Philip II* (1999).

privanza. Instead, it will argue that what sets these plays apart from the larger body of Golden Age writing that employs this type of image is the political uses to which playwrights put them. Indeed, in the case of the moon and its link to the most famous *privado* of all, we see the perfect example of how playwrights of the *comedia de privanza* take these common images and furnish them with a political flavour.

Finally, the *comedia de privanza* has unique thematic concerns. The plays place an emphasis on friendship, either between the king and the *privado*, or between two *privados*, and the role of friendship in court, often problematizing the tension between public role and private self. Equally, the inevitable rise and fall of the *privado* will often bring out the themes of envy, greed and ingratitude, either on the part of the *privado* or that of fellow courtiers towards the *privado*. These plays are overwhelmingly neo-stoic in their message and values, emphasising the inevitability of changing fortunes, and that good luck must always be followed by bad. Often, the *privado* will undergo a process of *desengaño* as he comes to terms with the frailty and weakness of all men, realising that only God can be trusted.

Whilst not all *comedias de privanza* demonstrate all of these characteristics, often their debt to their literary precedents is clear. Moreover, this study will show that playwrights took these characteristics and integrated them into plays that looked more similar to *dramas de honor* or *comedias de capa y espada*. The clearest examples of this are Vélez de Guevara's *comedias de privanza*. In so doing, playwrights show the malleable, ever-changing nature of the *comedia nueva*, which constantly evolved and built on precedent, integrating new ideas and fashions as it went.

Furthermore, in contrast to the work of earlier critics, this study will argue that although some examples of these plays were undoubtedly moralistic and didactic in their neo-stoic outlook, they fulfilled a function that went beyond a reflection of the arbitrary nature of luck that formed

part of the literary fashions of the age. As C. George Peale has argued:

> El drama de privanza no era teatro filosófico. Al contrario, la alta conciencia que el publico tenía del tema respondía de un modo directo a las realidades del momento. La rauda subida de los validos que se despliega en estas comedias propasara nuestro sentido moderno de verosimilitud, pero tiene su fundamento en el duque de Lerma (2004: 133).

This study will argue that the *comedia de privanza* is intimately linked to its moment of creation. A striking feature of the genre is the very clear reciprocity of ideas it shares with contemporary political thought, as expressed by such thinkers as Juan de Mariana, Francisco de Quevedo and Juan de Santamaría. Moreover, in their manipulation of their source material, the authors under scrutiny here change details and add emphases in order to better reflect events in contemporary politics.

That playwrights were attempting to deliberately create concrete parallels to specific events cannot be proved: in any case, the often uncertain dates of composition of the plays prevent this argument being made definitely. Indeed, problems of dating, and occasionally, attribution, provide a considerable challenge to readers of these plays. The sometimes vague, and often broad, date spreads of the plays under consideration ensure that any parallel found within them to political events must remain in the realm of speculation rather than proven fact. However, this lack of precision should not deter us from recognising the ways in which the plays speak to the intellectual and political movements of Philip's reign. That the *comedia de privanza* is most popular amongst playwrights during those years when Spanish monarchs reigned with *privados* implies a relationship of some form between the stage and the court. This study will demonstrate how plays were responding to the events of the years of their composition, and that even those plays which lack specific dates of composition can still be used to demonstrate this stage/court relationship.

To see this proved, we need look no further than to the handling of the Álvaro de Luna source

material in the hands of Salucio del Poyo at the start of Philip III's reign, and later in those of Mira de Amescua at the close of his reign: they use the same history completely differently, with Poyo's play manipulating them to reflect the tensions of Philip's early reign, and Mira's reflecting those of his later years. Some playwrights, inevitably, produced work that was more political in nature than others: Lope and Vélez write far more pointedly about political issues than Mira and Poyo, who use their *comedias de privanza* for more philosophical purposes. However, in spite of their varying use of the *privanza* topoi, they have in common their reference to contemporary politics. Within this understanding, however, we must recognise that the playwrights under examination here did not have as their aim to criticise the office of the *privado*: their primary concern seems to have been the type of the person who filled it, the behaviour their colleagues in court, and the nature of the relationship between the *privado* and the king. Moreover, even if they were minded to, playwrights will have been hesitant to link their plays too overtly to Philip III and Lerma, lest they risk problems with the censors. Whilst many critics are minded to read historical parallels between the *comedia de privanza* and contemporary history as reductive, the contention of this study is that a play about *privanza* in the context of the court of Philip III cannot possibly have been written in isolation from court events, and moreover, that the very inclusion of oblique, often veiled, parallels is one of the defining features of the genre.

Given that the years of Philip III's reign were those that saw the greatest number of *comedias de privanza*, and that it was this monarch's reestablishment of the office of *privado* that sparked the interest of political thinkers and playwrights alike, the years 1598-1621 provide the time frame for the study in question. Within these years, we find some of the finest examples of the *comedia de privanza*, by playwrights who both copy and imitate earlier incarnations of the genre, and those who innovate upon and rework it. The study will analyse four major playwrights following a broadly chronological structure (although there is some inevitable

overlap): Salucio del Poyo (whose plays date 1600-05), Lope de Vega (1599-1610), Vélez de Guevara (1613-15) and Mira de Amescua (1610-25).

The chapter on Salucio del Poyo will analyse his plays in an attempt to demonstrate how he invents the *comedia de privanza*, and the features that he established that would become characteristic of the genre. That Poyo is the first playwright of the *comedia de privanza* seems to be generally accepted amongst those scholars who have explored these plays (Caparrós Esperante (1987), Gutiérrez (1975), MacCurdy (1978), Peale (2004)); indeed, many offer no proof for the assertion except for the 1601 performance of a play entitled *Don Álvaro de Luna* (MacCurdy 1978: 72, n.6). Given that no earlier text that follows the generic characteristics that are common to the *comedia de privanza* has yet been identified, it seems reasonable to follow overwhelming critical consensus in agreeing that Poyo was the genre's first author. Inevitably, it is hard to know whether earlier texts that have now been lost or remain undiscovered to date may have served as inspiration for later playwrights. It is here, perhaps, that the issue of dating finds its greatest difficulty, as Lope's *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, which Morley and Bruerton (1940) date as early as 1599, has a possible date spread that could predate Poyo's work. However, Lope's own assertion that Poyo's work was the first of its kind in the dedication of his *Los muertos vivos* (see Chapter 1 of the study) seems to be the final piece of evidence that is relied upon to support the theory that Poyo was the first author of the *comedia de privanza* rather than Lope.

Whilst it is impossible to know for certain which text comes first, it is known that the three playwrights that follow here were at the very least aware of Poyo's work. Both Lope and Vélez directly refer to Poyo in their writing, thus demonstrating their knowledge of the *murciano* playwright's work, and the overwhelming similarity between Mira's *comedias de privanza* and Poyo's work has led scholars to conclude that Mira was directly rewriting Poyo's earlier

examples. It is impossible to prove how great an influence Poyo's initial works exerted over the playwrights whose works followed. However, the structural, poetic and thematic similarities that these later works bear to Poyo's first examples suggests at the very least passing knowledge. Even if they were not aiming to consciously mimic Poyo, their later examples contributed to the genre that the earlier playwright probably instigated. The following chapters, therefore, will show how each playwright, in his own way, both imitated and innovated upon Poyo's initial examples to his own ends, demonstrating the development and increasing sophistication with which playwrights approached the issue of *privanza* and its attendant philosophical and political debates. It will demonstrate the individual traits of each playwright, but also attempt to show the overarching development of the genre as Philip's reign progressed.

In light of the above, this study seeks to answer the following questions: what are the literary and thematic characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* as established in the earliest years of Philip III's reign by Salucio del Poyo? How do later playwrights develop and innovate on the first examples of the genre? And finally, what was the relationship between these plays and contemporary political thought and events? In so doing, it addresses the omission in current scholarship that neglects to consider the *comedia de privanza* as a genre in its own right. It sheds more light on plays that previous scholars have side-lined as lower in quality than other examples of Golden Age production. Finally, it elucidates the relationship between the stage and the political and intellectual environment that created it, in another significant leap in understanding of this relatively little-known group of plays.

In order to understand the *comedia de privanza*, it is essential to place this literary genre within its historical and intellectual context. When Philip II died on 13 September 1598, his inheritance to his son was a country in crisis. The third national bankruptcy of 1596 had put an

effective end to what had been Spain's policy of "Messianic Imperialism" (Feros 2000: 143), and forced Spain into the humiliating position of pursuing peace. This was the inevitable conclusion to a decade of foreign policy defeats: the failed armada of 1588, dwindling control in the Netherlands and the alarming loss of monopoly in the New World to the Dutch and British. Bankruptcy confirmed the defeat of Philip's northern campaign. As John Elliott (2002: 285-300) argues, although the material losses of the Armada and Dutch campaign were insignificant compared to the painful symbolic defeat of Philip's so-called 'Grand Strategy', the loss of revenue from America was by far the most damaging reverse, as it delivered a significant blow to the Spanish, and particularly to Castile's, economy. Spain's economy was built on an Atlantic model, and it depended on the import and trade of silver, and on the export of Castilian raw goods to New World settlers. However, Philip's decision to place trade embargoes on Dutch boats in Spanish ports in 1585 led to independent Dutch expeditions directly to the New World, thus replacing dependence on Spain as an intermediary and threatening Spain's Western Hemisphere monopoly. This had serious consequences for Spanish commerce. As the Spanish and American economies moved further apart, the English and Dutch moved in to fill the gap. John Lynch (1992) demonstrates that this was twinned with the contraction of the New World's economy; epidemics had wiped out the work force, the changing and developing economies of Mexico and Peru meant that they no longer required raw produce but manufactured goods that Spain could not provide. Diminishing trade returns, recession in silver mining and retention of capital in America to encourage local investment meant a smaller yield of empire. This meant that the financial burden of empire was necessarily forced back on to Castile.

The nature of Spanish government had always meant that Castile bore the brunt of national expenditure. Each region's individual mechanisms of state and delicate relationship with the monarch resulted, more often than not, in only very tentative and often abandoned attempts to

extract more revenue from regions beyond Castile. However, Castile's economy was largely agricultural, primitive and more or less self sufficient. It was held back by its rigid, serf-like system of working the land, which prevented it from growing and developing towards more advanced consumer goods. As Lynch explains (1992: 4-8), it was the peasants who took on the lion's share of the burden. They did not own the land on which they worked, and the transfer of peasants from royal to aristocratic control in the years around 1600 meant that their wages decreased and tax burden increased, so that they now were the main support for a top-heavy social structure. The charges paid by the peasants included rent owed to their landlord, consisting of between one third and a half of total of all produce, dues paid in kind and money to their lords and a tithe owed to the church which was charged on all grain, livestock and other agricultural products (this was often ten to twenty times bigger than seigneurial payments). On top of this was a royal tax collection for the *alcabala*, *servicios* and *millones* taxes. Spain's social structure aggravated the peasants' tax burden: the *hidalgo* class, just above the *labradores*, aspired towards achieving tax immunity, which was the privilege of the *caballeros* and *títulos*, the real aristocracy. A marked distaste for hard work amongst those above the peasant classes meant that although some *hidalgos* were forced to work for a living, more common was the tendency towards the proud, destitute *hidalgo* who refused to lower himself to the level of the class below him. This structure, which saw the aristocracy as having the monopoly over the countryside, and as being tax immune, was increasingly failing to keep pace with the needs of empire. Peasants were forced from working land they did not own and could ill-afford to continue working, into the cities that did not have jobs for them, resulting in rural depopulation and urban overpopulation, and thus recession in Castile's economy.

The final blow to this crumbling and inadequate system was the outbreak of plague in 1596. The first cases were reported in Santander, before disease spread rapidly across the peninsula. In the years 1596-1602, Spain is estimated to have lost five hundred thousand people, mostly

from the peasant classes, who were already malnourished and in a state of rural depression. Once disease caught hold, agricultural production, the economy's mainstay, fell even lower as the labour force radically diminished and that which survived was left weakened; naturally, this forced up prices. This devastating plague wiped out all of the sixteenth century's population growth, and was the starting point of a century of stagnation and demographic recession (Elliott 2002: 297). By 1609, when Philip III expelled the moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula, some seven hundred thousand people had been lost, accounting for ten percent of the population. It was a set of circumstances that bred a stark fatalism amongst Spaniards (Elliott 2002: 298). Since God had so inexplicably but obviously withdrawn his favour from Spain, what was the point of working to improve your lot? What would be would be, and indeed, this sense of fatalistic crisis would pervade the works of political thinkers (*arbitristas*) and writers.

It was into this disastrous socioeconomic context that Philip III acceded. As Feros (2000: 143-50) argues, he had some severe problems to solve: how would Spain relate, on the world political stage, to fellow European nations; how would he fill the empty coffers in the midst of economic stagnation; how would he reconcile his duty as preserver of the Catholic faith with resources that would not allow for activist policy? These were weighty issues for any young, new king, but all the harder for a timid, frail Philip III, who had spent his life in his father's intimidating shadow. Historians have not been particularly kind to Philip III. Lynch describes him variously as "ill-endowed in mind and character" (1992: 17), as having no strong interests except perhaps for eating or hunting (18), and rounds off his character assassination with the damning judgement: "Even more damaging to the interests of good government, however, was his incurable apathy. Philip III was the laziest king in Spanish history" (18). Meanwhile Elliott suggests that he was a "pallid, anonymous creature", whose "only virtue appeared to reside in a total absence of vice" (2002: 300). An accession to "a failed foreign policy and a broken

exchequer" (Williams 2010:32) would therefore present a significant challenge. Philip II had been aware of this in his final years, and he had taken steps to try to make his son's inheritance more manageable. These steps included brokering peace with France in the signing of the Peace of Vervins on 2nd May 1598. In the same month he handed over control of the Netherlands to the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs in Archduke Albert and Isabella (Williams 2010: 32-3). These vastly unpopular decisions tacitly acknowledged policy failure, and although Feros reminds us that Philip III's opening statement to council of state proposed an activist and militant programme, in practice this would now be almost impossible to achieve (2000: 145).

Elliott records how Philip II anxiously wrote to Don Cristóbal de Moura of his son "Alas, Don Cristóbal, I am afraid they will govern him" (2002: 301). This fear proved prescient, as immediately after the old king's death, Philip III's friend and chief advisor, the Marquis of Denia, later to become the Duke of Lerma, took centre stage in the new king's government. Indeed, Williams recounts that immediately after his father's death, the new Philip III confessed, took communion and retired to an antechamber with Denia. He then emerged, and he announced that the Marquis had his fullest confidence and that he had appointed him to a councillorship of State. Philip created in him the most powerful example of the figure of the favourite, or *privado*[10], since the rule of Juan II (1406-54)[11]. So while Philip III reigned, Lerma ruled. Although his reliance on a minister was in part due to his own personal shortcomings as a ruler, it was also perhaps an indication of the evolution of government. Philip II's vice-like,

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[10] The difference between the *privado* and the *valido* is a small one, and is defined by J. A. Escudero (2004: 18) thus: he defines the *privado* as "aquella persona que tiene acceso al monarca y disfruta de su amistad y confianza, y que como consecuencia de ello controla determinados resortes del gobierno y del poder". Meanwhile, the term *valido* refers to "[el] exclusivismo también en el poder y el mando". Therefore, a king can have many *privados*, but he can only have one *valido*. Malcolm elaborates on this, arguing that the term *valido* carried executive connotations that the more medieval term *privado* did not. As literally the person the king most valued, there could be only one at a time (2017: 2). Although for the most part the texts under consideration in this study will demonstrate *valimiento* rather than *privanza*, the study will explore both phenomena, and indeed, the terms are often used somewhat interchangeably.

[11] For more on the *privado* in the fifteenth century, and especially Don Álvaro de Luna, see Calderón Ortega (2004), Suárez Fernández (2004) and Boyden (1999).

personal control over every aspect of government was no longer feasible in a model of personal monarchy. Instead, an omni-competent minister was required to oversee government (Elliott 2002: 301). Indeed, Alistair Malcolm highlights the theoretical benefits of such a rule, where with spiralling costs of government and increasing volume of bureaucracy, having a single minster as both a point of contact and a spokesperson for the crown was doubly beneficial. On the one hand, the *valido* would be expected to have a group of his own loyal clients ready to be put at the disposal of the monarch, and on the other, as the implementer of more onerous policies, he could deflect popular disquiet away from the king (2017: 2-3).

Lynch, perhaps unkindly, suggests that "If Philip III was the laziest ruler Spain has had, Lerma was incomparably the greediest" (1992: 19). He argues that Lerma was hardly more qualified than Philip to rule, and that his career had been unremarkable under Philip II as Viceroy of Valencia- a post to which he was only appointed to reduce his influence over Philip III. It is certainly true that Lerma emerged seemingly from nowhere as the king's new favourite. As Marquis of Denia he had been the poorest of the grandees in the land, coming from a relatively unknown family, and a series of begging letters to Philip II demonstrates his relative penury. More than anything, his rapid promotion is an example of his desperate need for more funds (Williams 2010: 21-9). Williams demonstrates how from the earliest moments of government, Lerma took control, demanding that he be consulted after every meeting of Council and controlling access to the king and the king's movements. On 11th November 1599, Philip raised the marquis to the Duke of Lerma. This was the first dukedom to be created since 1572, and only the eighth since 1508. Indeed, in the same ceremony, Philip saw fit to raise both Lerma's son and grandson to marquises also. This honouring of three generations of one family sealed Lerma's position in court. For the first time in over a century, then, Lerma had established the office of the *privado*, an office that Williams argues would become the prototype for seventeenth-century monarchs all over Europe (2010: 2). The novelty of the new favourite

provoked an explosion of writings by the *arbitristas* considering what might constitute the perfect model of *privanza*. Tracts by writers such as Baltasar Álamos de Barrientos, Juan de Mariana and Eugenio de Arbona would all take on the theme of advice for advisors and the role of the favourite[12]. This was an exciting and uncertain time for Spanish commentators of state, anxious to see how the new king and his favourite would rule over a land besieged by crisis.

However, Lerma's position in court at the start of Philip III's reign presented something of a constitutional problem. If, as Richard Bonney argues, accepted thought in early modern Europe suggested that to be effective, monarchy had to be executed personally (1987: 99), how can a king ruling with and through a favourite, especially a *valido*, fail to represent a contradiction in terms? To understand how Lerma's role was exceptional, but also eventually justifiable, an understanding of the nature of Habsburg Spanish monarchy is crucial.

Patronage was central to the conception of Early Modern Spanish monarchy, as crafted by Ferdinand and Isabella. Feros (1998) argues that they concentrated all sources of possible patronage and wealth into their own hands, with the result that everyone became dependent on the monarch's favour, where royal favour represented the very essence of political society[13]. As Feros records, increasingly throughout the sixteenth century, for those aristocrats who sought power and wealth, the only route to such a goal was through royal service, as the king

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[12] See for instance Álamos de Barrientos' *Discurso al rey nuestro señor del estado que tiene sus reinos y señoríos, y los amigos y enemigos, con algunas advertencies sobre el modo de proceder y gobernarse con los unos y con los otros* (1598) (it appears in a modern edition under the title *Discurso político al rey Felipe III al comienzo de su reinado*), Mariana's *Del rey y de la institución real* (1599) and Narbona's *Doctrina política civil* (1621). Narbona's work, which initially appeared in 1604, was censored by the Inquisition in 1612. It was republished in 1621 when a new edition had been authorised.

[13] See Koenigsberger (1971) for a detailed examination of the development and use of patronage under Charles V and Philip II. Here, Koenigsberger points out that the loyalty and cooperation of their subjects depended on a ruler's personal control of patronage. Indeed, he goes on to argue that sixteenth-century morality dictated that appointment into an office was regarded as a reward for previous good service or as the price to pay for political loyalty. Thus the person fulfilling it would take maximum advantage of the opportunities the position offered (pp.166-75).

had become the sole source of wealth for them and their followers. As royal power and influence grew, so did the number of palace officials and royal servants, and with this boom came the growth of the court rather than the wider country or regions as the best stage on which to gain fame and prestige. Amongst these aspiring aristocrats, then, the aim was simple: although courtiers' chief duty was in loyalty in their service to the king, whom they should love and serve above all other humans, such service clearly brought with it its own rewards (Feros 2000: 35-6). All courtiers, then, as Feros argues, aspired towards becoming the king's *privado*, as becoming a favourite was central to ensuring wealth, influence and success[14]. Indeed, we see this played out on the wider Golden Age stage; we only have to think of Don Gutierre in *El médico de su honra* following Enrique straight to Seville in the opening act, so keen is he to press home the advantage that proximity to royalty has afforded him, and thus capitalise on the opportunity.

This system of the centrality of royal patronage was twinned with the isolated character of Spanish monarchy. The monarch himself was inaccessible and rarely seen, and it was this, at the very least to foreign visitors, that became the "outstanding feature of Spanish court life" (Elliott 1989:148). The architecture both of the fabric of the buildings the king inhabited, and the structure of the household reinforced this: the king was only accessible through a series of rooms, each one more exclusively accessed than the last, finally reaching the royal bedchamber, where only gentlemen of the chamber on active duty were granted access. Thus, court ceremony isolated the monarch in the company of a few favoured, privileged aristocrats (Elliott 1989: 149-51). Philip II's reclusive, solitary rule was something of a tour de force of this isolating model of Spanish monarchy; however, as Elliott points out, it was not one that was easily inherited by his son, who spent most of his reign attempting to rid himself of its

[14] See Ricardo Gómez Rivero (2004) for more on Lerma's control of court positions.

ceremony (1989: 154). Nevertheless, it was under Philip III's reign that court life flourished, perhaps because, as Elliott suggests, power and patronage, which had always orbited round the monarch, were in the hands of an aristocrat in the person of the Duke of Lerma (155).

The character of Spanish Habsburg monarchy, therefore, was extremely personal: it placed the person of the king at the centre of all power, promotion and influence amongst subjects, whilst at the same time creating an isolated and distant figure, personally inaccessible to all but the most privileged courtiers. Such a monarchy made the king himself the personal executive of the power invested within the crown; it also created a court where aspiration to proximity—both physical and emotional—to the king was an encouraged goal amongst courtiers, and where favouritism was almost inevitable.

Generally speaking, the office of the *privado* is rarely viewed negatively *per se* in the vast body of political writing that flourished on the subject at the turn of the seventeenth century: what comes under scrutiny is the way in which it can be manipulated or misused by individuals. Feros is keen to underscore that unlike modern historians, sixteenth and seventeenth-century rulers saw the growth of influence of favourites as a marker for increased royal power rather than its diminution (2000: 44)[15]. Indeed, used correctly, there is no reason for the office to challenge the notion of a personal monarchy; indeed, that Philip II had also had favourites for instance, was not in question. As Antonio Feros records, Philip II's most intimate minister, Cristóbal de Moura, enjoyed complete access to the monarch, and Philip II himself even counselled his son that although he should rule alone, he should not hesitate to solicit the help and advice of competent ministers, citing Moura specifically. As Feros comments, "Philip II was telling his son that to have favourites was not necessarily disadvantageous as long as these

[15] Feros expands on this is his 1999 article 'Images of Evil, Images of Kings', where he examines attitudes and discourses of favouritism across Europe.

men were worthy of the king's favour as Moura had been of his," (2000: 43). Indeed, Feros goes on to argue that Moura's conduct represented a model for Lerma's in his tendency to sign *billetes* in which he ordered royal institutions to implement the king's orders (114). In fact, as Feros elaborates, as a result of Philip II's increasing reliance on favourites towards the end of his rule, "se pusieron las bases para un desarrollo de teorías defendiendo al favorito como una suerte de ministro principal del rey, teorías que serán utilizadas y desarrolladas durante las privanzas del Duque de Lerma y el Conde-Duque de Olivares en el siglo XVII" (1997: 15). What set Lerma apart, however, was the way in which his power, wealth and influence far outstripped anything seen in Philip II's reign.

The theoretical basis, then, for intellectual exploration of the exact role of the favourite has its basis in the rule of Philip II, whose mode of rule increasingly demanded the use of favourites. In his reign, two authors in particular opened the theoretical debate: Fadrique Furió Ceriol and Pedro de Rivadeneira. In their analyses of *consejeros*, it was evident that they considered the king, like any other human, to need help and assistance carrying out his office. The choice of good advisors, therefore, was of paramount importance. In his 'El concejo y consejeros del príncipe', the only edited part of his *Sobre las instituciones del príncipe* (1559), Furió Ceriol conceives of the government as a body, with the king at its head, and with his advisors as the constituent body parts, each according to need and experience. For him, the king and the advisor are intimately entwined:

> Es el concejo para con el príncipe como casi todos sus sentidos, su entendimeinto, su memoria, sus ojos, sus oídos, su voz, sus pies y manos; para con el pueblo es padre, es tutor y curador; y ambos, digo el príncipe y su concejo, son buenos y leales ministros de Dios. Por el contrario, el mal concejo denuesta y abate por tierra a su príncipe… el pueblo se destruye y pierde, y los dos, es a saber, príncipe y su concejo, rebelan contra Dios y hacen vasallos y esclavos del diablo (2008: 5).

Where he conceives of advice as necessary, he makes it clear that bad advice is dangerous. Rivadeneira goes even further. In his 1595 *Tratado de la religión y virtudes que debe tener el*

príncipe cristiano para gobernar y conserver sus estados, contra lo que Nicolás Maquiavelo y sus secuaces enseñan, he speaks to the "flaqueza y miseria humana" (1919: 553) that afflicts all men, including princes, and thus instructs:

> La verdadera prudencia, no solamente enseña a hacer por sí lo que toca a cada uno por razón de su oficio, sino también a aprovecharse de los otros y pedirles consejo, lo cual es señal de ánimo dócil y blando y amigo de ser enseñado; y esta blandura y docilidad es parte de prudencia como enseñan Aristotóles y Santo Tomás. Y él que no sigue esta regla cae en el vicio de presunción y tienta a Dios, no usando de los medios que Él nos dejó, ni caminando por las sendas que nos descubrió para que no cayésemos (1919: 553).

He goes on to suggest that in his position of responsibility over the souls of his subjects, the prince is even further obliged to take advice. However, he is equally cutting in his earnest warnings against "lisonjeros", in what Feros (1997: 21) argues is a thinly veiled attack on Philip II's increasing use of favourites in a time when more and more voices were being raised against the crises in government that plagued the old monarch's final decade.

> Algunos que tienen entrada en los palacios reales, y son admitidos a la familiaridad y privanza de su príncipe, como ven que para todo lo que pretenden de honra e interese, lo que más les importa es ganar la voluntad (que es la fuente de donde ha de manar todo su falso bien, y hartarse pudiese su loca ambición y codicia), para conquistar esta voluntad del príncipe, procuran que él entienda que no tiene criados ni servidores que más le amen ni le sean más fieles (1919: 559).

For Rivadeneira, the true danger is those men who exploit the need for advice in order to pursue their own ends rather than *privanza per se*. They lie to the king, and should be "tenidos por pestilencia de toda la república" (1919: 560). *Privanza* on Rivadeneira's terms can only possibly work if the occupier is an honest man whose first priority is the well-being of the king and the republic, not his own ambition. He leaves clear that it is a sin to attempt to rule without help, but his writing indicates that favouritism can be dangerous.

What is noteworthy about Furió Ceriol and Rivadeneira's analysis, however, is the political vocabulary used to describe those courtiers who advance in the king's favour and execute power in some sort of political role. These men are *consejeros*, who speak very clearly to the

monarch's public self. However, these people were not intended to be the king's friend; where Rivadeneira uses the term "amigo" it strictly refers to those "lisonjeros" or "Falsos amigos" who actively do harm to good government. So there is a clear distinction to be made between those powerful men whose presence in government was so sought and necessary (Furió Ceriol earnestly declares "me parece a mí que los príncipes se deberían desvelar y trabajar noche y día en buscar y hacer un concejo cual conviene, sin que le falte ni sobre ni una cosa" (2008: 7)), and those very few men who enjoyed a position as the king's intimate friend.

At the end of sixteenth century, therefore, the dominant ideological vision was of a monarch with two distinct natures: one public and one private. He could have *amigos privados* who did not interfere with matters of state; meanwhile, he also had a public side, with which he was aided by a cast of advisors, some of whom he picked himself to be *consejeros privados* (Feros 2001: 59). Friendship is the most important issue underpinning the dominant political discourse around *privanza* moving forward into the seventeenth century, as this is what marks the undeniable and far reaching differences between Philip II's use of *privados* and Philip III's *valido*. Crucially, Philip II never publically acknowledged the institutional importance of his favourites, and equally, the favourites never boasted of their influence or importance (Feros 2000: 115). Essentially, the increasing number of intimate ministers, tasked with carrying out important business of state speaks to I.A.A. Thompson's argument that the rise of *privados* in seventeenth century government is the result of a complex series of political changes: the growth of government and the administrative state, the increasing professionalization of government, the boom of court patronage and the growth of direct contact between towns and central government (1999: 13-23). Philip II, as personal monarch of an expanding, hugely complex empire, simply could not administer successfully without the help of his advisors, and the presence of figures such as Moura in Philip II's court is demonstrative more than anything of the complexity of Philip's rule.

Clearly, however, there was a difference between Philip II's *privados* and Lerma's rule under Philip III. Nevertheless, Feros records how Lerma tried to emphasise the continuity between the reigns in order to legitimise his own position: if Philip II had *privados*, so too could his son. However, Lerma's role went well beyond such models; indeed, he even had his own *privados*. Perfectly recognising and exploiting the fact that the Spanish monarch was both invisible and inaccessible, Lerma, as *sommelier de corps* (a position he occupied from 1599), became the courtier who was closest to the private facet of the king. From this position, he was able to make the leap to the courtier who was closest to the king's public persona. He presided over the everyday running of the monarchy as well as being the sole point of contact for ambassadors and viceroys; he became the only means of communication between the king and the rest of the court, and even more surprisingly, the only courtier with the right to consult with the king in person. For everyone else, including Lerma's own *privados*, the only means of access to the king was through written memos, which Lerma himself edited first (Feros 2000: 60-6). Thus, Lerma's singular position granted him unprecedented power and influence, as a courtier who combined at once the roles of *consejero privado* and *amigo privado*.

However, he was limited by institutional and intellectual boundaries that dictated that the king was the sole source of a power that could not be shared under any circumstances. For Lerma, the constant problem of his *privanza* was how to legitimise the office of *privanza* without inciting accusations that he was usurping the king's power (Feros 2000: 60). Initially, the position, like that of those *privados* under Philip II, was never publically acknowledged, but in 1612, in response to increasing movement against Lerma, even from within his own faction, Philip III was forced to institutionalise Lerma's position by making him *ministro principal*[16]. The vast body of political writings that emerged in the first two decades of the

[16] See Feros (2001) for a more detailed analysis of this development.

seventeenth century spoke to the unique circumstances that Lerma had created: a figure who had exploited the defining characteristics of the monarch as personal holder of power, sole controller of patronage and figure isolated from the rest of the court. Political theorists attempted to either justify such a model of kingship, or condemn one where the king's power was unjustifiably undermined. This was the historical and intellectual context with which anyone wishing to write about *privanza* in the early years of the seventeenth century had to engage. These were the philosophical questions of the age, and they are those with which playwrights of the early seventeenth century played in turn[17]. The plays under examination in this study will show the rich and varied ways in which playwrights sought to explore and engage with the new political phenomenon they saw unfold before them.

[17] See Ferrer Valls *La práctica escénica cortesana* (1991) and Arellano "El teatro cortesano en el reinado de Felipe III" (1998) for more on Philip III's court and production of drama.

DAMIÁN SALUCIO DEL POYO

The Emergence of a Genre

There is little surviving documentation on the *murciano* playwright Damián Salucio del Poyo. Born into a noble family originating from Aragon, he was a wealthy landowner in Murcia. We know that he married Beatriz de Ávalos in 1574 and died without issue. In his study of the playwright, Luis Caparrós Esperante explores the surviving documentation relating to Poyo's life, but makes it clear that whatever remains, especially that from before and around the turn of the seventeenth century, is limited (1987: 24-30). María del Carmen Hernández Valcárcel reiterates this in her critical introduction to Poyo's *comedias*, adding that much of the information we have is plainly contradictory (1985: 9). However, the success of his three *comedias de privanza* raised his profile amongst his fellow playwrights. *Privanza y caída de Don Álvaro de Luna* (probably first performed in 1601), *La próspera fortuna del famoso Ruy López de Ávalos el Bueno* and *La adversa fortuna del muy noble caballero Ruy López de Ávalos el Bueno* (probably both performed for the first time in 1605, and certainly written before) all appeared in the 1612 publication of the *Tercera parte* of Lope's *comedias*. Indeed, it is Lope himself who lauds these works, especially the Ruy López diptych, as being the first of their kind. His *Los muertos vivos* is dedicated to Poyo and published in his *Parte XVII*. Part of the dedication reads:

> Esto es dirigir a V.m., una comedia, habiendo las muchas que ha escrito adquirido tanto nombre, particularmente *La próspera y adversa fortuna del Condestable Ruy López de Ávalos*, que ni antes tuvieron ejemplo, ni después imitación[18].

As we shall see, however, even if he only meant it rhetorically, Lope was proven wrong in his assertion that Poyo's work would lack imitation. The structure, use of history and themes that Poyo instigates in these works would go on to inspire his contemporaries, whose own handling

[18] *Los muertos vivos* is also available electronically, through the Teatro Español del Siglo de Oro (TESO) database.

of the topoi of the *comedia de privanza* would both imitate and innovate, as each playwright added their own voice to those dealing with *privanza* in their writings. Peale (2004: 133) highlights that the role of Fortune is the *sine qua non* of the *comedia de privanza*: this is certainly true, and it is Poyo's exploitation of the theme, and the way in which he has grafted it on to the imagery of the moon (a clever manipulation of the name of Spain's most famous *privado*) that captures our attention. Equally, in his presentation of the themes of friendship, envy and ingratitude, we see how Poyo plants the seeds for thematic concerns that will be further elaborated upon by other playwrights (Peale 2004: 141).

These early examples demonstrate that from its inception, the *comedia de privanza* was intricately connected to its context of creation. In its themes and plots, Poyo's work establishes a link between contemporary Spanish political writing, and events occurring in Spain during Philip III's reign. Moreover, although principally dealing with the moral concerns of the turning fortunes that *privanza* presents, and the moral, didactic message that man cannot trust fellow man, in literary and dramatic terms these plays set the precedent for later playwrights to follow. *Privanza y caída de Don Álvaro de Luna* does this in the presentation of an outlandishly malign *privado*, whose arrogance leads to his own downfall, thanks to the envy of his fellow nobles. Combined with the use of moon imagery and the use of the protagonist's rise and fall as a structuring principle, this *comedia* is striking for its negative portrayal of *privanza*. Meanwhile, the more assured *bilogía* on Ruy López de Ávalos adds the presentation of a morally blameless *privado*, brought down in spite of his saintly behaviour, to the *comedia de privanza*'s generic possibilities. Analysed together, we can see that Poyo's main point of exploration concerning *privanza* was not the office itself, but the person occupying it. The first play offers more critical insight into the nature of *privanza*, and in this way, it is easier to draw potential, oblique parallels to Spain's contemporary political situation. However, looking at all three works, we can see that Poyo's bigger preoccupation seems to have been to use the career

of the *privado* as an opportunity to explore the nature of fortune, and the fickle nature of man. Indeed, the radically different *privados* and kings seen across the three works invite us to draw parallel conclusions from all three works together in order to see what Poyo was attempting to achieve in his innovative, genre-founding plays. When we take all three plays together we can see the common traits of the new *comedia de privanza* and thus reveal the characteristics upon which later playwrights will draw.

Poyo's first *comedia de privanza, Privanza y caída de Don Álvaro de Luna*[19], is the very first of its kind[20]. Critics regard it variously as either a didactic piece on the nature of good and bad fortune (Gutiérrez 1975: 131-2), an example of Aristotelean tragedy (MacCurdy 1978: 111), or merely as a forerunner of Mira's plays (under examination in chapter 4 of this study) dealing with similar subject matter (MacCurdy 1978: 89, n.3). It suffers from the shortcomings and naiveté of a first attempt. Critics have been quick to point out that it contains so many scenes and events that it fails to make for good drama[21]. Each act of the *comedia* is filled with so many scenes, events and characters that it makes a short explanation of the plot virtually impossible, beyond that it traces the rise and eventual fall of an ambitious Don Álvaro in the face of a determined campaign by most of the realm's nobility to bring him down. Moreover, MacCurdy suggests, it is a very matter-of-fact play, too literal and too lacking in credible passion to be considered a high point of Golden Age theatre (1978: 121).

However, in spite of the shortcomings critics have identified, it maintains value as a blueprint of the genre in its structure, use of imagery and thematic content. Firstly, the *comedia*'s use of history as its source is indicative of how the genre will progress. Hernández Valcárcel suggests

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[19] All quotations are taken from María del Carmen Hernádez Valcárcel's 1985 edition of the play, and are given by act and line number.
[20] MacCurdy (1978: 72, n.6) notes that the exact date of composition for the play is unknown, but suggests that a play performed in Getafe on April 17th 1601 entitled *Don Álvaro de Luna* could be Poyo's.
[21] Caparrós Esperante (1987), Gutiérrez (1975), MacCurdy (1978) and Bradner (1971) all espouse this view.

that the first characteristic of Poyo as a dramatist is as "Instaudor e iniciador, junto con Juan de la Cueva y algún otro autor, del drama histórico y el teatro nacional" (1985: 68)[22]. Poyo's *Luna* has a blend of both accurate historical detail in his characters (the majority of the nobles, for instance, are courtiers of historical fact), and a disregard for accurate chronology. Hernández Valcárcel demonstrates how Poyo has manipulated dates and timeframes in his play (48-50), concluding however, that the alterations he makes are not due to ignorance on Poyo's part, but rather "son más de índole estética que histórica". This treatment of history will be repeated frequently by later writers of the *comedia de privanza*. Don Álvaro de Luna was a particularly striking example of the use of history that Bradner (1997) contends is typical of in Spanish theatre. This critic has shown how the use of history in the Spanish context differs from that in other European theatrical traditions; he points to the rich historical ballad tradition within Spain and the fact that as a result, Spaniards had a sense of their own history as a series of great successes or failures ingrained within them in a way that was not the case in England, France or Italy. He argues that Spanish drama used history not so much in order to demonstrate tragedy, but instead for its own sake, in order to narrate events as they happened, manipulating the facts to fit within the scheme of whichever event the dramatist wished to portray (1997: 97-106).

Caparrós Esperante (1987) records how Poyo will have had myriad documents to make use of in order to compose his play, such was the enormous popularity of the historical figure in *romances* and legends. Indeed, Daniele Crivellari details how Poyo has inserted whole sections of the *romances* "Los que priuays con los reyes", "Tocaba las oraciones" and "El Rey se sale de misa" at points throughout the *comedia*, as well as citing *Crónica del rey Don Juan II* and *Crónica de Don Álvaro de Luna* as broader hypotextual sources for the play (2010: 56–65).

[22] For more on Juan de la Cueva and historical drama see Díez Borque (1987).

MacCurdy notes that the use of unedited sections of these ballads appear at those points in the text that are the most dramatic, thus dealing with his fall, rather than his rise (1978: 108). Crivellari argues that their most basic function is in plot consolidation, resuming the action that we have seen on stage, as well as including details of the characters' histories that extend both before and beyond that play's action. Beyond this, Poyo's use of the *romances* alludes not only to the history of the character but also stimulates "el patrimonio mnemónico" of the audience, thus creating certain expectations of the plot's direction and "ampliando el valor evocativo de la palabra teatral" (63). Moreover, as Peale argues, their inclusion will have provoked the *admiratio* of a knowing audience (2004: 142). The manipulation of ballads and their insertion into the *comedia* is a feature that later playwrights of the *comedia de privanza*.

Caparrós Esperante goes on to argue that so wide-ranging was the legend and source material concerning Álvaro de Luna, that any reading of the figure and his history, from popular hero to odious schemer, was possible (1987: 145). Poyo, then, has made a deliberate choice in the selection of source material and his shaping of the character: just three years into Philip III and Lerma's reign, he has chosen to write a play about the most famous *privado* in Spanish history, and from a variety of portrayals of the historical figure, has chosen to depict him as an example of an arrogant, unfit and poor *privado*, who will fall as a result of his own hubris. Bradner's assertion, then, that Spanish drama does not use historical source material to offer political commentary (1971: 98), must be put under scrutiny. Even though the content of the drama is not in itself overtly political, in its use of its historical example, this will be a play that will offer insightful contemporary political commentary. *Privanza y caída* will show how the genre can be seen as a species of historical drama, but that in its use of historical example, it will go on to forge its own set of distinct characteristics that reflect the intellectual movements and politics of its own time.

In her discussion of the theatrical function of the *privado*, Maria Grazia Profeti states that in the *comedia*, the *privado* serves two roles: firstly, and as we have just seen, the *privado* is a historical reference point; secondly, he serves as a construct who will shape the structure of the play (2001: 113-31). Don Álvaro's ascent and descent serves as the perfect example of this structuring principle, and indeed, it is reinforced even further by the coupling of the structure with the image of the moon which dominates the play's symbolism[23]. The image of the moon links the protagonist to the overall structure of the *comedia*. The play follows the phases of the moon as its ordering structure: we see the moon as a waxing crescent as Don Álvaro ascends, as full in the moment of his fulfilment, as waning during his decline, and finally as eclipsed at his death (MacCurdy 1978: 112). MacCurdy goes even further, and states how these four stations are also a structuring principle analogous to the Wheel of Fortune (1978: 112). The whole of the *comedia* is therefore driven by the growing and declining fortunes of its protagonist. As Don Alonso comments wryly in the first act, "Siga su buena Fortuna,/ dejadle crecer a una,/ que esta creciente no es mala/ pues en menguante señala/ un gran eclipse de Luna" (ll. 382-6). The use of natural imagery to demonstrate the rise and fall of fortunes and its coupling with the trajectory of the *privado* is one of the defining features of Poyo's *comedias de privanza*, and represents one of the most recurrent features of the genre as future playwrights imitated Poyo's original examples. This recurrent use of the moon, and other images that emphasise turning cycles, make the overall conclusions of these plays clearer: that all fortunes must inevitably rise and fall.

Beyond its structural features, the play's content and plot also present themes and allusions that will become characteristic of the genre. Poyo creates a series of layered relationships between

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[23] Gutiérrez (1975) and MacCurdy (1978) explore the role of moon imagery in Poyo's *comedia* in much greater detail. MacCurdy centres his analysis on the tight relationship between evocation of moon imagery and the play's structure, emphasising Poyo's innovative decision to link the structure of the play to the *privado*'s rise and fall and the various stages of the moon (112-8).

the protagonist, the king and the other courtiers that invite comparison to Spain in 1601, and correspond with contemporary political thought. Moreover, in tandem with Poyo's characterisation, these relationships' presentation of friendship, loyalty and statecraft explore ideas that can be found in the work of later playwrights who, like Poyo, wished to explore *privanza* on stage. In Álvaro, Poyo provides a protagonist who has two main flaws, which will come to have both personal and political ramifications: he overestimates his personal influence over the king, and he underestimates the danger of the enmity of his fellow nobles. However, Poyo places these flaws in dialogue with a king who is incapable of distinguishing between private friend and political minister, and who lacks many of the basic qualities we might associate with good rule. These qualities, and the conflict that friendship presents for a monarch will be returned to by later playwrights, but it is Poyo who first touches on the theme. When put in contrast with the queen's superior abilities, and indeed, the more astute, ruthless political instincts of Álvaro's enemies in court, Poyo offers a richly political plot.

In his characterisation of Don Álvaro, Poyo establishes the major theme that will become characteristic of the genre: arrogance and greed, pitted against the corresponding avarice and envy of the rest of the court. All other iterations of the malign *privado* will echo Poyo's Álvaro de Luna to some extent. When the play opens, we find Don Álvaro already in situ as *privado* to king Juan II[24], and before even meeting him, we see a group of nobles discussing the *privado*. This group of men serves two functions. Firstly, as MacCurdy states, they fulfil a function much like the chorus in a Greek tragedy; their commentary will be a feature throughout the play, and it will heighten the tension as their cynical remarks remind the viewer that each step

[24] Juan II ascended to the throne in 1406, aged just one year, and thus reigned in regency until the death of his mother in 1418. He reigned for 48 years, until his own death in 1454. However, he was not a gifted monarch, allowing for the rise and unparalleled influence of his favourite, Álvaro de Luna. Luna ruled at Juan's side for nearly forty years, until his execution in 1453. See the first chapter of Nicholas Round's *The Greatest Man Uncrowned: A Study of the Fall of Don Álvaro de Luna* (1986) for a succinct overview of the economic, political and social reasons that allowed for this rise.

taken is a step closer to the *privado*'s downfall (1987: 113). Secondly, their presence and remarks are an early demonstration of the fact that nothing about Don Álvaro and the king and their relationship will go unnoticed by the nobles surrounding them[25]. It shows the audience that the court is alive with malicious gossip, and that Don Álvaro is surrounded by potential enemies who are keenly observing, openly hostile to and envious of the position he holds. However, paying close attention to their commentary on Álvaro's behaviour will also provide insight into the political motivations behind their decisions; as the play continues, it will become increasingly difficult to dismiss their fears and dislike of Álvaro's behaviour in government as mere gossip. When Don Álvaro enters the stage at line 37, after the nobles' hurried conversation, the audience is aware of the fragility of his position, and most importantly, of the total dependence he has on the king, who appears to be one of his only allies in court.

What follows is a confirmation of the envy we already suspect. Don Juan, Álvaro's most loyal friend and supporter, comes to relate to him how he has been the victim of unkind gossip and envy amongst other nobles (I, 64-151). In the relationship between Álvaro and Don Juan, Poyo sets up a contrast that will serve to enhance Álvaro's shortcomings, and the trajectories that the two characters follow will eventually demonstrate the fickle and fragile nature of court favour. Don Juan and Álvaro's conversation here about the nature of envy (the "cáncer del alma sangriento" (I, 158) according to Don Álvaro) constitutes one of the lengthiest, and most

[25] The topic of the nobles' discussion- that of a baptism, where Don Álvaro is named as godfather- was possibly not a coincidental choice on Poyo's part. Although we do not know for certain in what month of 1601 the play was performed, we do know that in September 1601, the Queen gave birth to Philip III's first heir, Anne. Lerma himself carried Anne into her christening—an enormous privilege—and the ceremony took place in his own palace, San Pablo, in Valladolid (Williams 2010: 1). Although it is impossible to prove, especially given the vagaries of the dates, it is not beyond speculation that the use of a baptism might have been a nod to the current situation in Spain's royal household. In any case, it seems reasonable to conjecture that the topic of childbirth and baptisms in a court setting was circulating throughout the year.

passionate exchanges of the entire *comedia*. Don Juan's attitude is cautious; he sees the danger of the grandees' envy where Álvaro cannot. Álvaro tells his friend:

> Oh desdichado envidioso,
> oh venturoso envidiado!
> Yo a mí me estoy alumbrando
> con el sol de mi fortuna,
> que esos que me están turbando
> son nubes que van pasando
> por debajo de mi Luna.
> (I, 180-6).

This is the first reference to the sun in imagery. The sun/moon binary is an important one throughout the play that will go hand in hand with reference to the king. The idea of the king as the sun is a well-known motif, and Poyo's use of it here will be significant in reference to Don Álvaro and his fall, for one of the mistakes he will make is that he will attempt to outshine the sun himself, thus putting both nature and the body politic out of balance (MacCurdy 1978: 121). The use of the sun/moon binary will become recurrent in later *comedias de privanza*, even those that do not retell the Don Álvaro de Luna story. That the binary is first established in this passage is important too, because the other key feature that arises from Don Álvaro's speech is his blasé attitude towards the envy the other nobles represent; "la envidia", he states, "es corona/ del poderoso y del justo" (I, 230-1). He is correct to identify envy as the natural result of success, and to highlight its inevitability. However, he is wrong to glory in it, and he is arrogant not to attempt to counteract it. His comment that he is far above the "nubes", that is to say, the grandees who lust after his position, is revealing as it demonstrates that he will not take competition from others seriously. It is this complacency that will lead to his downfall. His arrogance and presumption of his unassailability is striking, especially in contrast to Don Juan's wise and measured counsel. Juan agrees that envy is unavoidable, but cites Biblical heroes, including Christ himself, to demonstrate that this is no good thing, concluding:

> Don Álvaro, estos varones

con sus brazos poderosos
vencieron mil escuadrones,
sujetaron mil naciones,
pero no a sus envidiosos.
Juzga ahora que he pintado
este monstruo de natura
cómo es bienventurado
el hombre que es envidiado
y verás que es desventura.
(I, 212-21).

In Juan's view, the fall is inevitable. However, in his refusal to listen, we see that Álvaro has threatened to place himself not only above the sun, but more dangerously, above the very son of God. This is a clear transgression, and there can be no ambiguity in our reading of the character as dangerously conceited. In a neat chiasmus he emphatically dismisses Juan's advice: "ni temo a quien me murmura/ ni murmuro a quien me teme" (I, 235-6). This shows Álvaro's short-sightedness and it will have limited the sympathy of the 1601 audience for the protagonist: in a moment of dramatic irony, where the audience is in possession of more knowledge than the characters on stage, thanks to their awareness of the historical facts of Álvaro's eventual downfall, they are able to read Juan's warning as a foreshadowing of the play's eventual conclusion. Álvaro has not lacked good advice, and if he has not been sensible enough to take it, his fate is less surprising.

Nevertheless, initially Don Álvaro's complacency seems understandable. The first speech we hear from the king is his refusal to listen to the gossip of court, dismissing it by mirroring his *privado*'s imagery: "Don Álvaro ha de ser Luna / mientras su rey fuere sol" (I, 297-8). Don Juan suggests to Álvaro that "si uno te quiere bien / doscientos te quieren mal" (I, 284-5); however, the fact that the king's first act on stage is to gift a dukedom to his favourite seems to suggest that if that single person who loves you is the king, the disdain of the two hundred others is unimportant. Don Álvaro's reaction to the promotion demonstrates his understanding of this- his obsequious refusal to rise from his knees earns the disgust of his fellow nobles, but

the affection of the king (I, 307-52). However, the grandee chorus is capable of stoically awaiting the downfall they know will be inevitable (I, 372-86). It is precisely this tension, between the love of the king, and the hatred of the nobles, that provides the substance of the play's plot and Álvaro's trajectory. Moreover, the relationship between the king and his *privado*, characterised by the king's boyish adoration of him, and Álvaro's corresponding delight in his position, will provoke the eventual conclusion. Indeed, the only person who does not seem to exercise prudence in Don Álvaro's rise is Don Álvaro himself. This is reinforced even further in the act by the use of a prophecy. This is a motif common to both *Privanza y caída* and Poyo's two-part drama on Ruy López de Ávalos; indeed, the prophecies in both plays are made by the same character, the Marqués de Villena[26], and in both plays, it is a moment of key insight into the *privado*'s thinking. The Marqués warns:

¿No sabéis vos que una luna
ha de menguar y crecer?
Mas ¿de qué estáis tan hinchado?
Dejad esa fantasía,
Duque, porque vendrá día
que no tengáis un coronado.
Nadie se puede llamar
venturoso hasta la muerte,
que tenéis un rey por suerte
y una reina por azar.
Aunque le envidiéis de falso
os ha de querer el resto.
Esto os aviso, y sin resto,
que os guardéis el cadahalso.
(I, 588-602).

Much of what is said here does not constitute so much prophecy as statements of common sense. The truth of these statements is such that it renders Don Álvaro's flippant response alarming: "Una cosa harto donosa" (I, 604). Moreover, he intentionally and farcically misunderstands the final warning, interpreting *cadahalso*—the gallows—to be the town

[26] See Caparrós Esperante (1987), pp.133-7 for a more detailed exploration of the character of the Marquis of Villena in legend and in literature.

Cadahalso, near Toledo, and resolves instead never to set foot there. The use of a prophecy, or in other words, a predetermined fate, seems fitting for the fatalistic attitude of the time, and matches the inevitability of the moon imagery. However, hereafter, the prophecy is not mentioned again, which seems to suggest that it is more for the audience's benefit than Don Álvaro's. It may also be an indication of Poyo's failure to capitalise on all the possible dramatic avenues open to him. In any case, Poyo has crafted in his protagonist, a conceited *privado* who lacks the essential stoic quality of caution, and who is in a more perilous position than he realises. Sun and moon imagery, ironically employed by the king and his *privado* themselves, Biblical examples, and the motif of a prophecy all foreground an inevitable fall that Álvaro will do nothing to prevent.

It is this arrogance that propels Álvaro's many audacious transgressions. The first of these is his marrying off of the King without his consent or prior consultation. The irony of this is that, as Caparrós Esperante states, it is the new queen, chosen and forced on the king by Don Álvaro, who will eventually become his biggest foe (90). Indeed, it is the arrival of the queen, at the exact midpoint of the play, and her invitation for him to join the royal table that causes Don Álvaro, for the first time, to become aware of his fortune: "¡Ah Fortuna! Estáte queda, / no seas mudable o soez, / ¡Oh, quien pudiera esta vez/ echar un clave a tu rueda!" (II, 694-7). Although he eventually magnanimously follows the *privado*'s wishes to marry in Portugal rather than in France as he initially wanted, it is in the political ramifications of this personal act that we find the roots of Álvaro's downfall. Díez Borque (1976) argues that the general tendency within the *comedia de privanza* is to sentimentalize and create smaller personal issues of the larger political framework, citing the fight between love and power as an example, whereby the king and *privado* find themselves at odds over a matter of the heart, in an intertwining of the personal and political. Often such a discord will lead to the *privado*'s fall. In this first example of the genre, we can see the beginnings of this with the king's marriage. Indeed, this is when the

scales will tip over towards Don Álvaro's fall. It is an act that sees Don Álvaro's relationship with the king becoming increasingly fraught: the marriage proposal is just one instance of small tensions growing between the pair, and it is left to the audience to draw an uneasy and ironic parallel between the king and his *privado*, and the *privado* and his own client, Vivero, when Don Álvaro arrogantly reprimands him: "Pues sabes que eres mi hechura / y sabes que está, villano, / en la palma de mi mano / tu buena o mala ventura" (II, 310-4).

Álvaro's second transgression occurs when he turns to murder when faced with a revolt by the people of Toledo. Don Álvaro's successful quelling of it will lead to him reaching the peak of his success—his full moon—in becoming Maestre of the Order of Santiago. The people of Toledo are rising up because they are unhappy with a new tax from the king, which they believe to be "contra razón y ley / y temerario fastidio" (II, 776—7). Their appeal to Don Álvaro is revealing. The *Ordrero* is eloquent and frank, and his simple logic strikes a chord:

> Dejadnos nuestras franquezas
> y dejad al rey vivir,
> que mal se puede regir
> un cuerpo con dos cabezas.
> Si decís que el rey está
> tan pobre y tan empañado,
> prestadle vos un ducado
> de los muchos que él os da.
> (II, 841-9).

It is probably unlikely to be a coincidence that Philip III's first major act of 1601, the play's year of performance, was to instruct the towns and cities of Castile to impose a tax on wine and olive oil in order to raise the first instalment of the crippling *millones* tax. It was a level of taxation that was completely unprecedented in Castile. Moreover, Lerma was enjoying more privilege than ever as *privado*: in February, he successfully moved Spain's capital city from Madrid to Valladolid, his own city of birth, and with Lerma himself raised to master of the city (Williams 2010: 71-3). During this period he was also collecting a large amount of money from

mercedes granted by the king- from 1601-5, he more than doubled his personal income (Williams 2010: 79). The pleas of the *ciudadanos* in the play at hand, then, find an echo in what was really going on in Castile in 1601. Poyo puns on the dual meaning of the word "ducado" as both a duchy and a ducat to make his point doubly emphatic. Moreover, in a scheme of imagery that runs in parallel with Luna's fall, Poyo employs the image of the kingdom as a body; foregrounded here first, it is an echo of what is to come. The body is a symbol of the routing of corruption in the *comedia*, and it is against this that the *ciudadanos* of Toledo are fighting. Correspondingly, the queen uses the image to compel her husband to have Álvaro face a trial for his actions, thus ensuring that justice remains at the heart of his kingdom. She states emphatically:

> Las repúblicas y ley,
> por ley de naturaleza
> es un cuerpo sin cabeza,
> cuya cabeza es el rey.
> Que así como es claro y llano
> que la garganta sin vida
> tiene conforme y asida
> la cabeza al cuerpo humano,
> y viniendo a suceder
> ésta, que es su fortaleza,
> les falta al cuerpo y cabeza
> la fuerza, la vida, y ser.
> (III, 270-81).

The reference to the state as a body is a crucial image in terms of political theory at the turn of the seventeenth century. As we have seen in the Introduction, the theoretical basis for intellectual exploration of the exact role of the favourite lies in the reign of Philip II, whose mode of rule increasingly demanded the use of favourites. Fadrique Furió Ceriol and Pedro de Rivadeneira, amongst others, in their analyses of *consejeros*, made it clear that they considered the king, like any other human, to need assistance carrying out his office. The choice of good advisors, therefore, was of paramount importance. It is worth recalling Ceriol's conception of the government as a body, with the king at its head, and with his advisors as the constituent

body parts, each according to need and experience: "Así el concejo, si se dividiere (como es menester) en muchas partes, no hará más de un cuerpo, conviene a saber, un buen gobierno y protección, cuya cabeza es el príncipe, y sus miembros la diversidad de concejos" (2008: 6).

The message seems clear: advice is necessary, but there needs to be a clear, single controller, and this is encapsulated in the image of the state as body. Therefore, when Toledo's *Ordrero* and later the queen herself exploit the same image, it is not hard to spot the very clear reciprocity of ideas between the play's contents and those ideas surrounding *privanza* in Spain at the start of Philip III's reign. Moreover, it demonstrates the perfectly licit nature of the *Ordrero*'s request. Álvaro responds to the peaceful plea for clemency from the citizens of Toledo with violence, and a full-scale battle breaks out. When it is over, in a scene that will be echoed in Calderón de la Barca's rebel soldier at the close of *La vida es sueño*, a soldier demands compensation when others have been so richly rewarded. Álvaro, in direct contradiction of the king's orders, murders the soldier in the presence of the king for his cheek (II, 963-94). It is a clear transgression: it demonstrates Álvaro's cruelty, his disregard for those who threaten his position and his arrogance in acting against the king once again, for the second time in the act. Nevertheless, it is one that will see him rewarded with the highest possible honour, in his promotion to the *maestrazgo* of Santiago.

Although Don Álvaro's single-mindedness, arrogance and ambition are all factors that lead to his success and eventual downfall, just as important in both the rise and fall is the weakness of the king. This constitutes another common feature of the *comedia de privanza*. The *infante* of Aragon perfectly summarises the situation when he states: "Que la fortuna es mudable / y el tiempo largo y preciso, / el rey fácil y remiso / y ambicioso el Condestable" (II, 614-7). In other words, an equal combination of patience, the king's stupidity and Álvaro's own ambition will bring about the fall the *infantes* desire. The king's attitude towards Don Álvaro throughout the

play is more like that of a boy towards his best friend- this is especially true of Don Álvaro's return from exile at the opening of the second act. Certainly, friendship is a key element of the genre, and although it is not as obvious as in Poyo's later diptych, it is nevertheless foregrounded. Don Álvaro is perfectly able to manipulate this friendship, and indeed, the king's simple nature, to his own advantage; the consequences of the marriage arrangement are a clear case in point. After a tour de force of persuasive wrangling and begging, the king finally responds to Álvaro's apology: "Basta, que estoy agraviado, / no de vos sino de mí, / de haberos tenido así/ tanto tiempo arrodillado" (II, 370-3). In the final act, when Don Álvaro murders Vivero, thus precipitating his downfall, the king is again incapable of finding the strength of character to condemn a man who has murdered in his presence, acted against him and manipulated him ruthlessly; it is up to the queen to convince him. Álvaro's double murders and their utterly opposite responses from the king demonstrate how easy he is to manipulate.

Vivero's murder, however, is also important in terms of the character's relationship with Álvaro de Luna and our overall conclusions on the *privado*'s conduct, acting as a distilled image of the *privado*'s relationship with *privanza* and the state as a whole. We note at the start of the play that Vivero and Álvaro are close, and under Álvaro's protection, Vivero has risen in court. Indeed, it is Vivero's child that is christened at the play's opening, with Álvaro named godfather. The christening is a clear example of how proximity to the *privado* can ensure promotion and prestige. The king states this explicitly, promoting Vivero with the words "agraced/ solamente esta merced/ al compadre que tenéis" (I, 472-474). Don Pedro's earlier explanation that "Es amigo el de Vivero/ de D. Álvaro, y su hechura,/ y aún dicen que le procura/ la plaza de Camarero" (I, 451-454) speaks very clearly to the factionalism that results from *privanza*, and indeed, it has striking resonances with the worst criticisms of the Duke of Lerma, even at this early stage in his own *privanza*. This tendency will find its full dramatic flowering in the works of Mira de Amescua, examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis. In any case,

the relationship between Álvaro and Vivero in the first half of the play is a warm one: the question, then, is how it culminates in murder. Once again, Álvaro's arrangement of the king's marriage acts as a turning point. Vivero knows that the king's heart lies in France, and he is left incredulous in the face of Álvaro's actions, which smack of arrogance and overconfidence. Horrified, Vivero asks:

> ¿Hay tal rigor, hay tal ley
> ni vasallo tan injusto,
> que aún en las cosas de gusto
> quiera gobernar al rey?
> ¡Y que tenga tan sujeto
> al rey! ¿Hay desdicha igual,
> que le case en Portugal
> sin descubrille el secreto?
> Por Dios, que me tiene loco.
> (II, 180-8).

Álvaro then leaves the unpleasant job of informing the king of the marriage to Vivero rather than delivering the news himself. In spite of Vivero's plea that the king is dying for love of Rosiunda, Álvaro callously responds "Muera o no/ esto os consejo yo./ Haced lo que os pareciere" (II, 177-9) before sauntering off stage. This exchange reveals some important traits about Don Álvaro de Luna: firstly, that he has little regard for his friends. From this point onwards, he demonstrates that his conception of friendship is flawed. When the king justifiably turns his anger towards Álvaro, the *privado*'s first reaction is to turn on his former friend Vivero, and threaten him with ruin. This is doubly unfair, as we know that in fact, Vivero was, if anything, unduly generous towards the *privado* when informing the king of the marriage. Álvaro's treatment of Vivero also has significant political impact because it shows how he is able to alienate even those people who owe their position and power to him. In doing so, he has lost an ally. His treatment of Vivero was more than a personal slight; it was also an error of political judgement, for he failed to recognise the scarcity of his allies, and fatally turned his own faction against him. Meanwhile, in Vivero, we find an indication for how we are supposed to react: his short soliloquy and later asides draw our attention to the political implications of

the *privado*'s actions. Álvaro, therefore, has managed to betray his friend on two levels: both as his personal friend, and as a citizen of the republic, whose king he is tyrannously controlling. In the exchanges between Álvaro and Vivero, and the breakdown of their friendship, we see a perfect distillation of all the character traits that will lead to the *privado*'s downfall: his complete exaggeration of his reach, with the effect that even the most loyal of courtiers can no longer tolerate it and his disregard for the feelings of others. It is a relationship that stands as a microcosm of that which we see between Álvaro and the state.

All of the threads of Poyo's drama come together in Álvaro's final fall, which is rapid and unsurprising. It is typical of his arrogance and complacency that he does not believe that he will be punished for his actions because, as he claims "que nadie temo, que es el rey mi gallo" (III, 87). Even before his arrest, Poyo employs irony once again, as foregrounded in the first act, to show how Álvaro is the only one, both on stage and in the *corral*, who does not see the inevitable fall coming, claiming that "todo vendrá a ser nada" (III, 482). The queen is the force behind the arrest. We see from her earlier interactions with Álvaro that she does not bear him any ill will, but her argument is simply that as head of the body politic—a concept that the citizens of Toledo have shown us is familiar to and accepted by all on stage except the king and his *privado*—the king must respect that justice must necessarily be the life blood of his realm. Accordingly, the corrupt, murderous *privado* must be punished for his actions (III, 270-89). Even so, at the moment of signing the warrant, with an attitude reminiscent of Pontius Pilate, Juan states "Dadme la pluma, señora, / cortada de mi inocencia" (III, 754-5). Just as the king's lack of willpower and intelligence have allowed Álvaro's *privanza*, so they will allow the king to seal his favourite's fate (Caparrós Esperante 1987: 92). Indeed, one of the outstanding, if slightly confusing, features of the play is the full court scene, complete with Latin arguments and lawyers, where the former *privado* is tried and sentenced to death. It is the queen, and not the king, who leads these formalities. In contrast to her mute husband, she

asks questions, directs proceedings and clarifies when unsure (III, 603-765). In other words, she seems to embody the spirit of justice and the law: she speaks without prejudice, convinced that: "pues tiene el pleito justo,/ nunca tema la sentencia" (III, 264-5). She does not allow personal prejudices to hinder her judgement, as evidenced by her compelling her husband "No te ciegues de pasión,/ mira que lo estás" (III, 235-7). Her reminder to her husband is an indication of the king's real problem: his inability to separate his affection for the *privado* from the *privado*'s actions.

However, José María Díez Borque reminds us that although the *comedia* dealing with *privanza* will always insist that *privanza* depends on the whim of the king, certain that this was the case for medieval *validos*, these *comedias* do not usually criticise the king outright, as this would be to criticize the perfection of his majesty (1976: 175). For indeed, in this first *comedia de privanza*, we find a very clear antihero in its eponymous protagonist, whose own culpability for his fall far outstrips any capriciousness on the king's part. It is striking, especially in comparison to later *comedias de privanza* dealing with Álvaro de Luna just how unsympathetic a character he makes of his first *privado*. That he seems personally unpleasant serves only to enhance the constitutional threat he poses. What started as gossip in the opening act amongst the nobles, by the end has become demonstrable fact. The criticisms the grandee chorus levels at the *privado* go beyond petty jealousy. These are real political concerns: that the king has lost his free will to an over mighty *privado*. The main thrust of the entire play is in their attempt, along with the *infantes* of Aragon, to separate the king from Álvaro's dangerously pervasive influence. Their reasoning and arguments go right to the heart of contemporary thinking on the issue, with a striking chord of similarity. The *infantes* and the nobles' desire is to remove Álvaro, and in so doing "libertar a España" (I, 426) by separating him from "el poder de este tirano" (I, 402); Juan is "el primer rey preso/ que se habrá visto en España" (I, 409-10). They recognise that the whole realm is threatened by Álvaro's *privanza*. Fracisco Tomás y Valiente

stresses that for the length of the seventeenth century, the office of the *privado* in itself was rarely a target for dissatisfaction: more often, it was the holder of it. He goes on to suggest that, at least amongst other nobles, this was due, in part, to envy, and a belief that their own birth or abilities made them equally suitable for the position (1990: 117-9). Certainly this chimes with at least the opening scenes of *Privanza y caída*: the *infantes* claim "Infamia es de la nobleza/ destos reinos … / que en los demás se publique/ de vuestro rey tal bajeza" (I, 395-8). However, although envy plays its role, it is worth reemphasising that it is in Álvaro's unnatural power, over the realm and king himself, that the nobles find their displeasure: a fear that becomes increasingly justified as the play progresses. The play has a clear attitude towards *privanza*: that the *privado* should be humble, his power limited, and moreover, that he should not threaten the king's dominion. If he does, he must be removed.

As early as 24 June, 1594, Antonio Pérez wrote in a letter addressed to the Duke of Lerma "Porque si Dios, con sobrarle la gloria, y el poder para hacer de nada lo criado, no sufre compañero en la adoración, ¿cuánto más se picarán los reyes de la tierra, cuyo poder es tan limitado, de que algún hombre les iguales?" (2008: 49). Moreover, he suggests that popularity amongst the people is the only way to stay in power: "La gracia de las gentes hace más durable y firme la gracia del príncipe" (2008: 49). This is a lesson that Poyo's Álvaro de Luna could have done with learning. In his famous treatise against tyranny, the 1598 *De rege y et regis institutione*, Juan de Mariana's words ring true with Poyo's work too, given the way in which the nobles frame Álvaro's actions within those of tyranny, branding him as a tyrant from the earliest lines of the play. Mariana makes it clear in the strongest possible terms that the duty of the citizens is towards the wellbeing of the state ("Llamamos cruel, cobarde e impio al que ve maltratada a su madre o a su esposa sin que la socorra" (1950: 482)), and that before anything else, he must do all he can to save it from dangerous rule. Part of this lies in approaching the king peacefully to make your case ("Se ha de amonestar ante todo al príncipe y llamarle a razón

y a derecho" (482)). This is behaviour we see exhibited in Poyo's play. Although arms are taken up, it is only in an effort to compel the king to finally cut ties with his *privado*. That the king seems deaf to reasoning and petitions leaves at least some blame firmly on his shoulders. Clearly, then, there is a marked relationship between the ideas Poyo puts on the stage, and those penned by his *tratadista* contemporaries. This makes this very first example of the *comedia de privanza* both political and a clear product of its time

MacCurdy's concluding analysis of the play is that Don Álvaro's fatal mistake is in too readily absorbing the rays of the sun and burning himself out, but that in the end the *privado* recognises that all men must live according to cycles. As the moon is eclipsed with Álvaro's execution, so it waxes again as Don Álvaro enters eternal life (1978: 117-8). Indeed, Don Juan, Álvaro's most loyal ally who defended his friend to the very end, perhaps sums up most accurately the inevitability of these cycles and how they must be interpreted by politicians: "Viva quien vence" (III, 356). At the end of the play Juan sees himself raised into the Marquisate that Don Álvaro possessed, and thus the vicissitudes of fortune in court continue. It is important to note that in terms of the wider genre, playwrights of the *comedia de privanza* were more often inspired by the sentiment and drama of the small personal crises *privanza* could inspire rather than by the desire to make overt political points. Don Álvaro's main mistake was in his failure to acknowledge the realities of the moon imagery he so readily exploited. Poyo's play demonstrates that all men are the victims of fortune and time, and that fortunes that rise will also inevitably fall. It is each man's responsibility to live humbly and strive for virtue in order to mitigate this fact. Don Álvaro de Luna fails to do so here, and pays the ultimate price.

Poyo was not necessarily attempting to rail against Spain's newly established *privanza* in this play. However, he was making a point about the strength of the monarch and the importance of an incorruptible *privado*. This is a play that is unquestionably of its time, replete as it is with

contemporary ideas, and mirroring, even if only obliquely, events in Philip's court. Although the play was not necessarily political in motivation, this does not make a political reading of the play unfruitful. It shows that the stage, as well as the tract, can give us an insight into and teach us about contemporary attitudes to *privanza*. Moreover, the clear reciprocity of ideas between Poyo's play and contemporary political thought provides this first example of the *comedia de privanza* with a clear date stamp, participating in the intellectual dialogues circulating at the turn of the seventeenth century. This will be a key facet of the genre as it develops, and one of the features that makes it stand out from other historical or genealogical pieces. Each of the playwrights that follow in this study will put into the mouths of their protagonists ideas that can be found in the words of contemporary political thinkers. Poyo's work also instigates several of the features that will become omnipresent in the genre as it develops: the trajectory of the *privado* used as a structuring principle; the use of cyclical natural imagery, with special emphasis on the moon, to reflect shifting fortunes; use of marriage and personal relationships in wider political events; the role of envy and the over reach of a *privado*.

Poyo's second offering on the theme of *privanza*, the two-part plays *La próspera fortuna del famoso Ruy López de Ávalos el bueno* and its second half *La adversa fortuna del muy noble Ruy López de Ávalos el bueno* (hereafter referred to as *Próspera* and *Adversa* respectively[27]) are widely considered by critics to be superior in quality to the earlier work[28]. This, they argue, is largely due to the greater space that Poyo has allowed himself to treat the subject, and Gutiérrez maintains that the better structure and coordination between the scenes demonstrates how the dramatist has grown in invention and maturity (1975: 151). Ruy López could not be a more different *privado* to Don Álvaro, and indeed, Poyo presents us with a different model of

[27] All references from these plays are taken from the 1857 *BAE* editions (found in volume 43), and are given by act, page and column.
[28] This is the view held by Bradner (1971), Caparrós Esperante (1987) and Gutiérrez (1975).

the *privado*-monarch relationship here. Ruy López's behaviour is, by and large, impeccable, and his fall, instead of being partially of his own authorship, will come about in spite of his virtuous behaviour and as the result of a scheming antihero. As MacCurdy notes, although the more nuanced *privados*, such as Don Álvaro, who are neither clearly villainous nor saintly, are more convincing as characters, "the all-virtuous hero … would serve equally well to carry out the purpose of the plays: to provide moral *exempla* showing the fall of man as an ineluctable fact of human experience" (1978: 77).

Caparrós Esperante (1987: 121-5) reads the differing portrayals of *privados* in Poyo's work as a mark of Poyo's evolving thought on the matter of *privanza*. He suggests that if *Luna* represented a condemnation of *privanza*, this later work represents Poyo's growing acceptance that it was inevitable. However, a more prudent reading of the texts would suggest that all three *comedias* point to the latter conclusion. Caparrós Esperante's reductive contention is that *Luna*'s overarching question is "¿es o no positivo para el rey y para el reino la existencia de un privado?", which, thanks to its unflattering portrayal of Álvaro de Luna, leads to the conclusion that Poyo is undoubtedly condemning the system of *valimiento*. This is not the case: all three *comedias*, thanks to their use of images of fortune, speak not to the existence of offices, but instead, the individuals who occupy them. The presentation in quick succession of two radically different models by the same playwright does not suggest a correspondingly radical change in attitude: indeed, the reverse is probably more likely. In both plays, he seeks to explore the consequences that arise from *privanza*, and how different sorts of *privanza* shape the realm. If Poyo were suggesting that *privanza* was wrong as an office in itself, he would be flying in the face of political consensus that encouraged the monarch to rule with advisors. His presentation of such different uses of the same office does not suggest that he performs a volte-face in mere months, going from fierce critic to more enthusiastic proponent: he is instead

exploring how the *privado* should behave once in office and using *privanza* as a means of exploring fortune and stoicism.

In Poyo's treatment of the historical López, there is some suggestion that he deliberately altered historical events in order to make his portrayal more sympathetic to López's descendants. Poyo was married to Beatriz de Ávalos, a direct descendent of Ruy López himself- an extremely beneficial match for Poyo, raising him above the status of a wealthy landowner. Ferrer Valls (2004) and Zugasti (1998) suggest that Poyo wrote extensive *comedias genealógicas*. Indeed, throughout the play, there are frequent moments and allusions that mark out Poyo's clear praise of the Ávalos family, especially in *Adversa*, where a fitting example may be found in Don Diego's lengthy praise of the Ávalos family in I, 471a-b. The most striking moment, however, must be when an anthropomorphised representation of Italy comes on stage to relate at length to a dying Doña Elvira the very many successes that her descendants will go on to have, especially within Italy. Safely in the knowledge that her children and future descendants will enjoy such wealth and power, she dies content (III, 485c-6a). The scene is far-fetched and incongruous with what had been, up until that point, a fast-paced and well-constructed political drama. However, the *encargo* evident within the text need not colour our conclusions of the political issues the *bilogía* explores. Indeed, the Ruy López character is more nuanced than his saintly behaviour superficially suggests.

For the most part, it would seem that Poyo's manipulation of history in these *comedias* is for reasons of dramaturgy: López's rise actually began under Juan I (1379-90), and this is the king under whom most of the dramatic action took place. However, for the sake of dramatic unity, Poyo moves these events to Enrique III's reign (1390-1407), under whom the real López's *privanza* was most powerful. Thus Poyo presents just one monarch rather than two for the sake of simplicity (Caparrós Esperante 1987: 131-2). Equally, the entirely fictitious scene which

opens the *bilogía*, where López is seen as a slave under the Moorish king Almanzor, seems designed, in its colour and amorous love triangle, to immediately capture the attention of the audience, and get them on side- a theory that is supported by the inclusion within it of the entirety of Lope's popular and extremely well-known ballad "Mira, Zaide". The manipulation of the Moorish characters' names and the subplot Poyo generates in order to make the ballad fit within the play's broader scheme is somewhat tenuous, and suggests that the ballad is shoehorned in to give the knowing audience a taste of something familiar.

As for Ruy López himself, again, Poyo has seen fit to alter the historical record in order better to fit the moral and didactic message his *bilogía* seeks to emit, as Caparrós Esperante demonstrates (1987: 137-143). During the reign of Enrique III, he did indeed rise to be one of the greatest nobles in the land, thanks to his bravery and skill in fighting Castile's enemies, eventually reaching the office of *Condestable* of Castile. Therefore whilst *Próspera*'s plot is more or less in keeping with the real Ruy López, the events of *Adversa* are an example of Poyo's poetic license: he only chooses to maintain the bare bones of the fall of a powerful man, from the very peak of his influence. To this end, Poyo exaggerates López's power at the start of *Adversa* in making him the tutor of the young king (this role was actually undertaken by the queen and the king's brother). However, he was still a very influential courtier, and indeed, the Ruy López of Juan II's rule was in fact a ruthlessly interested politician, desperate to extend his reach where possible- a far cry from the stoic, magnanimous hero of Poyo's drama. The real Ruy López fought to unseat more powerful courtiers, and in turn became the victim of intrigue. If Poyo presents López as the innocent victim of envy, greed and court machinations, the real Ruy was an arch-plotter himself, who seems to have miscalculated and fallen as a result. As we see in *Adversa*, he was indeed implicated in a (probably false) plot, in which he was accused of treason with the Moors. Poyo's ending, which sees López called into service

in Valencia is another invention of Poyo's: Ruy López died alone, poor and forgotten in Valencia in 1428.

By changing the fundamental character of his historical protagonist and maintaining only the shape of the real Ruy López's political career, Poyo is turning his protagonist into a moral and didactic figure. By making external forces, rather than his own ambition, the mechanism that causes his rise and fall, Poyo places an emphasis on the role of fortune. However, he also offers clear conclusions for the role of the king that outstrip that which we see in his earlier play: what is it about Enrico that allows him to enjoy such a mutually successful relationship with his *privado*? What does Juan lack that allows for Ruy's fall? If Ruy represents the incarnation of stoic constancy in his never-changing attitude to court service, the changes that occur around him become all the more significant in our understanding of his eventual fall. Such manipulations of history in order to suit the overall conclusions of the *comedia* will be imitated by later playwrights, most obviously by Lope de Vega and Vélez de Guevara, both of whom make striking alterations to history in each of their *comedias de privanza*. In his *bilogía*, Poyo continues his work in creating the blueprint for the genre of the *comedia de privanza*: an emphasis on the role of fortune, the use of contrasting characters to highlight rise and fall, the exploration of the themes of greed and friendship, and a conclusion that is moral: trust only in God, and not in the fickle, fleeting glories of this life. Later playwrights, especially Lope de Vega, would go on to explore the implicit political content that Poyo presents, whilst maintaining all of the characteristics that Poyo instigates in their *comedias de privanza*.

In order to put an emphasis on the role of Fortune and Ruy's constancy, the play opens with Ruy López at his lowest point, which serves as a fitting contrast to his glorious high point at the end of the first play where the situation has been completely reversed and the Moorish king becomes Ruy's slave. Indeed, by the end of *Adversa* a complete revolution of the wheel of

fortune will have taken place, as López is thrust down once again. What is striking about the character is his consistency across both plays and in all situations: magnanimity, generosity and humility, as well as remarkable diplomacy and courage characterise his personality. However, although these plays have been praised for this achievement in structure, Peale (2004), Caparrós Esperante (1987) and Gutiérrez (1975) all maintain that this *bilogía*'s plot remains hard to follow thanks to Poyo's characteristic overcrowding of scenes, weaker characterisation, and characters that appear and disappear with little warning. Perhaps the best example of this is Celinda, who in *Próspera*, is the plotting Moor whose love Ruy spurns. In marriage to Don Gonzalo, the plays' main antagonist, she seems perfectly poised to execute revenge on the Christian who so rudely and unkindly rejects her (in the play's closing moments, Gonzalo and Celinda celebrate that in their marriage, taking in joy in how Ruy "ha juntado/ dos enemigos suyos" (III, 462a), with Celinda tantalisingly suggesting "Uno basta/ si es mujer como yo, y más de mi casta" (III, 462a)). However, Poyo chooses to abandon what would have made for an intriguing and compelling plot line in developing this alliance, and abandons the Celinda character all together in *Adversa*. The marriage of the former play is unmentioned, and one of the most captivating characters of the first play, who, in her dressing as a man to follow Ruy from Granada, triggers the war with Castile, and who even salaciously suggests that she will happily share a bed with Ruy López before her true identity is discovered (I, 443c-444a), is sadly never seen again. This is perhaps in service to Poyo's rather blunt didactism in his crafting of Ruy López: Ruy makes an enemy of Celinda, a character who could have been an ally, thanks to his unkind treatment of her. To have her cause his downfall in the second play may be to lay some blame for Ruy's misfortunes at his own doorstep, and clearly, this was not the conclusion that Poyo sought.

Caparrós Esperante suggests that the whole of the first act of *Próspera* fulfils an essentially informative function, and that it does not necessarily match up with the structure of the rest of

the play (1987: 68). It contains three long scenes that provide context that, far from clarifying, in fact confuse, establishing too many characters and plot threads to keep hold of. Nevertheless, they are important in establishing the characterisation of the protagonist and antagonist. This contrast between the two is how Poyo will establish the role of Fortune in the play: in *Próspera*, Gonzalo's attempts to unseat Ruy will do nothing except propel him higher still. On the other hand, Gonzalo will benefit directly in the form of his own promotion when Ruy falls in *Adversa*, thus unfairly drawing gain from his duplicitous behaviour. Establishing a clear binary between the two is therefore how Poyo will drive the plot forward as the *bilogía* progresses.

As *Próspera* opens, Ruy López is a slave in Granada[29], and is at the centre of a complex love triangle: his mistress Celinda loves him, but in turn, three Moors, including the king himself, all love Celinda. Poyo exploits the traditional image of the Moor as the passionate lover, as established in the *Abencerraje* and developed in the late sixteenth century ballad. However, he also sets up a strictly religious contrast between Ruy, the noble, enslaved Christian, and the passionate Moors. Ruy's identity is established in strictly religious terms: Celinda states that it is specifically a Christian that she loves. This is emphasised further, in another nod to the *Abencerraje*, by the fact that the Moorish characters refer to Ruy as Rodrigo, a name shared with the *Abencerraje*'s knightly, Christian protagonist. It is shorthand for Ruy's superior behaviour. Throughout Ruy's time in Granada, he shines as an exceptional example of diplomacy and common sense. He successfully diffuses the tension of the love triangle, whilst counselling the Moors in chivalry towards Celinda (he tells Zaide, who suspects Celinda of

[29] In his discussion of the 1609 expulsion of the moriscos from the Iberian Peninsula, John Lynch states that from the years 1604-5, socio-economic conditions focussed discontent on the moriscos. Complete return to recession in the Indies caused widespread malaise in Castile (even sparking mutiny in the Spanish navy), and caused discontented Spaniards to start looking to a minority to blame (1992: 57). Poyo, a *murciano,* would have been more aware than most of the morisco minority in Spain, given their concentration in the south east corner of the Peninsula. Throughout *Próspera* and *Adversa* Moorish characters are frequently seen as traitors and enemies of the king, and in turn, of Ruy López. Besides the Golden Age literary fashion of evocation of the Moor, the plays also perhaps provide a small nod to their date of performance in 1605.

betraying him "Ni ofendas su buena fama;/ que se engaña fácilmente/ el corazón de quien ama./ Celos tienes, mal sospechas,/ Y ofendas su honor" (I, 437a)), and Almanzor's response to Ruy's requests for freedom is telling in its praise:

> …la libertad
> que me pides no te he dado
> porque siempre he procurado
> tenerte en esa cuidad;
> que estimo yo tu persona
> más que el oro que me das.
> (I, 439a).

This sentiment will be repeated throughout the two parts of the play, by each of the kings he encounters: Ruy's presence is a gift of fortune, and his person is extremely valuable. Enrico, for instance, claims that he has suffered from "mala fortuna" in not having Ruy López up until the point of his arrival in court (II, 447a). He goes on to argue that "no se puede hallar/ Un Ruy López fácilmente" (III, 458c). In *Adversa*, when Ruy is penniless and exiled from Castile, Don Alonso, the soon-to-be crowned king of Aragon tells him "No veis que [Castilla] os ha desterrado/ porque ella no os merecía" (III, 488a), emphatically stating "Nadie se iguala a vos" (III, 488b). Across both plays, he is a soldier and political advisor with considerable value that cannot be matched. López's behaviour in this opening scene, where Ruy is at the bottom of the wheel of fortune, demonstrates all the characteristics that will become essential to his character, and will not change as he rises: he is an excellent diplomat and politician, and he is brave, as is demonstrated by his request to leave Granada to seek his fortune in Castile in order to buy his freedom.

Ruy's appearance on stage bookends the first act. The next time we see him, it is in the third scene of the first act, where he is on the road to Castile, preparing for royal service. Here, we will learn that in addition to his political skill and courage, he is also cautious. His humility has been apparent since the opening of the play, but his caution stems from the prediction motif

that surfaces again in Poyo's second treatment of *privanza*. Caparrós Esperante describes Ruy's meeting with the Marqués of Villena as an appointment with his own destiny (1987: 71). This is certainly true: in the long term, the prophecy will shape his conduct for the rest of the *comedia*, and in the short term, it is the Marqués who secures Ruy his first royal appointment. The prophecy itself is much more specific than Don Álvaro's, in that it spells out the broader outline of the plot for the rest of *Próspera* and *Adversa*. There is no warning involved this time, and unlike in the case of Don Álvaro, there is nothing he can change in his behaviour that will alter his fate. Nevertheless, the careful Ruy nevertheless has a stoic and sensible response to it:

> […] cosas son
> que me pondrán en cuidado,
> porque de pena me han dado
> lo que tenéis de opinión,
> y viviré con recelo
> de lo que de mi será
> (I, 445a).

For the rest of the play, although Ruy is keen to ask for promotion where he thinks it is deserved, this is tempered by a caution towards promotion for its own sake. He appeals to the king not to make him a count saying: "suplícoos que no lo hagáis,/ porque, de hacerlo, me dais/ más enemigos que fama" (II, 453c). He takes from the prophecy a fear of unearned promotion: this is exactly the lesson that Álvaro de Luna failed to learn, and in Lope's later *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, the lesson in constancy and humility will be one that Don Payo de Guzmán takes to the other extreme (see chapter 2 of this study). In this instance, Poyo lays the groundwork for the constant, stoic *privado* who acts with the best interests of both the king and state, but who also acts cautiously in the knowledge of the inevitable fall. The use of the prophecy is a heavy-handed tool which Poyo employs to remind the protagonist (and the audience) of the fall that must come. Later playwrights will not have recourse to a prophecy: their *privados* implicitly work in the knowledge that their luck too will eventually come to an end, without the need of a prophecy to remind them. Indeed, more assured playwrights such as Lope or Vélez de

Guevara will make use of less heavy-handed dramatic tools to foreground their protagonists' falls, using careful imagery instead. Prophecy, as used in these early examples, makes it clear that in the *comedia de privanza*, no matter how saintly your conduct, good fortune must always be followed by bad, and indeed, the use of the common motif across both of Poyo's works, with their vastly differing protagonists, highlights the inevitability of mutability.

Between the two scenes involving Ruy, in the second scene of the first act we are introduced to Don Gonzalo, who will become the piece's major antagonist. We see him in the throes of the siege of Ponferrada, the town where he is mayor. The play's setting, in the middle of Enrique III's wars against the English and Portuguese is essential. It allows for Ruy's rise, as Ruy, more than anything, is defined as a successful and hardworking soldier. War provides the perfect set of circumstances that will allow noblemen, like Ruy and Gonzalo, to demonstrate their abilities. Whilst both Ruy López and Don Gonzalo are brave, loyal soldiers, we in fact see more evidence of bravery on the field in the antagonist than the hero. For indeed, as the *alcaide* of the town, Don Gonzalo is courageous and fierce. He loses his battle with the English, but his bravery in defeat provides some of the most admirable passages of the entire play. His captors unanimously praise his courage when he is brought to them bound, to which his dignified response is "Si lo fuera/ muerto me trujera ahora,/ y no atado" (I, 441c). He then puts his life directly in danger by tearing down the flag of the victorious English *infanta*, proclaiming "Viva Enrico solamente,/ Rey de Castilla y León;/ yo echaré en tierra el pendón/ o moriré honradamente" (I, 442b). The *infanta*'s response is full of admiration, and indeed, as Caparrós Esperante notes, throughout the play, she is judicious, respectful of Spanish custom and law, merciful and wise (1987: 70). She states: "Yo no vengo, castellanos, a quitaros/ la libertad…/ solo a honraros vine aquí,/ no a alterar vuestras leyes" (II, 442c). This is a sympathetic portrayal, and is perhaps a reflection of the result of the 1604 Treaty of London, which put an end to decades of war with the English. It was a peace which would endure into

the 1620s, and achieved the end of English piracy of the Spanish fleet, put a halt to English support for the Dutch rebels and heralded the reestablishment of commercial relations (Feros 2000: 163). Poyo's drama therefore reflects the warmer Anglo-Spanish relations of the start of the seventeenth century[30].

However, both Gutiérrez (1975) and Caparrós Esperante (1987) argue that the presentation of Don Gonzalo in the first act is incompatible with that of the rest of the *bilogía*; the brave, if slightly theatrical, *alcaide* of the first act bears no reasonable resemblance to the scheming and jealous courtier of the rest of this play and into the next. Both critics argue that the completely different characters that seem to appear in the first and second acts are indicative examples of poor dramatic writing on Poyo's part. Although Gutiérrez attempts to account for it by stressing that, strictly speaking, there is nothing inherently incompatible between bravery and jealousy (1975: 156), this does not quite get to the bottom of the issue. The contrast is so notable that it is hard to believe that it is not intentional on Poyo's part—not least because Gonzalo is an invented character—and so we must ask what Poyo is trying to achieve by crafting his antagonist thus. A rather simple explanation might be that the contrast in characterisation was a choice made by Poyo to deliberately mislead the audience, and provide a greater, and thus more satisfying, shock when the character who they thought of as so noble and brave becomes the play's main antagonist. However, if this is the case, it is rather poorly executed, and so it is also worth considering other options. Re-evaluating Gonzalo's behaviour in this first scene sheds light on the contrast: his actions in Ponferrada could bear the labels of hot-headedness and impetuosity just as easily as they could bear that of courage. Rash behaviour is most certainly in-keeping with the character of the following dramatic acts: Gonzalo's determination to bring down Ruy leads him to make some spectacular claims, all of which are doomed to fail

[30] We will see reference to warm Anglo-Spanish relations in other examples of the *comedia de privanza* from around the same date, most notably in this study, in Lope's *La corona merecida*.

by their very lack of consideration. His attempt, for instance, to discredit Ruy by falsely informing the king that he has failed in the vital negotiations with the Moors and has been defeated by them (a claim he backs up with the melodramatic promise of "Si no fuere verdad lo que te digo/ córtame la cabeza como a infame" (III, 457a)), is a claim that will be disproved the moment Ruy walks back into court, which indeed he does a few lines later. Such ill-conceived plotting can hardly be considered the work of a great political machinator: this is the work of a rash political novice. This would be perfectly in line with Gonzalo's foolhardy ripping down of the flag in the first act.

Accepting this however still leaves us with the question as to why Gonzalo turns against Ruy López: if, as he claims, he is such a loyal subject of Castile, why should he be so opposed to a *privado* who does good for the realm he claims to love? His reaction to Ruy seems to spring from jealousy. Gonzalo is horrified to see Ruy López so richly rewarded when he has not been:

> ¡Brava fortuna de hombre! Hoy ha visto
> el rey a este soldado, y ya le ha hecho
> uno de su consejo, y yo le escribo
> seis años ha, y apenas me conoce:
> ¡Ruy López de copero y gentilhombre,
> y yo su contador! ¡Cielos! ¿Qué es esto?
> Yo le echaré de la privanza presto.
> (II, 447a).

The dispatches that are read out (at López's own request) demonstrate Ruy's prowess on the battlefield: this impresses the king who claims that he is in need of good soldiers, and immediately promotes him. We can at least understand why it is that Gonzalo feels hard done by: if he has indeed been asking for promotion for six years, it must be galling to watch a newcomer gain, after one attempt, what he has been striving for repeatedly. The difference between Gonzalo and Ruy, of course, is that Ruy has had a more successful career: although Gonzalo's actions in Ponferrada were admirable (if not foolhardy) in their grandiose bravery, they were nevertheless the actions of a soldier who had already lost the battle.

In Gonzalo, Poyo presents us with a soldier who is less able than the protagonist, but who is desperately seeking reward and promotion. Perhaps his theatrics in tearing down the flag and his horror at being defeated and tied up betray a desire to be seen as brave, and thereby earn promotion. He is desperate for the recognition that Ruy López receives, and his jealousy is piqued all the more by the successes that Ruy wins against Castile's enemies when he himself failed. As the plot moves on into *Adversa*, he will claim that he does not know why he hates Ruy López so much, but that it is merely in his stars ("Fuerza es/ de alguna estrella" (I, 472a)): in other words, it was inevitable. Thus Poyo was possibly trying to demonstrate the inevitable and pervasive nature of jealousy. It is not merely inherently malign courtiers who are affected by it. In Gonzalo, we see an antagonist who possesses little political skill, is inclined to brazen acts of impetuosity, and who is denied promotion, all of which give rise to jealousy. In these respects at least, the character is consistent across all six acts of the *bilogía*.

In his protagonist and antagonist, therefore, and their characterisation, Poyo has created two characters who incarnate the moral message his plays attempt to transmit: that good luck must always be followed by bad, and that good luck, no matter how well deserved, will always inspire envy. There is little political debate here on the validity of the office of the *privado*: instead, Poyo seems to recognise in the political career of *privados* the potential for dramatic reflection on the role of fortune, and in his *bilogía* he sets up envy as the natural enemy of good fortune: where one succeeds, the other will fail. In setting this up in a binary incarnated by the two characters who personify these traits, Poyo is establishing yet another feature of the *comedia de privanza* that will be taken up by later playwrights: the dual fortunes of two courtiers, who are set up in opposition to each other and either benefit from or suffer by the good or bad luck of the other.

Ruy's promotions as *Próspera* progresses are always deserved: without doubt he is the ablest politician in the play, and as previously explained, it is the war setting that helps bring this to the fore. As Caparrós Esperante points out, the war divides the drama down an imaginary line, as the scenes zigzag between the two rival camps (1987: 72). The only person who is nimble enough to jump between these camps with success is Ruy, and he is warmly received by both sides, demonstrating his abilities as a keen negotiator and diplomat. He earns his promotions through skill, and Don Gonzalo is therefore wrong to attribute his ascendance to luck alone. Indeed, the main content of the *comedia* is Ruy's brilliant diplomacy and Gonzalo's frustrated attempts at showing him up, both of which propel Ruy higher and higher in the king's, and the rest of the court's, estimation. Poyo places Ruy's good service in even sharper relief by contrasting it throughout with the inferior service the other kings we see on stage receive from their courtiers.

The most explicit example is Zaide's service to the Moorish king Almanzor. When Celinda disguises herself in pursuit of Ruy López, it is assumed that Ruy in fact abducted her, sparking the enmity between Castile and Granada. Almanzor sends Zaide to Enrico to deliver a letter demanding a payment and the punishment of Ruy López, as well as the return of Celinda. Zaide, however, fails to request the payment, instead reporting back to Almanzor that it was refused and withheld, as well as neglecting to tell Almanzor that Ruy López was not guilty of abducting her in the first place. Thus, Almanzor engages in full scale battle with Enrico; Zaide's motivation, of course, lies in his own love for Celinda, and hatred of Ruy for having stolen her heart. In this regard, Zaide's behaviour in government it entirely driven by self interest. In his initial audience with Enrico he wastes no time in telling him that he is not particularly committed to his diplomatic mission: "Prometí al Rey que vendría/ mas luego me arrepentí" (II, 449b). The result of his treasonous actions is a ruinously costly war, that Almanzor loses. Almanzor realises he has put his trust in the wrong statesman: "Sacásteme de Granada,/ la paz

me hiciste romper/[…]/ Hicísteme despedir/ la gente con traza y dolo,/ hállome cercado y solo,/ ¿Qué he de hacer, sino morir?" (III, 454b). We see first-hand the disastrous consequences of following the wrong advice, and in the choice of poor advisors who are led by self-interest rather than a desire to do the best for the realm. Zaide's offhand defence of his actions is telling in its indifference: "Es verdad que se emprendió/ por mi consejo esta guerra:/ erróse, que el hombre yerra" (II, 454b). He is right to suggest that humans err; however, he fails to recognise his own role in Almanzor's loss in the war. His denial of his role in bad government—his lies have led to this course of action—is not lost on the audience, who in a moment of dramatic irony, can only watch on in horror as Zaide lies to his king. That Zaide is murdered at the hands of Ruy López in revenge for the stain on Enrico's good name caused by Zaide's lies seems fitting: the model for excellent *privanza* embodied by Ruy López defeats that of bad *privanza* represented by Zaide. Watched by Almanzor, who gives his approval to Ruy's extra-judicial murder of one of his most important courtiers, we are clearly meant to agree with the Moorish king that this is a fitting end to the sort of advisor who deliberately gives damaging advice. In the first play, therefore, Poyo sets up a deliberately flattering contrast between advisors, to demonstrate Ruy's superiority. It is yet another tool that he employs in his didactic and moralistic portrayal of his *privado*.

However, it is worth remembering again Ruy's remarkable consistency throughout the plays. His talents and disposition do not change or alter. Ruy's luck really depends on whether his superiors are capable of recognising and using his talents, thus leaving Ruy powerless to the extent that in order to flourish he needs to be in a position where his abilities are given full rein. This will be the main differentiating factor between the first and second plays: in Enrico, Ruy finds a king well disposed towards him, and with whom he can do business. Where in *Privanza y caída* the theme of friendship was not so pronounced, here it is brought to the fore; by act II, the king repeatedly appeals to Ruy: "Que quiero que me tratéis/ como se trata un amigo",

“Dejad el Señor ahora;/ llamadme Enrico”, “No me llaméis majestad./ Guárdese en todo la ley/ de amigo, tratadme así” (all II, 450b). This burgeoning friendship will be the defining feature of Ruy’s *privanza*, and its lack in his relationship with his son in *Adversa* will be one of the biggest catalysts to Ruy’s downfall.

The political issue of friendship was hotly debated in the political literature at the turn of the seventeenth century. Antonio Feros looks extensively at the relationship between monarchs and *privados* and the nature of the “friendship” that can arise between them. He states that as early as the sixteenth century, political theorists had recognised the need for friends: in the early modern Spanish court, where one could only rely on God, to have a friend was of paramount importance. Citing Juan Luis Vives and Antonio de Guevara, Feros records how friendship encompassed a list of duties: unlike *aduladores*, who only looked for material benefits, a true friend had the obligation of trusting in and supporting their friend, especially in moments of problems and danger. Moreover, a real friend had to be honest, carrying the obligation to tell their companion the truth always, as one of the benefits of friendship was to receive advice, and this could only be done on the basis of the assumption of truth. At the same time, the friend must be warm and open, willing to defend their counterpart and to not listen to slights against them. True friendship, Feros suggests, was seen as a communion of desires and wishes, like a union of souls: as Juan Luis Vives says in *De anima et vita,* friendship constitutes a common soul, shared in two bodies. This confluence of souls led classical and modern writers to see friends as equals, or identical, so that when one saw one’s friend, it was like looking into a mirror. A friend was “otro yo” (2001: 48-81).

However, although there was a clear recognition of the fact that the king too, as a human, required the help and support of friends, there was a conflict with the conception of a monarch who had no equal, and who wielded a power that was divine. Fray Pedro Maldonado, in his

1609 *Discurso del perfecto privado* (which was dedicated to Lerma), defends the right of the king to have friends. Maldonado opines that since any private individual is allowed to have a close friend as an intimate, there is no reason to deny a similar right to the king. Moreover, he argues that if the *privado* behaves as he is supposed to, he should be the best part of the king, and therefore of the kingdom. This represents one of the first real defences of *privados*. It was repeatedly plagiarised, suggesting that it was liked by the authors who copied it, but also that the original was not particularly well known. Nevertheless, whether by coincidence, Maldonado's direct influence or that of the plagiarists, the ideas and arguments were repeated incessantly by other writers (Tomás y Valiente 1990: 131-2). However, the dominant ideological vision was of a monarch with two distinct natures: one public and one private. In his clear attack on the office of the *privado*, *Teatro de república y policía cristianas* (dating from 1615, and dedicated to Philip III), Juan de Santamaría extends the argument that the king needs a friend. However, he warns that usually, a man's friends are of his same rank and station, but since the king has no equal, this makes for a serious difficulty. This can only be overcome if the king chooses amongst his friends the most virtuous men he knows (Tomás y Valiente 1990: 143-4). In this, he corresponds to Quevedo's thinking on the subject: his *Política de Dios* (1617-26) also suggests that the king can have no equal. The *privado* must have boundaries to his power and what he can, and cannot, do in government. To his mind, the office of kingship cannot be shared: "Ser rey es oficio, el cargo no tiene parentesco;" he argues, "huérfano es" (Tomás y Valiente 1990: 138). Writing much later, Saavedra Fajardo elaborates on these ideas. In his *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano representada en cien empresas* (1640) he agrees that it is perfectly licit for a king to have a friend, given the heavy burdens of state, or indeed, for the king to be friends with his *privado*. However, he warns that royal power must not be threatened by the existence of the *privado*. The relationship between the king and *privado*

should be understood as a division of work, not a division of power: "Asístanle al trabajo, no al poder. Tenga ministros no compañeros de imperio" (Tomás y Valiente 1990: 140).

Poyo's very clear use of the lexis of friendship is therefore politically charged, and the relationship that the two men share is beneficial to them both, as well as to the realm. "Amistad", as it is shared between Ruy and Enrico, stands for loyalty, affection and good service in the case of Ruy, and generous reward in the case of the king. When the king happily comments on his *privado*'s reliable presence at his side, Ruy replies "Como niño regalado,/ acudo a quien bien me ha hecho". The king acknowledges this by stating "A quien yo mi pecho fío/ por fuerza he de hacerle bien" (II, 450a-b). The reciprocity between the two in terms of their office is clear. Constitutionally, however, it speaks to the conflict between the public and private facets of the king, with the king drawing a line between how the two should behave in front of others (i.e. when they are engaged in public work), and how to behave when they are alone and exercising their private friendship: "Guárdese en todo la ley/ de amigo, tratadme ansí;/ cuando hubiere gente aquí/ me trataréis como a rey" (II, 450b). The understanding between the two seems clear: at the end of *Próspera*, Enrico's final line to Ruy is "Vuestro rey y amigo soy" (III, 462c), demonstrating a clear separation of the public and the private. If the king ever errs slightly on the side of over-generosity and over-enthusiasm (he concerningly tells Ruy "Cuando os hago grande yo/ os he de igualar a mí" (II 450b)), then Ruy, in his caution, is able to curb his zeal: it is notable that Ruy never uses the term "amigo" to refer to the king, and in spite of the king's insistence in act II, he never refers to the king as "Enrico" again, whether they are alone or in public. Ruy's attitude to friendship is exemplary. Between them, then, they carve out a perfect, licit friendship and *privanza* that allows for benefit to the realm; Castile wins the wars, and peace heralds the end of the first play.

It is precisely the lack of such a carefully crafted king/*privado* relationship that will be the cause of Ruy's undoing in *Adversa*, where Poyo takes Ruy and Gonzalo and their ongoing feud into new circumstances. Caparrós Esperante demonstrates that Gonzalo has not improved his tactics from the first play, but in the immature Juan II, he finds someone who is prepared to listen (1987: 75). In this new, peaceful context, there are fewer opportunities for Ruy to prove his worth. The battle has moved from the field into the court, and this provides a dangerous setting for Ruy because if he is old, increasingly unwell and no longer proving his worth on the battlefield or trading on the goodwill of his friend the king, he is vulnerable to attack. No longer is he the trusted friend, but instead the tutor of a headstrong teenaged king. Where Enrico and Ruy had a meeting of minds, and a relationship that meant the licit execution of each of their offices, Ruy's relationship with Juan is uneven: where Ruy respects both his own and the king's office, and the roles expected of them, Juan does not respect Ruy's role as his tutor and advisor, and has a warped understanding of his own office that Ruy attempts to fix.

Perhaps the scene that best demonstrates this is that which closes the first act: Juan is determined to go out carousing at night. Ruy compels him not to, on pain of the whipping of his best friend, a young Álvaro de Luna (who is never seen on stage). Ruy's humility and reasoning for preventing the king's planned activities are sound: as his tutor he recognises that "por freno me puso/ de vuestro libre albedrío", and moreover that "El Rey/ no puede hacer cosa fea" (II, 472b-c). The king argues that "Sea lícito o no sea,/ en siendo mi gusto, es ley;/ por eso soy rey" (II, 472c), in a line of logic and expression that will become commonplace in the *comedia de privanza*. Ruy encourages the king to act within the boundaries set by the office he occupies; Juan is determined to see only that as king, he has the power and ability to do what he wants. Moreover, he fails to recognise the sound advice given to him by his advisor, and neglects to respect the office that Ruy represents: "¿Por qué he de estar yo sujeto/ a mi vasallo?" (II, 473b). Ruy, of course, does not represent a mere subject: as García tells us in the

opening lines of the play, in making Ruy the person responsible for the young king's education and upbringing, "fue dalle/ todo el gobierno absoluto/ del reino" (I, 466b). Whilst Ruy's interest is in the good of the state ("Que más le importa a Castilla/ la vida que aventuráis/ que la mía, cuando hayais/ por eso de destruilla" (I, 473a)), Juan fails to see the broader implications of his actions. It is telling that when Gonzalo comes on stage, he is going to speak to Juan's wishes and desires rather than his duties and his office. Gonzalo exploits the king's private self in order to derive public benefit in the form of *mercedes* and promotion. Indicatively, Juan greets him "Amigo, habeis de saber/ Que me ha hecho el Condestable/ Hoy un gran pesar" (I, 473b). The use of the term "amigo" here speaks to Juan's inferior understanding of the role of friendship within government. Gonzalo is his "friend" because he will tell him what he wants to hear; it is a far cry from that constitutionally harmonious relationship Ruy and Enrico shared. Indeed, Gonzalo perfectly manipulates the young king: rather than telling him that Ruy was right to curb his behaviour, recognising an opportunity to bring his enemy down, he instead brands Ruy's decision to whip Don Álvaro "desvergüenza notable" (I, 473b), and plants the seed of the king taking on his majority early in order to rid himself of his troublesome tutor.

In the following fall, the issue of "friendship" is taken to new extremes. As he is slowly stripped of wealth and titles, Ruy's former allies merely watch on: "Anda en desgracia ya un preso;/ No habrá amigo que le hable" (II 476a) comments Fajardo, thus demonstrating the fickle nature of friendship in court. Meanwhile, when Ruy is falsely accused of plotting with the Moors, when none of the court is prepared to arrest him, Juan states "A quien le prendiere/ le haré justicia mayor/ de Castilla. ¿Quién merece/ el título que le doy?" Having heralded his majority one scene previously by rewarding all the court with new titles (except Ruy, of course), he now goes one step further in attempting to buy the loyalty of his court.

Upon his accession, Philip III faced a large number of malcontents, who had become exasperated by Philip II's apparent parsimony. To counteract this, he followed advice to be merciful and generous. As early as 1598 he issued a decree to reconsider all unsuccessful petitions from the last reign which led to the giving out of hundreds of *mercedes*. In the longer term, this proved unsustainable: many more petitions flooded the court with the expectation of being granted, as others had been successful. It would also create a context that would spark criticism of Lerma and his family for manipulating the situation for their own advancement (Feros 2000: 57). When the state was forced to announce bankruptcy in 1607, the first order that Lerma decreed was to limit the number of *mercedes* granted, since the grants were so numerous and generous that they were bleeding the exchequer dry (190). This is possibly something that Poyo is alluding to here. The greed of Gonzalo and the rest of the court is placed in sharp contrast to Ruy. In an important subplot, Ruy handles the inheritance of a poor worker, to whom he hands over an entire inherited fortune. The reaction of the peasant is telling: he is utterly amazed at being given the whole amount. Ruy insists "Que yo no la he menester/ harta tengo, Gloria a Dios" (I, 469b-c). Ruy's remarkable generosity, and the peasant's simple incredulity (as well as his doggedness in ensuring that Ruy claim half should he ever require it) seems a pointed comment on court greed. This is reinforced again later in the play, when Ruy has been arrested and his goods and wealth have been confiscated. The greedy nobles look through his box for treasures: instead, they find petitions from the poor and relics, eliciting the response: "Señor, este es el tesoro/ de un Conde que no fue estable" (II, 480a)- a clear pun on the title that Ruy held as *Condestable*, indicating their incredulity that he has failed to enrich himself in the role.

Juan's relationships with his court are a far cry from those that Enrico enjoyed with his courtiers. Juan hands out rewards in an attempt to buy loyalty, rather than in recognition of good service. This is a clear example of bad kingship, brought about by the manipulation and

lies of Don Gonzalo, the new *privado*. There is a clear recognition in this second play that men can easily deceive each other: in rhetoric that reminds us of Zaide's in the first play, when Gonzalo's calumny is discovered, he claims: "¿Soy ángel yo?/ Hombre soy, bien pude errar" (III, 484c). Meanwhile the king, in recognition of his error, states mere verses later "¡Ah reyes, que fácil yerra/ un príncipe! ¡Ah humana ley!" (III 485b). Poyo does not criticise the king, but stresses the human frailty that affects all men, and the slippery, greedy nature of court and courtiers. The friendship that exists between Juan and his new *privado* is twisted and malign: it is based on revenge and personal gain, not on good governance or mutual respect. Juan's court and kingship remind us of Poyo's moral message in his *comedias*: man cannot trust fellow man. All glory is fleeting, and all we can do is attempt to live well, and trust in God.

Master of dramatic contrast, Poyo further highlights Juan and Gonzalo's warped relationship by furnishing Ruy with the most loyal of friends and servants, even at his lowest point. In act II, we see Juan's dictatorial meeting of his nobles, where he bullies them into submission in allowing him to take on his majority; in a mirror scene, we see Ruy López in communion with his servants and followers asking advice and listening to counsel. Moreover, in Herrera, Ruy López finds a servant who epitomises loyal and faithful service, and in fact, it is due to Herrera's dogged efforts that Ruy has his name cleared in the play's conclusion. Whilst Ruy accepts his poverty with stoicism (when he is left destitute and without possession, he elegiacally states "Ansí dormiré mejor;/ que no tendré qué guardar" (II, 479a)), Herrera is willing to sell his own title and home to raise funds for a now impoverished Ruy López (III, 482b). Ruy may be abandoned by the nobles, but in the end, it is the poor who come out in support of him; it is Gil Parral, the peasant who Ruy made a rich heir who comes to Ruy's aid. Giving him half of the inherited sum, Ruy exclaims "¡Oh prueba de la amistad!/ ¡Oh ejemplo de fe y amor!" (II, 482a). The message for the audience is clear: acting well and honourably

when you are the top of fortune's wheel will reap its benefits eventually, if not on earth, then certainly in Heaven.

Although in the play's conclusion Don Gonzalo's false accusations of treason[31] are discovered and Ruy is exonerated, by this stage he has escaped to Valencia and found favour and good service with the infantes of Aragon. Ruy is the character who states what must be the play's ostensible moral conclusion: "se engaña/ el hombre que en hombres fia" (II, 477b). Although we have seen that fortune does indeed move in inevitable circles, the best response to this unavoidable situation is to trust in God. However, Ruy's pragmatism is significant too. He refuses to return to Castile, stating instead "¿qué bien me puede hacer/ quien tanto daño me ha hecho?" (III, 489b). He has learnt that he can mitigate bad luck by not stepping deliberately into harm's way; but this is something he can only do having learnt that he cannot trust in Fortune or man, both of which are fickle and capricious, in this sense going through a process of *desengaño* that is typical of the literary age. Although this attitude—that of accepting the inevitable machinations of man and fortune—fits again into the fatalistic context of Spain's turn-of-the-century crisis, it also offers conclusions in terms of the office of the *privado*. It seems to suggest that not only do bad kings seem incapable of recognising good service, but also that bad kings cannot retain or attract good servants. An imprudent king, who gives out rewards as a matter of course and keeps around him corrupt ministers drives away good service.

Across Poyo's three genre-defining plays on *privanza* we see varying models of the king and favourite. Firstly, a greedy *privado* and a needy, weak king; secondly, an excellent *privado* and a king capable of recognising and exploiting talented ministers who prove their worth; finally, a good *privado* neglected by an appalling king. As the genre developed, playwrights would

[31] Charles Oriel (1996) analyses Gonzalo's use of the written word, or *papel*, as a metatheatrical device, where the *papel* becomes *papel* in the creation of fictional roles. This is part of a wider discussion of Derridian theory and the *comedia de privanza*, where the written word becomes a *mise en abyme* for the *privado* himself as "other", fictional and performative.

take on all formulations of the *privado*/king relationship (MacCurdy 1978: 77), but that we have three models in the first plays alone is indicative of a playwright coming to terms with the renewed phenomenon that he saw playing out in front of him, and indeed, these are plays that are more exploratory rather than derogatory in their presentation of *privanza*. They demonstrate how Poyo has taken facets of historical drama and, in his exploration of medieval *privados*, created his own, new genre with characteristics of its own: a manipulation of history to suit broader philosophical concerns; use of political career as a structuring principle; natural imagery of cycles; thematic emphasis on envy, greed and friendship; the contrasting careers of two nobles. These are the characteristics and ideas that were recognised by later playwrights, who spotted in Poyo's work thematic and dramatic potential. The genre blossomed from these first examples as later writers took these ideas and bent and manipulated them to their own ends and in their own ways; this is what the subsequent chapters of this study will seek to demonstrate.

As well as planting the literary roots for the genre and foregrounding many of the themes that would define the *comedia de privanza*, Poyo's plays also demonstrate the genre's ability to draw political parallels both with contemporary political theory, and with events in the Spanish court at the start of the seventeenth century. However, this should not lead to the conclusion that Poyo was criticising or praising the contemporary *privados*, or indeed, that future playwrights were doing so either. The questions that Poyo poses, on the nature of the relationship between a king and a *privado*, on the extent of the power wielded by a *privado*, and on the nature of life in court and political ambition, represent the first iterations of the sort of explorations that future playwrights would go on to make in greater depth and in more assured theatre.

However, from Poyo's first attempts we can say with some certainty that one of the striking characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* is its mirroring of contemporary political thought and its ability to echo, even if only faintly, what was happening in Spain at the time. However, as we shall see, these parallels are more pronounced in later examples of the genre; in Poyo's hands, the message he presents is to use the *privado* as a moral vessel to demonstrate the frailty of man and the unpredictability of luck. Stoic acceptance and caution, the two lessons Don Álvaro fails to learn and those which Ruy López exemplify, are the qualities Poyo recommends. Indeed, it is only in conjunction with the Ruy López diptych that his initial work on Álvaro de Luna comes into better focus. His inevitable fall that he makes no attempt to mitigate, his bourgeoning relationship with the king, and his treatment of his servants are in perfect contrast to Ruy López, who is modest, cautious and generous. The fact that both men fall demonstrates the moral truths of Poyo's work: nothing you can do will prevent envy. Moreover, all men are fickle, and all political careers must end. These are the essential truths upon which the rest of the genre will rest, and subsequently build. In literary terms, playwrights will copy and innovate on the structures, images and themes Poyo instigates. In political terms, they will reflect more deeply on the questions Poyo first presents, unpicking and adding nuance to the thorny political issues that arise from the rule of a monarch with a friend. All of them, however, will owe a debt to Poyo's first examples of the *comedia de privanza*.

FÉLIX LOPE DE VEGA

Political Commentary and Poetic Mastery

Damián Salucio del Poyo may have provided the first examples of the *comedia de privanza* but it is with Lope de Vega that the genre grew to have an increasing political awareness and true poetic quality. The three plays under examination here are all dated by Morley and Bruerton as between 1599 and 1610: *Los Guzmanes de Toral* (1599-1603), *La corona merecida* (before 1604) and *La fortuna merecida* (probably 1604-10) can all be said to bring to bear significant reflection on Lerma's most powerful years. As this chapter will seek to show, Lope's examples of the *comedia de privanza* are nuanced and deeply political. They dwell especially on the tension that lies at the heart of service, between service to the desires of a monarch, service to the good of the realm at large and service simply to self. Lope dramatizes the issue of reward of *privados*, and what should truly motivate any courtier serving the king. His views have far-reaching conclusions, that implicitly go to the heart of the Lerma regime at the height of his power and wealth. Equally, he dwells far more heavily on the role of the king, and what *privanza* says about kingship. Specifically, he uses the visual aspects of drama to make these points, heavily emphasising appearance, dress and the body, and their implications for our understanding of power. Meanwhile, we see that his handling of the subject material shows a conscious use of traits Poyo instigated in the earliest *comedias de privanza*: we see moon imagery, the image of the wheel of fortune, use of the *bilogía* structure and reflection on the mutability of fortune. However, unlike Poyo, Lope uses these traits in a way that can be read as explicitly political. Additionally, he grafts other theatrical genres and Golden Age conventions on to Poyo's original blueprint. Thus, Lope's recreation of Poyo's work on *privanza* suggests how use of the trajectory of a *privado* as a basis for drama has developed into a recognisable genre: as we have seen above, Lope was aware of Poyo's work, referencing it in the dedication to *Los muertos vivos*. More than this, however, we can see how Poyo's work

was being consciously copied and produced, and now in the case of Lope, even deliberately manipulated and subverted to make political points. His *comedias de privanza* can be found at the forefront of the critical argument over the nature of Lope's theatre, as either propaganda in support of a monarcho-seigneurial regime, or as politically probing. With ideas and poetry that directly reflect both the *arbitristas* and fellow poets, and full of direct and indirect allusions to Lerma's regime, these plays continue to show how the *comedia de privanza* reflects its years of creation, and the close relationship between this genre and Philip's reign. Thus in Lope's *comedias de privanza* we find points of reference to Poyo, but with his more expert hands, he moulds the genre into a more political, and more theatrically engaging offering. Lope's masterful dramaturgy and his more overt political commentary constitute the main characteristics of Lope's manipulations of the *comedia de privanza*.

Although Morley and Bruerton consider *Los Guzmanes de Toral* of doubtful authenticity, those few critics who have written on it broadly attribute it to Lope. Ferrer Valls considers the play to be an obvious attempt at gaining the favour of the Guzmán family (1998: 228), and indeed, Payo de Guzmán, the play's protagonist, is one of the more virtuous examples of a *privado* to be found anywhere within the genre. However, dealing as extensively as it does with *privanza*, and given its years of composition (1599-1604), as well as being a *comedia genealógica*[32], it also constitutes an early *comedia de privanza*. In this example, Lope's debt to Poyo is clear: like Poyo, he broadly uses the trajectory and rising and falling fortunes of his protagonist as a structuring principle; imagery of the wheel of fortune is recurrent; friendship, loyalty and jealousy are themes that dominate the play's plot. However, as we might expect in the hands of the Phoenix, this early example of a *comedia de privanza* is far from simplistic, navigating a course between satire and propaganda. In terms of form, it innovates, building on the simple

[32] For more on this, and the play as an example of the *comedia genealógica* see Ferrer Valls (2004), and more briefly, Gutiérrez (1975) and Peale (2004).

pattern of rise/fall to create a more politically intriguing plot. Moreover, Lope integrates further contemporary literary tropes, most notably *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, into his more complex work. Although Poyo broadly advocates for a stoic acceptance of the mutability of fortune, Lope goes further, turning this *comedia* into a condemnation of court life, with his noble protagonist eventually eschewing the court altogether and choosing to return to rural isolation. The play comments on both *privanza* and on court more generally in a barely-concealed attack that recognises the need for advice, but that makes clear that those courtiers who seek only their own enrichment are to be avoided by the monarch at all costs.

In this sense, it has clear links to its moment of creation. The years 1601-6 marked the court's move to Valladolid, away from Madrid, thus leaving Lope, as Wright records, in exile in Madrid whilst his contemporaries flocked to court in Valladolid (2001: 67). This sense of exile permeates *Los Guzmanes*, with its clear binary between court and country. Wright argues that a *suelta* of four *romances* attributed to Lope, the third of which was a retelling of the execution of Álvaro de Luna, demonstrates opposition to Lerma. Although not conclusively by Lope, the use of his name on the *suelta* proves that Lope had become "an emblem of the abandoned court city" (2001: 68). In these early years of the reign, therefore, Lope's position outside the court was well known. In his biography of Lope, Antonio Sánchez Jiménez highlights this too, noting that despite being at the peak of his court career in 1599, between 1600-1606/7, he did not enter the service of a single courtier, and moreover, that this period, in which he was distanced from the court, saw him pen frequent protests against court life, including a 1604 letter where he branded the court "océano de perdidos, lotos de pretendientes y escuela de desvanecidos" (2018: 128). This criticism of court life saturates *Los Guzmanes de Toral*. Moreover, although we do not see a plot that mirrors Lerma's own *privanza*, Payo's blunt and stoic refusal to accept promotion or personal wealth in return for service represents a very obvious echoing of the early criticisms of Lerma's own uncanny ability to enrich both himself and his family. Such an

outspoken criticism perhaps explains, according to Justo García Soriano (1929), why Lope did not seek to have the *comedia* published[33]. In this *comedia* therefore, we see Poyo's initial eye to contemporary political events developed further: Lope's deft touch develops the genre in literary terms, but also continues to prove how rooted the *comedia de privanza* was in its moment of creation: Lope provides commentary, however obliquely, both on Lerma's *privanza* and on his own situation as poet in exile.

The play tells the story of Payo de Guzmán, an Asturian nobleman, who lives a quiet, unassuming life in the countryside. However, he comes to see king Alfonso crowned, and approaches him to kiss his hand, whereupon his humility and self possession impress the king such that he calls him into his service. Payo aims to "mostrar/ como a de usarse del bien/ y a de prevenirse el mal"[34] (ll. 965-7; a maxim that serves as the play's subtitle), and maintains his humility and self-control throughout the play's ups and downs, eventually returning to his rural outpost at the play's conclusion in spite of his exemplary service. Drawn as he is from rural obscurity, the contrast between the play's protagonist and the other courtiers has ensured that interpretation of the *comedia*'s main interest has followed two main strands: its presentation of *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*[35] and in its setting up of a perfect paradigm of *privanza*, in a fashion that Ferrer Valls equates to Quevedo's *Como ha de ser el privado* (2004: 16). Inevitably, these two strands are very closely linked in a *comedia* that offers such pertinent commentary on the early seventeenth-century Spanish court. Payo's identity is rooted in his rural *aldea*. His first appearance marks out how he differs from the typical courtier, with stage

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[33] As Peale (2004) highlights, the play remained unedited until 1899, which accounts for how little known it seems to be today.

[34] All quotations from the play are taken from Antonio Restori's 1899 edition of *Los Guzmanes de Toral o Cómo ha de usarse del bien y ha de prevenirse el mal*, and are given by line number.

[35] Gutiérrez (1975) explores in detail how Lope has used Guevara's *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* in *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, suggesting that the structure of the work follows Guevara's ideas, and highlighting those verses that echo Guevara most explicitly.

directions explicitly telling us he must be "vestido a lo asturiano"[36]. Dress and appearance will have great significance in this play, as Payo's refusal to wear court dress will become a defining feature of his *privanza*. However, his country dress is not merely a reminder of his geographical origins. As Gutiérrez argues, in Payo's dress, "El autor se complace en romper esa equivalencia entre el traje y la condición del que lo lleva" (1975: 123). Dressed as a lowly countryman, our expectations for his character should not match those characteristics of intelligence and political acumen of which he will soon prove himself capable, thus setting up a conflict between *ser* and *parecer* that will become the plot's driving force. Indeed, Gutiérrez defines the mismatch between dress and temperament in the protagonist as the main "punto de arranque" of the *comedia* (1975: 123). Meanwhile, David Hildner argues that Lope makes use of both the positive and negative attributes of Payo's rustic roots in this *comedia*:

> Se trata, en estas sus primeras escenas, de un personaje que muestra rasgos de rústico charlatán y huraño, de vasallo leal y de filósofo sabio. Su mismo nombre, Payo, deformación de Pelayo, indica, por su parecido con el victorioso de Covadonga, los orígenes montañeses de la Reconquista y, por lo tanto, de la hidalguía más impecable. No obstante, su nombre llevaba connotaciones léxicas de "agreste, villano, y záfio o ignorante", según *el Diccionario de Autoridades* (2015: 6).

Our negative preconceptions based on Payo's appearance are shared by those on stage: Payo is prevented from approaching the king by Don Álvaro because "os falta la nobleza/ como en el traje se ve" (ll. 27-8), eventually being told "Que grande descortesía:/ sal bárbaro!" (ll. 34-5). However, in response to the offence, Payo simply responds "No hables tal,/ que el bárbaro solo es/ en cualquiera noble opinión/ él que tiene, según ves,/ en el cuerpo de ambición/ por alma el propio interés" (ll. 35-40). This exchange perfectly demonstrates the role that Payo's attire plays in the *comedia*. It functions not simply as a visual reminder of Payo's roots, but

[36] Ruano de la Haza (2000) explores the importance of costume on the stage, indicating its role in reliance on convention in order to allow audiences to easily identify the social position of the character, with an emphasis on type rather than a realistic representation of what people wore at the time (78). He goes on to list "asturianos" as one of many regional and national dresses that the audience could expect to see on stage (83).

stands as a physical representation of a whole collection of moral and political behaviours that Payo will exhibit but his contemporaries in court will not. Payo explains in the second act:

> Yo privo, y puedo caer:
> y ansí vengo a conservar
> mi gusto, con no abarcar
> aquello que he de perder.
> […]
> Por aquesto aqueste traje
> no a de apartarse de mí.
> Con él, García, subí,
> con él mi privanza baje.
> Demás que no ay lengua ruda
> que no diga ál que a subido:
> "Este a mudado el vestido,
> tanbien la condición muda!"
> Yo no la pienso mudar
> aunque vea más claro el dia,
> ni he de ser otro, García,
> que él que he sido en mi solar.
> (ll. 1295-319).

For Payo, his outer appearance equates to his moral philosophy: just as he will stoically accept the rise and fall of his position, so he will remain clothed in his more humble attire. He will remain constant, both in clothing and in attitude. When his sister comes to court dressed in fashionable finery in the second act, he refuses to recognise her, reprimanding her for not taking his advice to remain in Toral and in her simple attire (ll. 1427-71). It is an attitude that he extends to his office, refusing promotions and preferring to eschew the spotlight, as will be explored below. His clothes serve, then, as a visual metaphor for his conduct in court and his approach to the office of *privado*. Indeed, it later comes to light that it was not actually his dress that caused Álvaro to attempt to block Payo's access to the king in the first scene, but instead an old feud between the two families. Payo's dress was merely a cover for Álvaro's uncourtly, and self-interested behaviour. Lope's use of rural dress seems to say less about the man wearing it than about the conduct of those around him. However, it is this very attire that will be the constant point around which his enemies will rally: in act II, it is both a source of

gossip early in the Act, and the target for a vituperative attack when García thinks he has been betrayed by his friend. Payo is branded "aquel medio salvaje" (l. 1712). This recalls Álvaro's initial rebuff of Payo in the opening lines of the play, "sal bárbaro!" (l. 35). Lope opens a binary between barbarism and civilisation, with the rustic Payo at its heart: Álvaro and the other ambitious, envious courtiers may brand Payo as the savage, but we are left to draw our own conclusion as to whether the court, or Payo's rural retreat, represents civilisation, and the better model to follow.

Certainly, the rural *aldea* of Toral epitomises simplicity and retreat, and it is with this landscape that Payo corresponds harmoniously: we note that he is introduced as "el mancebo/ a quien las montañas dan/ de Diógenes nombre nuevo" (ll. 244-6)[37], highlighting his reciprocity with the landscape in which he finds his origin. His *lira* at the centre point of the first act (ll. 523-64) as he contemplates his *locus amoenus* serves as an elegant distillation of the message of the play as a whole. He says:

> Gracias a Dios que miro
> ya por la chiminea el negro humo
> salir adonde aspire
> mas que al real palacio; en quien presume
> que son cameleones
> los hombres, sustentados de ambiciones.
> (ll. 523-8).

The image of the chameleon is touched on briefly by Gutiérrez: besides its metaphorical connotations of a flatterer (as seen in Covarrubias' definition), he argues that their colour contrasts with Payo's simple clothing (1975: 126). Indeed, the lexis of clothing and the contrast between colour and its absence, and the implicit moral equation, can be seen by Greida too,

[37] Lope showed particular interest in the philosopher Diogenes. As we shall, in this instance, the idea of plain talking with a monarch will have appealed to Lope, and indeed, Payo de Guzmán's frank manner with the king is striking. For more on Lope's use of Diogenes see Luis Gómez Canseco's 2014 article, "Diógenes como empresa personal en Lope de Vega".

when she admonishes Aldonza for attempting to "vestir a mi rostro de colores" (l. 1784). As the *lira* progresses, in Horatian imagery that strongly recalls Luis de León's 'La vida retirada', we see him glorying in rural simplicities: high mountains whose horizons are devoid of vanity and pretension; pure, transparent water; bird song that wakes him in the morning; fruit trees that offer him all he needs. All of this is in utter contrast to the court, whose lodestones are "la guerra y la inquietud" (l. 548). His conclusion is that "yo más precio ver esta librea/ que abril al campo ha dado,/ que cuanto goza el rey, pues es prestado" (ll. 550-2). The only elaborate clothing and rich colour he is willing to countenance is that which appears in the fields. The court has nothing to offer him, which he expresses with further recourse to natural imagery: "siendo todo vano fingimiento,/ es vanidad muy necia/ hacer estimación de lo que es viento" (ll. 560-2). Indeed, Payo's rural haven, and his harmonious place within it, is enough to spark the envy of the courtiers who visit him there: at the first act's conclusion, when the king and García come to Payo to summon him into service, looking on at the scene of Payo and his *paisanos* eating a simple meal from the edge of the stage, García remarks "Que esto es gozar de la vida/ gran Señor, y por mi vida/ que envidia en mi pecho ha puesto" (ll. 729-31)[38]. Ironically, García, a creature of court, allows even this scene of rural harmony to inspire envy within him. Unlike Payo, who stoically distances himself from envy, greed and ambition, García is incapable of doing so. Where Payo corresponds to the ideals represented by rural retreat, the king and García do not.

It is García who proves to be the focal point for envy in the *comedia* in spite of ostensibly being Payo's greatest ally in court. Indeed, Payo goes out of his way to advance García's career, recommending him for the military promotion instead of accepting it himself, and later, giving

[38] The scene of the table and simple meal between friends also recalls Luis de León's *lira*: "A mí una pobrecilla/ mesa, de amable paz bien abastada/ me baste" ('La vida retirada', ll. 69-71). Equally it recalls Alexander's visit to Diogenes.

up the hand of Aldonza, the king's cousin, for his friend who is deeply in love with her "para que eches de ver hoy/ Don García Ibáñez, que soy/ tu amigo el más verdadero" (ll. 1936-8). In spite of this, García is always ready to jump, erroneously, and in moments of dramatic irony, to the wrong conclusion about his friend. The message seems to be that it is impossible to live without envy, and the real question at stake is how to combat it. Gutiérrez suggests that the lesson Payo teaches us is "No hay que apegarse al bien, es decir, a la prosperidad; de ese modo, se inmuniza uno contra la adversidad. Hay que mantener una ecuanimidad estoica" (1975: 128), thus demonstrating the importance of Payo's refusal to change his clothing. There is a clear binary, therefore, between the machinations of court, and the simpler harmony of the countryside. Lope crafts a sophisticated dramatic rendering of the ideals of *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea* and grafts it on to a political play, using its ideals to better demonstrate the perils of court. Moreover, he creates in Payo an outsider to court life, who corresponds to his own position away from court.

However, once in court, Payo's actions give the play its highly political flavour, thanks to his exemplary conduct. Part of what makes him such a politically sympathetic favourite to critics is his quiet and unshakeable sense of self-belief. He refuses to be deterred by Álvaro's rebuffs in the first act, stating "Dejad, llegaré:/ que soy noble y tan igual / del Rey, que su sangre es mía" (ll. 30-2). As he returns to Toral from León, his servants are struck by his decision to walk away from the king. Payo reassures them however, in a moment that will recall Lope's later work *El villano en su rincón*, "Yo soy Rey en mi solar:/ su favor ni su desdén/ no temo" (ll. 662-4). It is a striking attitude that he adopts: he shows that he is not afraid of the king, and more importantly he shows that he does not see the need to flatter or please him. That is not to say that he does not humbly respect the king or the office he holds: quite the contrary, when the king enters his house, he refuses to sit, stating "no dirán de mi ley/ que me iguale con un Rey/ siendo un humilde vasallo" (ll. 781-3), earning the admiration of the surrounding

courtiers. This is not an isolated incident: throughout the play, Payo makes it clear that he is aware of his position in relation to the king: Alfonso is his "señor natural" (l. 747), and he states to him flatly "no estoy igual a ti" (l. 1534). In underlining this point, Lope aligns the politics of his protagonist with those *arbitristas* and other writers who place such a heavy emphasis on the inferiority of the *privado* to the king, most strikingly Quevedo later in the century in his *Política de Dios y gobierno de Cristo*. The theoretical boundary the *privado* must never cross is that which would allow the *privado* to equal the king in terms of influence and power. Indeed, throughout the play, in clear reciprocity with political writings, he makes recourse to the image of the mirror in order to remind the audience of what well-ordered government should look like. Early in the play, Alfonso is reminded that as king, "De España eres el espejo" (l. 300), in a moment of striking similarlity to the thinking of Juan de Mariana. Meanwhile, later in the act Alfonso himself recognises in Payo "un hombre que podía/ ser espejo de mil reyes". Just as the king reflects the subjects he governs, so the favourite serves as an example to the king in helping him toward good government. Payo himself reciprocates the image in talking to García at the end of the second act in declaring "como en cristal, puedes verme/ el alma" (ll. 1963-4). In the exchange of mirror imagery, Lope furnishes his *comedia* with a distinctly political discourse that falls into line with contemporary thinking on the *privado*.

This extends further when we recall Rivadeneira's staunch opposition to *privados* who use the office in order to enrich themselves. In Payo we find a *privado* who is not motivated by such self-serving principles. As we have seen, he is content with his rural retreat, and reasonably determined to remain there. His ambition, if he has any, resides only in serving the king if asked, and it is only because it *is* asked of him that he goes. Proving himself a shrewd judge of character, and thus at odds with many kings in the *comedia de privanza*, who often have poor instincts, the king is determined to bring Payo to court, recognising in him his capacity for excellent service ("Hoy traigo un nuevo Aristídes/ al gobierno de Castilla" (ll. 515-6)).

However, Payo does not come easily: instead, he agrees only in return for the forgiveness of Álvaro and Urgel, who during the meal, have stormed the stage and attempted to murder Payo, revealing the family grievance that had made Álvaro attempt to prevent Payo from kissing the king's hand in the first scene. The king immediately uses the foiled plot as his chance to issue his command that Payo return with him to León. Payo's response is predictably lukewarm, but he uses the forgiveness of his would-be murderers as the condition of his service: "Pues, si he de ir allá, Señor,/ aunque mi bien me quitáis/ a los dos que están aquí/ los habéis de perdonar/ o no mandar que vaya" (ll. 952-6). It is a striking speech that goes beyond the moral implications of forgiving wrong doers that we see in Salucio del Poyo's presentation of Ruy López de Ávalos. Payo instead uses it to take control of the transaction, by brokering conditions for his own service. Moreover, he openly affirms without shame that he has no wish to leave Toral and enter the king's service. It is stunning in its quiet audacity, and sets the tone for the relationship between monarch and *privado* for the rest of the play. In Payo, the king has a *privado* who knows his own mind, and who will not allow sycophancy or personal gain to dictate their relationship.

Indeed, he is outspoken and unfailing in his opposition to the king when Alfonso strays towards bad government, at the expense of his own enrichment. In the second act, his arrival in court is signalled by a switch in verse form to the stately *octava real*, and in his first act of government, he refuses promotion, instead recommending García for the position, insisting "pretendo/ irme con él tan solo como soldado" (ll. 1229-30). More strikingly, in the middle of the act, Alfonso demands taxation from the people of León. Seeking Payo's advice, Payo asks carefully detailed questions to ascertain the amount and nature of the tax, before refusing to allow him to apply it to the people:

> [...] Echo de ver,
> Alfonso, que estas no son

cosas que he de conceder;
y ansí me levanto en pie
de impedirlas obligado,
solamente porque sé
que si te hablo sentado
a concederlas vendré.
Y respondo que León
no puede ese pecho dar.
(ll. 1569-1578).

We note that it is not an arrogant refusal: he stands before his king, putting himself in the inferior position (as we saw him do at dinner with the king in the first act), refusing to sit across from him as an equal[39]. His argument is that it is too great a financial burden for the people to bear. Instead, he resolves to pay the sum himself from the *mercedes* that the king has granted him, as well as from the personal wealth he has amassed in Toral. However, he does not mince his words: he tells the king outright "que injusto ha sido/ lo que has querido imponer" (ll. 1600-1), and goes further to acquaint the king with the fact that "Veo del reino las quejas,/ las voces que dando está" (ll. 1605-6). Again, Payo's confidence is striking, as is his forceful honesty. Just as we saw in Poyo's treatment of taxation in *La privanza y caída de Don Álvaro de Luna*, Lope might be making a small nod to the unprecedented taxation that heralded the opening of Philip III's reign. What differentiates Lope's treatment however, is Payo's selfless gesture to cover the costs himself, in what is undoubtedly a more pointed attack on Lerma who would never make such a gesture himself. C. Pérez Bustamente meticulously lists just a selection of the *mercedes* that Philip III granted over the course of his reign, eventually calculating that in all, he gave away over 40 million ducats, much of which went to Lerma and those associated with his faction (1950: 53-8). Lope's demonstration of magnanimity on the part of the *privado* makes the criticism that we see in Poyo even more direct, especially as the criticism here is not levelled at the tax in itself, but at the source of the revenue. It is never once suggested that the

[39] Combined with the issue of dress, the issue of physical presence and position on the stage is heavily emphasised in this play. Lope seems to be aware of emphasising Payo's position and difference beyond the words he speaks. Payo's self-possession would suffuse every aspect of his on-stage presence in performance.

tax is not justified or required.

The exchange between king and *privado* is made all the more noteworthy by the way in which the king welcomes Payo's advice and actions. He sought Payo's opinion in his capacity as *regidor* of León, without any foregone conclusion: "Conozco tu entendimiento./ Mas óyeme atento" (ll. 1535-6). Indeed, this is proved by his reaction to Payo's response. Rather than anger, he instead questions Payo, asking of León's *ciudadanos* "Pues, no son/ricos?" (ll. 1581-2), hoping to reach a better understanding. He finally concludes "Por esa lealtad me da/ los brazos, que me aconsejas/ solo lo que bien me está" (ll. 1602-4). The relationship between the two men is, in many ways, perfect. We see a king who seeks advice, and does not presume to rule without help, listening to a wise counsellor capable of offering practical, sound advice, to the improvement of the realm. Moreover, as *privado*, Payo is playing an essential role in government: he has proactively prevented popular unrest (in contrast to Poyo's Álvaro de Luna), and without his intervention, the state would undoubtedly be in worse shape. Moreover, he does so without deriving any personal benefit. On the contrary, he becomes personally worse off, in what is perhaps an irony aimed at Lerma. This being the case, then, how does the relationship end with Payo in rural retreat, and the state deprived of such an eloquent and effective *privado*?

The problem seems to be in Payo's striking autonomy. The stoic attitude represented by his choice of dress proves to be well placed in the play's conclusion, when he faces the inevitable fall from grace, which occurs when Payo refuses an enraged king the hand of his sister Greida. His reasons for the refusal are sound: that a king must marry his equal. However, such is the king's anger that he banishes Payo and marries Greida anyway. Although he later relents, and gives back Payo's honour and titles, as well as the hand of his cousin Doña Aldonza, Payo accepts only the marriage, and eschews court life for good, preferring to return to his *aldea*.

Although we have previously had reason to praise Alfonso as a king in this play, he shows here, as is so often the case in the genre, that affairs of the heart are an impediment to good kingship. Meanwhile, we see that Payo was right to resist the temptations of court advancement and to rise above petty ambition. As he returns to Toral at the end of the *comedia*, it is with a distinct sense of indifference: "Quedaré acá/ sin que me dés cosa ninguna" (ll. 2948-9), whilst the audience is left with a real concern over the loss for the king and the country.

Payo seems to be far too autonomous to fit easily within the court structure, and he breaks free of the traditional symbiotic relationship between king and *privado*, where the ambition of the outstanding courtier is rewarded in return for excellent service. Can court really ever shape itself to accommodate truly excellent advisors like Payo? Certainly, Payo's attitude to the court seems to suggest that it is impossible. He had determined to "mostrar/ como a de usarse del bien/ y a de prevenirse el mal" (ll. 965-7) in his *privanza*. Teresa Ferrer Valls sees this maxim as a representation of the fluctuations of fortune Payo understands as inherent within court life:

> Entendiendo "el bien" como el estado de privanza, y el "mal" como el de caída, apuntándose una de las constantes temáticas de todos estos dramas de la privanza: el estado de privanza en el favor real es presentado como algo inherentemente transitorio, sometido a los cambios de fortuna. Las reflexiones sobre las mudanzas, que pueden poner en peligro en el favor real al protagonista y provocar su caída, ocupan en estos dramas un lugar principal ("el tiempo todo lo muda / que tiene inmenso poder"), y son frecuentes las alusiones a la rueda de la fortuna. (2004: 17).

Certainly such an attitude would explain Payo's initial displeasure at the thought of court life: if all position and power is fickle and fleeting, why attempt it at all? Moreover, it would follow the precedent set by Salucio del Poyo for the *comedia de privanza* to act as a vehicle to dramatize the turn of fortune's wheel. Indeed, it is with recourse to this set of images that Lope most clearly shows his similarity to Salucio del Poyo's work. When Payo is first given the hand of Doña Aldonza (he later gives her up to his friend García), his appeal to Fortune could be lifted straight out of any Poyo's plays: "Fortuna, detén la rueda,/ que ya la cumbre llegamos/[…]/ Pues quanto más me deribes/ vengo a estar más levantado" (ll. 1620-6).

However, Lope's play goes beyond Poyo's rather superficial recognition of the mutability of fortune, because, ironically, Payo rejects the benefits of the wheel's highs. He does not "usarse del bien", as instead he deliberately prevents his own material rise. The strategy he employs is not conducive to a successful mutually beneficial relationship between court and *privado*. The play's strapline, then, is somewhat ironic. Lope seems to suggest that the best *privados* understand that there is no way to benefit from the office of *privado*: it must never be occupied by those seeking their own advancement, as this is not an inherent consequence of the job.

Far from dramatising the perfect relationship between king and *privado*, then, this play raises important political questions that are not posed by Poyo's less sophisticated works. George C. Peale notes the worrying questions that are left unanswered by Lope's play. Firstly, the critic asks: "Si como enseñaban los doctrinarios y la opinión popular desde la Edad Media la institución del privado del rey es inherentemente buena y necesaria para el bienestar del Estado, ¿por qué, o cómo puede el ex-valido negarle al monarca su petición de volver a la corte?" (2004: 131). A convincing answer to this may well be that having already experienced the king's wrath, Payo has every reason to be tentative in re-entering royal service. Since his only reason for going to court in the first place was at the king's express demand, when the king does not insist upon his return at the play's close, why would he choose to, given his aversion to court life? Perhaps another, more politically incisive way of phrasing Peale's question might be: why does Alfonso's court repel good service? Why is it that he is incapable of holding onto such a valuable minister? The answer seems to be that such a minister is not compatible with court life. Payo cannot reconcile himself to life at court, and other ministers cannot reconcile themselves to him: the king, in the end, could not follow Payo's advice; García could not truly see beyond his rivalry; Álvaro and Urgel were blinded by factional resentment. Payo cannot therefore be said to be the perfect paradigm for the *privado* because he inherently does not fit into court life. Peale's second question is "si el oficio del privado es tan sufrido y peligroso

como declaran los protagonistas de estos dramas, ¿por qué se le ruega al rey conferir sus títulos y honores a su mejor amigo o a su hijo?" (2004: 131). This question, whilst valid, seems to neglect one of the most important aspects of *privanza*: that it is inherently a symbiotic relationship, where the king benefits from good advice, and the nobleman gains power, prestige and wealth in return. Moreover, Peale seems to forget that it is an honour to be chosen to serve the king, rather than a punishment. Payo, who actively refuses all kind of advancement, serves only out of duty, and whilst this is admirable, it is inevitable that to him it should eventually become a rather painful, thankless task.

Perhaps it was Lope's intention to remind audiences of the delicate balance the *privado* treads between self-interest and honest service. He is perhaps quietly suggesting that no noble can really serve without sufficient reward. Put more bluntly, any system that rewards good service so generously will always attract more than just the purely public spirited: it will attract its fair share of those seeking their own advancement, and this can squeeze out those of more wholesome intention. Indeed, the only way Payo could have comfortably stayed, it would be reasonable to infer, would have been if everyone in court thought and acted as he did, as this would be the only way to mitigate the criticisms he brings against the "chameleons" of court. This may, of course, be a subtle nod to the vast, perhaps over-generous *mercedes* Lerma was collecting from Philip III. Beyond the issues of rewards, however, remains the issue that no matter how high the initial rise, political careers nearly always fall eventually. The *comedia* does not necessarily come up with a convincing solution to this, beyond quiet stoicism and a determination not to allow promotion and altered position to change you: Payo spends the most successful part of his career in the shadow of the inevitable fall. *Los Guzmanes de Toral* is far more political than simply a play dramatizing the turns of fortune's wheel, and it demonstrates the more subtle way in which the *comedia de privanza* develops in Lope's hands. The genre, in this way, has already started to develop beyond Poyo's use of it, for it is now asking

significant political questions about the office of the *privado*. Lope has taken the trope of *menosprecio de corte y alabanza de aldea*, and thus created a protagonist who in his defying of our expectations, makes timely political points that chime exactly with both political thinking of the time, and criticisms against Lerma's personal enrichment. Moreover, it speaks to Lope's own disenchantment and isolation from court. In the play's structure, choice of imagery and political and moral philosophy, he owes a clear debt to Poyo. However, he has used it to advance more politically incisive questions. Its conclusion, where Payo turns his back on court, thus leaving the country implicitly worse off for it, is more problematic than anything with which Poyo presented his audiences. Development in this sense is clear.

Los Guzmanes de Toral first exposes some of the issues that Lope considered to be problematic within *privanza*; *La corona merecida*, written only shortly afterwards (broadly attributed to 1603[40]), consists of an even more complex and involved exploration of the issue. In this play, a young Alfonso VIII is so overcome by lust for the sister of one of his favourites that he forces her into a position where she must burn her own flesh to repel his advances. Crucially, however, he is aided and abetted by a cast of favourites, all of whom, to varying degrees and in various ways, fail to prevent the king's outlandish behaviour. Like *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, it derives much of its political force from its use of other dramatic conventions. Indeed, Ferrer Valls (2001) discusses the play as an honour drama, and Doña Sol's remarkable struggle for her own honour marks her out as worthy of attention. Unlike so many other honour dramas where the male characters defend the lady's honour to the point of fanaticism, here, Sol is left bereft by a whole cast of male characters, and is instead forced to take matters into her own hands as sole protector of her honour (Ferrer Valls 2001: 42). Discussing Sol's remarkable self-sacrifice,

[40] Both Montesinos (1923) and Rodríguez-Gallego (2015) discuss the play's dating at length in their editions of the play, concluding that 1603 is indeed the correct date. Although Carreño-Rodríguez (2009: 81 n.155) suggests it was composed in 1599 to celebrate Philip III's marriage, he does not offer evidence in support of this.

Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarno highlights that this solution to the honour predicament stands alone in Lope's honour dramas. Sol negates her body's role as desireable, both to her husband and the king, and in so doing, writes herself into Spanish legend, thus illustrating "just what is required of women to be included in the definition of "Spanishness"" (1994: 95). That this stands alone in Lope's honour dramas suggests that the play does not coincide neatly with the paradigmatic *dramas de honor*. This is especially true as the play puts such a heavy emphasis on Spanish monarchical identity: the play's very title poses questions about monarchy and places the crown—both that which is symbolically presented to Sol at the play's conclusion, and the institution it metonymically represents—at the centre of our understanding of the work. Lope has taken the themes of the honour play, and has grafted them onto the *comedia de privanza* in order to present us with a play with startling political ramifications.

The play's political nature is reinforced even further if we consider how Lope has developed the plot for his *comedia*. The events of the story are, broadly speaking, a matter of historical fact. However, they took place in Seville, not Toledo; indeed, the date of composition for the *comedia* coincides with a period in which Lope resided in Seville (Rodríguez-Gallego 2015: 586). This perhaps explains Lope's point of inspiration for his *comedia*, refashioning a famous *sevillano* legend to fit with the political environment of the early seventeenth century[41]. Moreovoer, the events of the play are generally ascribed to Pedro I of Castile, not Alfonso VIII. Meanwhile, the lady in question was not a Doña Sol, but instead Doña María Coronel, who held firm against the king's sexual advances, but, unlike Sol, ended her days in a convent[42]. Indeed, Ferrer Valls (2001) classes this play as a *comedia genealógica* as it tells the story of

[41] For more on Lope's periods in Seville, see Sánchez Jiménez (2018), pp.131-9.
[42] In his Introduction to the play, Rodríguez-Gallego (2015: 588-9) recounts the full legend of María Coronel, as well as the Coronel family's origins.

the Coronel family as at the play's conclusion, Sol is presented both with the crown, and also the surname of Coronel.

These changes to historical fact did little to impress Menéndez Pelayo, who argued that the play merely repeated themes and ideas that were better presented in *La Estrella de Sevilla* of 1623, before branding the character of the *privado* "insoportable". He concludes "Si se añaden a estos substanciales defectos los pueriles juegos de vocablos sobre el *sol* (que quizá fueron el único motivo que tuvo el poeta para cambiar el nombre de la heroína), quedará completa la enumeración de reparos que pueden hacerse a esta pieza, que… no es de las mejores de Lope" (1949: 112-3). Although Menéndez Pelayo was at a loss to explain Lope's strange decision to change the historical setting of the play, this is a question that has occupied later scholars. Both Urzáiz Tortajada (2011) and Kirschener and Clavero (1998 and 2007) argue that Lope simply did not wish to give away the ending of his play to audiences who will have already been familiar with the famous legend, and that by changing the historical details, the audience would be kept guessing. Another explanation lies in Spain's foreign policy in the early seventeenth century. Feros notes that although Lerma and Philip III were initially keen to make conflict with England a foreign policy priority, the failure in 1601 of a fleet designed to help Irish rebels establish Catholicism led them to abandon the strategy. Instead they looked to the future relationship with Elizabeth I's successor, even contacting James VI in anticipation of a future agreement between the two monarchies upon his accession. Once James became king in 1603, both monarchies actively worked towards peace, which culminated in the 1604 Treaty of London (2000: 149-50)[43]. It therefore seems fitting that Lope should have turned his attention

[43] See Álvar Ezquerra (2010: 242-50) for more on the process leading to the peace and how it was brokered. See Feros (1998), chapter 8 for more on the effects of the Treaty of London. Although historians often suggest that the Treaty was the result of financial necessity (Elliott goes so far as to suggest it was the "direct consequence of financial, economic and psychological exhaustion" (1989: 116)), the peace endured for the next twenty years. Williams records how in celebrations in 1605 to mark the Treaty, the idea of a marriage between the two countries first arose, the idea of which so captivated James I that he made it the "lynch-pin" of his foreign policy to arrange

to Alfonso VIII (1155-1214), who married the English princess Eleanor, daughter of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine (Rodríguez-Gallego 2015: 594). In his choice of monarch, Lope cleverly captures the pro-English sentiment in court around the Treaty of London, demonstrating yet again the *comedia de privanza*'s close association with the politics of its age.

However, the vast difference of reputation between the legend's true king, and that with which Lope replaced him in *La corona merecida* remains perplexing. Pedro I is often remembered in conflicted terms, as demonstrated by his opposing cognomens, "El Cruel" and "El Justiciero". Meanwhile, Alfonso VIII's victory at the 1212 Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa represented a decisive turning point in the *Reconquista* and thus made him one of the most important and respected monarchs of Medieval Spain. As McKendrick (2002: 42-3) argues, Lope's interest in Pedro I was such that he wrote eight *comedias* about him, demonstrating both his flaws and strengths, thus showing that Lope was not afraid of portraying the king in negative terms: an attempt to protect Pedro I's reputation would not, therefore, explain the decision. She instead ascribes Lope's bizarre change of history to Alfonso's youth. Coming to the throne as an infant, his minority was noted for its bitter warring factions. There is enough similarity here, therefore, to create an oblique parallel to a young Philip III, whose court was similarly split by a nascent *privanza*. Indeed, throughout the play, Alfonso's age is used by his favourites to excuse his poor behaviour. As McKendrick points out, although the play has traditionally only been analysed in the light of tyranny, really, it is the portrayal of royal favourites that seems to lie at the heart of this play. Lope's deliberate modification of history, therefore, seems designed to demonstrate the danger of the wrong sort of *privado*, and the susceptibility of a young king

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a Spanish match for his son. He concludes that the celebrations (and by extension, the Treaty) "left their mark upon international affairs for the best part of a generation" (2010: 5).

(much like Philip III, whose very weakness made him particularly vulnerable), who listens to bad advice.

This parallel aside, however, it is still worth asking why Lope would be willing to besmirch the reputation of a revered Castilian king with such an unflattering portrayal, especially, as is noted elsewhere (Rodríguez-Gallego 2013), given that Lope was a great admirer of Alfonso VIII. The answer lies perhaps in Lope's reliance on the audience's knowledge of the reign and its great victories. By focussing on the youthful Alfonso, he makes it clear that a young king can, and must, be educated. The play's relentless emphasis on specifically Castilian identity and monarchy, and the centrality of Sol—her name, her body and her crown—underscore this notion of the *espejo de príncipes*. The audience's knowledge of the events that would succeed the play's ending justify its unflattering contents: indeed, it could even be tempting to suggest that the lesson learnt by Lope's dramatised Alfonso in his youth, as portrayed on stage, could go on to help shape the great monarch the audience know he was to become. This is highlighted by the references to the biblical king David in the play. Manrique, the least scrupulous of the *privados*, alerts us to the dangers of the king's behaviour, with a sharply observed parallel: "¿Posible es que tanto daño/ causó de una vista Amor,/ aunque viera, señor,/ como a Bersabé en el baño?" (ll. 1037-40)[44]. Again, in the third act, when trying to get rid of Álvaro, in a fit of desperation and despair, Alfonso himself suggests "¿Envialle no es mejor,/ como David hizo a Urías?" (ll. 2171-2). Pedro replies with clear shock and exasperation "No quedó ese ejemplo escrito/ para darte esa advertencia;/ imita su penitencia/ y no imites su delito" (ll. 2175-8). Comparing Alfonso to David is a strategy in keeping with the *arbitristas* who frequently use David as an example of perfect kingship. Here, however, Lope highlights his biggest flaw in

[44] All references taken from *La corona merecida* in *Comedias de Lope de Vega. Parte XIV*, ed. Fernando Rodríguez- Gallego (2015: 585-829).

his obsessive love for Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah. Given the successes Alfonso VIII would go on to achieve, the comparison to this great biblical king seems fitting. They share in common sexual avarice, but also will achieve great things in their kingships, once they have learnt from their sins. It is a comparison that allays our impulse to criticism, thus allowing Lope leeway. It is almost certainly this which allows Lope the freedom to create such a damning portrait of *privanza*. In his changing of the source material, therefore, Lope carefully ties together contemporary politics, both domestic and foreign, and also treads a path that allows for a freer commentary.

If the king's love of Greida becomes the sticking point in *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, then in *La corona merecida*, the king's rampant lasciviousness—the metaphorical *fuego* that burns Sol's skin—is the main driving force behind the dramatic tension. More specifically, it lies in the tension between the king's wishes and the complicity of his *privados*. The king's sexual desires and the tyranny that they wreak become a flashpoint in the tension between the law, and the king's wishes, and more importantly, in how this impacts on *privanza*: is the main duty of the advisor to carry out the king's desires, no matter how tyrannous, or to counsel him against unlawful behaviour, and prevent him from acting exactly as he pleases?

This is apparent from the play's opening, where early exchanges between the king and his three favourites, Nuño, Manrique and Pedro, reveal the exact nature of their relationship. Alfonso is eager to ride out to meet his English bride to get a glimpse of her before their wedding. It is Nuño who anticipates Alfonso's desire (l. 18), and the other two who encourage him in the pursuit, telling him "ha de encender tu deseo/ en más verdadera llama" (l. 39-40). It is a testament to how tightly Lope structures his *comedias* that we should see this imagery used here, anticipating the play's tragic conclusion: the trip to Burgos will indeed ignite the flames of Alfonso's desire, culminating in the physical flame that will burn Sol 2500 lines later. From

this early stage, we can see how the *privados* will contribute to the damaging behaviour of the king. This is especially due to the total dependence the king seems to have on them. Worryingly, the king seems to have little desire, or ability, to work out any of the details for himself, even down to the clothes he should wear (l. 46). His favourites are his "fixers", men who, once the royal mind is made up, take care of all the arrangements. They set out the time at which they should depart (ll. 41-2), and come up with the plan that will allow the king to fulfil his desires. Each act is marked by an escalation of the plots devised by the *privados*: in the second, Manrique will propose the promotion of Álvaro to bring Sol into court, and in the third, Pedro will arrange the false evidence that sees Álvaro arrested. At each instance, the substance of the plot is conceived entirely by the *privado*, not the king himself.

The decision the courtiers take—to disguise themselves as peasants in order to catch a glimpse of the arriving queen—is significant. In another moment of carefully executed and structured imagery, Don Manrique explains the logic behind disguise thus "Si al sol encubrir tenemos/ nubes necesarias son" (ll. 46-7). The image recalls that used by Poyo's Álvaro de Luna, where he suggests he is the moon to the king's sun, demonstrating common imagery across the *comedia de privanza*. William R. Blue examines the importance of sun imagery in the play (in part to respond to Menéndez Pelayo's damning assessment of the play). He argues that: "The comparison of Alfonso to the sun points out that he is, or should be, the most pre-eminent of men, at the top of the chain of being. Similar references throughout the play will emphasize the contrast between what Alfonso should be and what he actually is" (1973: 1000). The use of *sol* to demonstrate proper royal behaviour will reach its climax in Sol's crowning in the play's conclusion. This sense of roles, duties and behaviours is emphasised further by the use of disguise itself. In *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, Lope played on a set of expectations surrounding rural, peasant dress in order to create a favourable contrast for Payo de Guzmán: these expectations are exactly those which Alfonso plays into by donning peasant clothes in *La*

corona merecida. Moreover, he believes that by donning them, and appearing to be something else, he leaves behind the responsibilities of his true identity. When he sees Sol for the first time, and is overcome with lust for her, he justifies his need to satisfy his desires by stating:

> Sin duda y es justa ley,
> que no la ha seguido el rey,
> sino el labrador vestido.
> Y pues dél no ha de pasar
> aquesta imaginación,
> ni de Madama es razón
> que me pueda deslumbrar,
> no será gran flaqueza
> executar un deseo,
> movido del bien que veo
> en su celestial belleza.
> (ll. 302-12).

He plays on the notion of the contrast between appearance and reality in order to escape culpability for his unkingly behaviour. The logic, of course, is flawed, and the conclusion we draw is doubly damning for the king, because in his very justification, he demonstrates that he is aware of what is expected of him in his role, but in this instance, he is choosing to turn his back on it. He goes on to emphasise the relationship between appearance and role in his treatment of Sol, who similarly, has disguised herself as a peasant. We noted in his anticipation of seeing the queen, that his interest lay in her body and her external beauty, establishing from the outset the importance of women's bodies in this *comedia*. Alfonso's immediate concern was for her physical appearance, as his first question was "¿Dícese ya/ que es hermosa?" (ll. 3-4). We see his desire for women's bodies emphasised even further in his response to Sol. Seeing her dressed as a *labradora*, however, he states: "Esta es pobre labradora; gozarla y dejarla" (ll. 313-4). Where before we had noted his clumsy use of commonplace, now he has descended into crudeness and tyranny, using his perceived understanding of her social position as an excuse for his tyrannous behaviour.

It is worth noting how the *labrador* disguise functions completely differently for Alfonso and Sol. For Alfonso, it is a liberating exercise, that removes responsibility from his shoulders. For Sol, on the other hand, it is one that places her directly in danger. However, for both it marks how deceit and disguise are going to dictate the play's plot. Kirschener and Clavero (2007) discuss the use of disguise and change of costume throughout the play, arguing that they bring the audience's attention to the dual personalities and multiple roles played by the protagonists and the subterfuge they engage in, extending their analysis to include the disguising of two moors in order to implicate Álvaro and have him falsely imprisoned, and the use of wax and burns on Sol's body to deceive: "El uso del disfraz prevalece en los tres actos y sirve para materializar exteriormente la interiorizada práctica del tema del encubrimiento, que pasa así a ser emblemático de la estructura misma de la pieza" (2007: 153).

The contrast between appearance and reality has reminded the audience of the proper behaviour of the king. Sol's disguise goes further in its political ramifications, thanks to the reaction of Nuño, her brother, to it. The hypocrisy in the volte-face he undergoes as soon as he realises it is his own sister who is the object of the king's desire is staggering. Having been perfectly content, even off hand, in his execution of the king's whim (indeed, the extent of his opposition to the scheme to convince Sol to sleep with Alfonso was purely one of taste: "Como en el gusto no hay ley, / es un bárbaro terrible" (ll. 366-7)), it is only when his own personal honour is at stake that he decides to act to dissuade the king, informing him that Sol is a noblewoman in disguise. The king's reaction is comical, demanding, "Pues si Castilla tenía/ mujer de igual valor/[…]/ ¿para qué me aconsejastes/ que enviase a Inglaterra?" (ll. 449-53), and petulantly telling his favourites "Todos errasteis" (l. 455). Although he has angered the king, Nuño's actions have steered the king off his immediate path, and the question is left as to why he did not do this earlier if it was in his power. It is clear that Nuño is only willing to act correctly when it is in his own interest to do so: he is not motivated in his *privanza* by loftier ideals of

good statesmanship, or indeed, morality. Indeed, the play is dominated by the response of his *privados* to the question the king himself poses to them: "¿Un rey no puede? ¿Yo soy/ rey de Castilla?" (l. 596-7) Alfonso believes that "sólo el gusto del señor,/ bien o mal, se ha de mirar" (l. 731-2). Don Pedro, who carries the keys of office (ll. 1573-5), indicating his superior position in the royal household, will be the voice of reason throughout the play, and of all three men, he will be the one who is most prone to attacks of conscience. Although there is undoubtedly a degree of conviction behind his counsel, he will never manage to turn advice into action. His failure is highlighted by two almost identical scenes in the first and third acts, in which he attempts and fails to counsel the king. In the first act, Pedro tries every tactic he can think of to distract the king from Sol. His first recourse is to reason: "en éstas [cosas], que ya son/ de tan diferente ley,/ Alfonso, no reina el rey,/ porque reina la razón" (ll. 601-4). Although Pedro tries to remind him that Nuño is a loyal servant ("el conde es un hombre/ a quien has de hacer merced" (l589-90)), and to point out Leonor's outstanding beauty (ll. 623-658) this falls on deaf ears. The king still insists on Pedro's talking to her, and Pedro's response is disappointing, choosing to hide behind obligation to the king as an excuse for acting in a way that he finds reprehensible:

> El consejo en el privado
> es ley de buen caballero;
> un privado lisonjero
> es un veneno dorado.
> Yo cumplo mi obligación;
> lo que intentas no lo apreubo,
> pero lo que mandas debo
> poner en execución.
> (ll. 733-49).

Pedro highlights one of the key messages of this play: that the *privado* must never simply be a flatterer or a yes man. In pointing out the danger of *lisonjeros*, Lope demonstrates again the parallels between his work and the *arbitristas* of the age. Mariana is vocal and emphatic on his opposition to flattery in court: "¿Es siquiera posible que [los príncipes] puedan reconocer la

verdad entre los continuos aplausos de los cortesanos y entre los embustes de sus criados que lo acomodan todo a sus personales intereses, ¿es acaso extraño que caigan en error a cada paso?" (1950: 470) he asks, in terms that apply uncomfortably to Alfonso and his flattering *privados*. However, Pedro's actions do not match his words. This irony shows both Pedro's lack of integrity, and the fluidity of the word *obligación*. Pedro shows that at least on some level, the word must mean his duty to attempt to advise the king well and help him act honourably. However, when these attempts fail, he reverts to the understanding that his *obligación* is simply to do as he is told: this is the ambiguity that all *privados* must come up against. Essentially, he shows himself to be exactly the sort of *privado* against which he warns the king, and the *cameleones* against which Payo de Guzmán warns. In his covert conversation with Sol, Pedro tells her "Soy tierra entre el rey y vos" (l. 777), showing his understanding of the fact that he is the king's facilitator. He is aware of his role within the execution of government, but he eschews a more moral understanding of the implications of his actions.

Meanwhile, in the third act, Alfonso is horrified that his plot to bring Sol into court has not harvested quicker results, and resolves that something must be done to remove her husband from the picture. Again, although Pedro initially attempts to resist his king's pleas, he eventually gives way, as we, and Alfonso, knew he would. Pedro tells him:

> Sabe Dios cuánto me pesa
> de ayudarte en este engaño;
> pero considero el daño
> de no salir con tu empresa,
> y eres mi rey, en efeto.
> (ll. 2163-7).

Again, just as in the first act, he hides behind his perceived duty to the king, using this as a convenient excuse to justify his poor conduct. He finishes his plan with a desperate attempt at self-justification: "Sabe Dios que estoy corrido/ de aconsejarte tan mal;/ mas veo a mi rey mortal,/ enfermo, loco, perdido/ y procuro su salud" (ll. 2195-9). His words demonstrate in a

final blow, just how human both the king, and the *privado* have now become. Moreover, his reaction and sentiment are identical to those we saw in the first act, in spite of the now vastly escalated situation, leaving us to question the conviction behind his rhetoric. The use of the metaphor of illness is fitting with the feigned *fuego* that Sol is about to conjure: if Alfonso is indeed unwell, the illness is catching, spreading from the king down into the body politic. The king's response however is key in understanding how the *privado* functions within this *comedia*:

> ¡Ay, Pedro, no digas eso!
> Tu lealtad, tu amor confieso,
> tu piedad y tu virtud.
> Eres mi amparo; no pares,
> pues ves que vida me das.
> (ll. 2200-4).

Alfonso only considers Pedro's actions to be "loyal" because he is saying what Alfonso wants to hear. He is not interested in his advice or counsel: only in actions that fall in line with his desired ends. In this regard, he recalls the *tratadistas*' warnings against those kings who do not take or heed good advice.

The contrast between Payo de Guzmán and Pedro could not be more clear. The *privados* have completely failed to give their corrupt king good advice, and thus the whole of the realm is left to suffer. Although he will later attempt to convince the king to alter his course (ll. 2555-2587), it will not be enough. Pedro has failed in his role as *privado,* and Lope has given us a forceful attack on young kings who surround themselves with self serving, or weak advisors. Thus in two plays, Lope gives us two very contrasting models of the king/*privado* relationship, with the latter constituting an extremely critical portrayal of *privanza*, demonstrating again the pervasiveness and attraction of the theme in the early years of Philip III's reign.

However, although *La corona merecida* deals extensively with *privanza*, and contains many points of similarity both with *Los Guzmanes de Toral* and Poyo's *comedias de privanza*, unlike these works, it shows a novel development in not having a structure that is determined by the rise and fall of a central *privado*. Instead, each act is marked by a fresh attempt by the king to gain access to a woman, be it Leonor in act I, or Sol in Acts II and III. The amorous intrigue and assaults on Sol's honour therefore serve as the structuring principle. Where the play does exploit those tropes we see in Poyo's work, ironically, it is by Don Álvaro, who fails to understand the truth behind both his promotion and subsequent imprisonment. Álvaro's role in the *comedia* is minor, and his interjections serve often only as a point of humour that turns sour if we consider the implications for Sol's safety. A prime example is the final scene of act II: stychomythia, split between characters on opposing sides of the stage, and rapid asides complete a tense patchwork of complex poetry and contrasting schemes. Only the audience fully grasps the range of machination and emotion, although all the characters seem to be aware to some degree. Álvaro, however, is blind to the situation unfolding before him, simply commenting "Contento estoy" (l. 2019), as chaos unfolds around him. When he is accused of treason, his first recourse is to blame envy of his elevated position in court: "¡Ah, envidia!" (l. 2457). Lope uses the tropes from earlier *comedias de privanza* in order to create a moment of acute irony: Álvaro, whose wife is being pursued relentlessly by the king, and whose position in court is due solely to attempts to get her closer to him, is the least enviable character in the whole *comedia*. Lope takes the themes associated with *privanza*—envy and greed—and puts them to such an ironic effect, that it borders on the comedic[45]. His use of them in this manner,

[45] The role of humour in the *comedia* has frequently been remarked upon by critics, and Rodríguez-Gallego discusses it in the Prologue to his critical edition (2015: 602-3). It is curious that a play with such a serious plot should have so many comic moments, especially given the lack of a *gracioso* character. This is something that is unusual in the *comedia de privanza*: rarely are they so humorous. In this sense, Lope is again mixing conventions, and adding them to the genre established by Poyo. The inclusion of moments of outright humour (the rustic *alcaldes* of Burgos trying to work out how to welcome Leonor to their city in the first act is the most obvious example, and indeed, is the one that Menéndez Pelayo (1949) picks out for special attention for its comic value) perhaps is explained by the unusually damning portrayal of *privanza* we see on stage. *La corona merecida*, with

if anything, serves to highlight the very different way in which *privanza* is tackled in this *comedia*. Earlier *comedias de privanza*, by Poyo and Lope himself, demonstrated the dangers of *privanza* to the courtier filling the role, which was emphasised by the structure of the play, the imagery used and the themes of friendship and envy. However, by turning envy of those nobles who are close to the king into a moment of irony and humour, Lope demonstrates the danger of *privanza* to the state as a whole, as it demonstrates that the institution effects more than a single person occupying the role. Álvaro's presumption that he should be envied, and that he should be following a trajectory like that of Ruy López or Álvaro de Luna, and his ignorance of the larger picture around him, of multiple powerful *privados* working in aid of an unstoppable king, reveals a far starker picture of *privanza* and its dangers than anything we have seen up to this point.

Such a subversion does not stand alone in Lope's examinations of *privanza*. in *El servir con mala estrella* (probably written 1604-6, and published in 1615), we find a *comedia* that represents a *tour de force* of *decir sin decir*, using supposed bad luck (a feature that, as we have seen, is central to Poyo's *comedias de privanza*) as a cover for what is in fact tyrannous kingship. In this instance, Rugero, an impeccable courtier is repeatedly denied promotion in spite of excellent service. In a bizarre ending, the king attributes his failure to recognise his servant to his own bad fortune, proved by compelling him to choose from two chests, one which contains jewels and the name of his beloved, and the other sand. When Rugero chooses the sand, the king is vindicated. However, in failing to recognise and reward good service, the play offers a pointed commentary on the role of kings and their liberality. McKendrick argues: "The play-text subverts the play-title, which ends up encapsulating not what the play has shown but the opposite of what it has shown. It is a technique of *quod non est demonstrandum* which

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its youthful king and cast of corrupt favourites, could potentially ring too true for contemporary audiences. Comedy, undoubtedly, releases some of the tension we see on stage.

nonetheless provokes firm conclusions" (2002: 59). The play claims to demonstrate the arbitrary turns of the wheel of fortune; however, instead it demonstrates the poor rule of a bad king. As in *La corona merecida* Lope is using the genre's typical features ironically in order to offer stark political conclusions.

In any case, in *La corona merecida*, Pedro and Manrique's bad advice comes home to roost in the play's tragic conclusion. Once Álvaro is arrested, Sol comes to the king, and as planned, offers herself to him in return for her husband's life. In her petition, delivered in stately *octavas reales* (the only examples of the verse form in the play), her quiet dignity and self-possession contrast sharply with Alfonso's celebratory sonnet. He grotesquely appropriates military lexis, crying "¡Vencí! ¡Vitoria! ¡La ciudad es mía!/ Ya se canta la paz, la guerra cesa/ y suspende el furor la artillería" (ll. 2748-2750). The sonnet is one of two that Alfonso speaks (of the three in the play; Leonor speaks the other): their use marks the climax in his "campaign" to win Sol in the third act, with the first spoken at the point at which he manipulates Pedro into arranging the arrival of the Moors to contrive Álvaro's arrest (ll. 2231-44). In this first instance, the first half of each line poses a question on the nature of love, that he flippantly answers in the second half. It demonstrates Alfonso's fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of the emotion he claims to be celebrating. The stilted, clinical approach he adopts, ironically contained within the verse from of a sonnet, shows how far his emotions are from those of the praiseworthy, honourable lover. This is especially the case if we compare his first sonnet to the lyrical, poignant sonnet spoken by Leonor in the second act. Alfonso's sonnets mark him out as a lover, but at each turn, their inversions of typical love poetry show how lust, rather than love, dominate his emotions. In the knowledge of the military campaigns that Alfonso VIII will go on to win, his use of a military lexis in his second sonnet is particularly pertinent, inviting us to draw an unfavourable contrast between those successes and the depraved "campaign" he is currently waging. Moreover, the violence of the lexis he uses reflects the violence that Sol is

forced to inflict on herself: the victim of the war is Sol herself. In spite of the fact that Alfonso does not, in fact, succeed in the way he had been hoping, Sol does not really win either. The metaphorical "penas y pasiones" he alludes to (l. 2743) are flippant when compared to the *penas y pasiones* that Sol is forced to endure in the war for her honour that she had no part in instigating, but in which she is left to fight alone.

Sol is left to take action to avoid the fate that the men of court have thrust upon her. Taking a candle, she burns sores on her own flesh, and thus repulses the king, who leaves her be. Sol represents the only character who has any success in preventing the king from acting tyrannously. However, she is physically burnt by his lust, and her body, like the body politic, is physically harmed and marked by the traits of Alfonso's bad kingship. We have seen above how Furió Ceriol and Rivadeniera conceive of good government as the body; with this in mind, we can see how the lesions inflicted on the body have come about as the direct result of the bad advice and uncontrolled whims of an all-powerful monarch, whose own advisors failed in their duties, leaving Sol to represent the burnt and mutilated body of state recalled by the *arbitristas*. She, rather than Alfonso, has represented the qualities of kingship, and from the outset, sun imagery has reminded us of Alfonso's failures. Therefore, as a symbolic queen of Spain, both because of her crowning and the name Lope has given her, her damaged body becomes symbolic of a diseased crown. If, as McKendrick argues, the *corona merecida* of the title of the play belongs to Sol for her prudence and courage (2002: 42) then this ending has great symbolic value. Leonor praises her saying: "España queda obligada/ a la virtud peregrina/ de tu casto y noble pecho/ [...]/ Yo me quito esta corona,/ porque es razón y justicia/ que corone tu cabeza,/ como reina de Castilla" (ll. 2985-3000). The two women, pitched against each other by Alfonso's rapacious sexual appetite for the duration of the play, are brought together in a moment of symbolic crowning: this is the real moment at which the war ends, and it is a moment grounded in specifically Spanish identity. Yarbro-Bejarano notes how her sacrifice is

immediately “assimilated into the Spanish imperial objective of competing successfully with classical antiquity in honour and fame” (1994: 95), and indeed, it is important that her act is integrated into a specifically Castilian catalogue of great feats. Up to this point, the play has been building on repeated allusions to Spanish identity, which are used to indicate bravery and nobility: Pedro tells us that Nuño “[le] llaman “el Castellano”/ hombre de tanto valor/ que aun el Rey no le hace ofensa” (ll. 1642-4); when Elvira encourages Leonor to be braver, she urges her: “haz pecho español” (l. 1976). Sol, then, sacrifices her body to a notion of Spanishness that Alfonso fails to exemplify. When Nuño pointedly asks “¿Qué intenta el Rey Castellano?” (l. 1697), it reminds us that he is the representative of this set of exceptional national values. However, in failing to live up to them, he, as representative of the whole state, brings the nation into disrepute. Sol, in her sacrifice of her body, and the Queen, in her understanding of it and the lesson she accordingly teaches Alfonso, are the rescuers of the Spanish crown. Finally understanding what has happened, he states “Cuanto [la reina] ha dicho, el Rey confirma./ Doy a la Reina mis brazos/ por lo que en esto me obliga” (ll. 3011-3). This pervasive emphasis that Lope places on the uniquely Spanish nature of the acts on stage increases its potency and immediacy to its time of composition. By tapping into a pantheon of Spanish heroes—both Alfonso VIII for his success against the Moors, and the legend of María Coronel—and reinventing it to reflect the importance of the education of Spanish princes, as well as the current political concerns of *privanza*, Lope makes his commentary all the more pointed.

Lope places a strong emphasis on the body and appearance as a reference point for power and kingship. The overall conclusion we are encouraged to reach, however, is that this goes far beyond simply Alfonso’s lust. His behaviour has been either approved or planned for him by his *privados* every step of the way, and the result has been Sol’s burning. *Privanza*, seen here in its worst form of flattery and lack of true conviction in providing good advice, has to go beyond merely doing as the king desires. *Obligación* goes beyond just the duty to the king, but

to the state as a whole, which is something all three *privados* failed to grasp here, with tragic consequences. It goes without saying that Alfonso's lustful behaviour cannot possibly be compared to Philip III's conduct. Driven as it is by a king's lust, there is little that can be seen to be a direct reference to Philip's reign *per se*. However, that is not to say that taken more generally, the play is not speaking to its context of around five years into the Lerma regime. As McKendrick argues (2002: 42), the play speaks powerfully about *privanza*, and whilst Philip was not lecherous like Alfonso, he was young and easily led.

Lope's conclusion seems to be something of a warning that a king must listen to good advice, but that he must not allow himself to be vulnerable to bad advisors. More importantly, it is that a good *privado* does not merely do as he is told by the king. His duty and obligation must be to the wellbeing of the realm as a whole, not just to the king. In *La corona merecida*, we are reminded forcefully that kings and servants are human, and thus frail and corruptible. Beyond its subject matter, the *comedia* bears almost no resemblance to Poyo's first attempts at the *comedia de privanza*. Luck and the role of fortune have almost disappeared, in what is an altogether more political piece. The progression of the *privado*'s career no longer provides an overarching structure for the *comedia*, and recurrence to imagery that emphasises the arbitrary nature of luck has disappeared. However, dealing as extensively as it does with *privanza*, it could hardly fail to constitute a *comedia de privanza*: indeed, Lope demonstrates his clear debt to earlier examples of the genre in his use of those common themes ironically in Álvaro's trajectory within the play. Moreover, his choice to change the source material in order to incorporate such a heavy emphasis on *privanza* demonstrates how Lope understood, at the very least, the dramatic potential of stories that involve favouritism. These manipulations of the source material also go on to show, like other plays in the genre, an inextricable link with its moment of creation, reflecting contemporary events from the Spanish court. Moreover, its reciprocity with the political theories of Mariana, Rivadeneira and Furió Ceriol shows a

continuity with earlier examples of the genre. However, as with *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, Lope brings together features from other genres, and incorporates them into his work: this play takes subject matter concerning *privanza* and grafts it onto a plot that feels similar to an honour drama. Equally striking is how he has then taken this usually tragic genre, given it a (comparatively) happy ending, and incorporated scenes designed to be overtly comedic. *La corona merecida*, therefore, is an extremely rich and varied play, that shows continuation and a clear debt to the earlier *comedias de privanza* but that innovates in equal measure. Moreover, in its pointed political commentary, it continues the *comedia de privanza*'s ability to be most meaningful when considered in the light of its historical context.

However, this is not to say that Lope did not write *comedias de privanza* that more closely imitated Poyo's initial model. Indeed, Gutiérrez explicitly states that Lope may have had Poyo's work on Álvaro de Luna in mind when composing *La fortuna merecida*, given the similarities in the plays' relative plots (1975: 258). *La fortuna merecida* has an uncertain date of composition. The *comedia* appears in the eleventh *Parte* of Lope's *comedias*, which was published for the first time in 1618. Morley and Bruerton propose a date spread of between 1604-15, suggesting that the years between 1604-10 are the most likely, basing this on their analysis of the play's verse forms. However, Ana Isabel Sánchez (2008) puts forward a case suggesting that due to the play's close relationship with the Count of Lemos, the play is in fact later. She suggests that the purpose of the play was to protect the reputation of the Count, Lope's friend and former patron, and thus, that a composition date of 1616-18, is more accurate, as this represents the period of Lemos' fall in court (2012: 617, 2008: 492). In any case, it is reasonable to suppose that it is the latest of the plays under scrutiny here. The play traces the rise of Álvar Núñez, who comes from rural obscurity and thanks to his saving of the king's life, becomes *privado* and one of the greatest men in the land. Although his rapid ascent provokes the envy of the nobles in court, who resent his low birth and the stunning speed of

his rise, his behaviour is exemplary. Like Poyo's originals, we see that Lope has reverted to the trajectory of the *privado* as a structuring principle, with each act culminating in a new promotion, and the main dramatic intrigue arising from the various ploys of the nobles to provoke his fall. The play ends with Álvaro's promotion to the position of *Maestre* of the Order of Santiago, a title the *privado* goes on to return in order to prevent civil unrest. Like Poyo's Ruy López diptych, this too was designed to be a *bilogía*—a second half depicting the inevitable fall is tantalisingly hinted at in the play's closing lines (ll. 3279-85)—but no such text has been found. The play is dominated by imagery of the wheel of fortune, a topos exploited by all the characters, and once again we see envy as the driving force behind the play's plot.

However, once again Lope's deft handling of the convention provides theatre of far greater maturity. Moreover, in spite of its reverting to a more typical structure, we see that like his earlier examples, Lope, as master of *decir sin decir*, provides a great deal of contemporary political commentary that outstrips in its barbs anything that Poyo produced. Indeed, the very sophistication with which Lope has managed this is evidenced in the differing critical approaches to the work: on the one hand, Ana Isabel Sánchez views the play as a prime example of *mecenazgo*, whose aim was purely propagandistic (surely seeing exactly what Lope hoped his wealthy patrons would see when viewing the play). This is a view that McKendrick refutes, arguing that "it was just not possible to write an 'innocent' play about a favourite, historical or otherwise, in the reign of Philip III" (2002:69). Her interpretation of the play is that it is a reflection of concern about what can happen in the case of over-reward. She suggests that Lope provides a façade of dutiful respect that does not crack, but that the merest suggestion of a parallel, whether direct or not, would be enough for sensitised audiences to pick up on. Once again, this play demonstrates Lope's sensitivity to current political shifts and moods, and his awareness of the problems *privanza* can present. Moreover, it demonstrates that even when

imitating Poyo's genre-defining *comedias*, later playwrights added layers of political commentary and literary innovation to enrich and develop the genre as the new century and the reign of Philip progressed.

Once again, it is the use of history, and the issue of patronage, that lie at the heart of the play's chequered critical reception. As with *La corona merecida*, Lope has made use of historical source material to shape the plot; however, in another similarity with the earlier play, he also made perplexing changes to the source material, once again sparking the disapproval of Menéndez Pelayo (1949). The historical Álvar Núñez de Osorio (who Lope renames Álvaro Núñez de Sarria) was indeed the favourite of Alfonso XI of Spain, a king who inherited the throne as an infant. In 1325, Alfonso created his favourite the Count of Trastámara, Lemos and Sarria. However, such were his supposed abuses of power that plots abounded to rob him of his position, most notably by Don Juan Manuel who supposedly propogated the rumour that Álvar was intending marriage with the king's sister[46]. This, combined with an uprising against him in Valladolid in 1328, caused the king to request the return of Álvar's lands and titles. His refusal to do so led to his execution in 1329 (Sánchez 2012: 641, n.1; McKendrick 2002: 64). Alfonso XI had a reputation as a great warring king, famed for his political and leadership skills, as demonstrated by his readiness to execute his favourite when the time came (indeed, in 1326 he even executed his own uncle, Juan de Tuerto). Lope, then, takes certain liberties with this source material. McKendrick argues that in his handling of the king, he makes two important changes: Lope makes Alfonso older, and far more attached to his *privado* than seems to have been the case in reality (2002: 66). Moreover, Lope's Alfonso is far from politically astute, and insofar as he has a character at all (he is, as Sánchez argues, "un monarca sin personalidad" (2008: 492)), he is unintelligent and indulgent to the point of recklessness.

[46] Indeed, it is the turning of Juan Manuel, the great man of letters, into the plot's main antagonist, with attempted regicide as just one of his crimes, that so offended Menéndez Pelayo in his reading of *La fortuna merecida*.

Indeed, as far as we can tell, he even allows the courtiers who attempted regicide to escape without punishment, as no consequence is made clear in the text. This is a far cry from the historical Alfonso who was willing to execute his own relatives. Meanwhile, Lope makes of his protagonist a far more virtuous example of a *privado* than his historical counterpart appears to have been.

These changes to history have been put down to the close links between Lope and his patron Pedro Fernández de Castro, with whom he worked from the end of the sixteenth century. This nobleman would become the fourth Marques of Sarria, and later, the seventh Count of Lemos, and as such, he was a descendant of Álvar Núñez. Sánchez accordingly proposes that *La fortuna merecida* is the result of a commission on Lemos' part. Indeed, Lope emphaises the link between the historical Álvar Númez and his seventeenth century desendents in his changing of his name ("Sarria", rather than "Osorio"[47] makes clearer the link to Lemos, who was also the count of Sarria (2012: 614 n.2)), and in his moving of Álvaro's place of origin to Sarria in Galicia, rather than León, the Osorio family's true homeland (2008: 491). She concludes:

> Si se da como cierta la posibilidad de que *La fortuna merecida* naciera de un encargo de Lemos, la comedia debería cumplir ciertos requisitos: en primer lugar, debería ensalzar los méritos y la honra de Lemos; además, debería tratar de desplazar las culpas que se le imputaban al Conde hacia sus acusadores; y en tercer y último lugar, debería incluir una apelación a la clemencia del rey ante los posibles errores cometidos por un vasallo leal y fiel. Y éstos son, sin duda, los objetivos que pretende conseguir Lope con esta comedia... Así, la bondad del Álvar Núñez ficticio y su inteligencia política se trasladan hasta el siglo XVII, encarnadas en la persona de Don Pedro Fernández de Castro y en la de su protector el duque de Lerma. El público asume la "fábula" como si fuera "historia" y por lo tanto su percepción de la realidad política del Siglo de Oro se ve, cuando menos, distorsionada. (2008: 490-3).

Ferrer Valls seems to concur, arguing that the play constitutes another *comedia genealógica* that turns the historical facts of Álvar Nuñez's *privanza* into a eulogized account of a man who always escapes from the plots of court thanks to the help and support of his king (2004: 5). However, McKendrick argues that the changes in characterization to the king in particular point

[47] Zugasti also suggests that *La fortuna merecida* has the aim of flattering a particular family, but he instead suggests that it is the Osorio family, reminding us of the connection between Lope and Elena Osorio (2013: 24).

to a more nuanced, political reading of the play: by changing the king's age, Lope manages to avoid too sharp a parallel of young kings and greedy favourites (2002: 64-5). Indeed, McKendrick's exploration of the play, and her conclusion that it demonstrates the danger of over-reward amongst favourites (63-9) seems to hold more water if considered against the broader content of the play, and Lope's manipulation of the blueprint Poyo offered for future writers of the *comedia de privanza*. The play's changes to history do more than simply praise and flatter their protagonist, and indeed, it is full of pertinent points that speak loudly to a self-enriching Duke of Lerma.

Worth noting in the play's opening lines is Álvaro's, and his servant Gonzalo's, overt praise of Valladolid, calling it the "octava maravilla" (l. 3)[48]. Bearing in mind that this play was almost certainly written after the transfer of the capital of Spain from Madrid to Valladolid, Lerma's own city of birth, it gives the play a keen sense of location and constitutes an obvious nod to Lerma's city as the place where the fortunes of *privados* are made. Like Payo de Guzmán, Álvaro starts his ascent in court from humble beginnings, as a rural *hidalgo*. Like Payo, he seems aware, albeit a good degree less anxious, of the vicissitudes of luck in court. In a sonnet that reminds us of Payo's rhetoric, he taps into Horatian commonplace likening the court to a sea (ll. 136-48):

> ¿Cómo el recién venido cortesano,
> de la corte en el piélago profundo,
> entra en la nave del servir tirano?
> Pues al primer peligro y al segundo
> dan la lisonja ambición la mano
> (ll. 144-8).

Using the *culto* term "piélago" to refer to the sea, we note the aural similarity between that term and "peligro", the danger that Álvaro suggests dominates the court. As the sonnet

[48] All references taken from Ana Isabel Sánchez's edition in *Parte XI* of the *Comedias de Lope de Vega* (pp. 613-787). Quotations are given by line number.

progresses, alliteration using "P" underlines the tight relationship between the court and danger. His servant Gonzalo delivers a matching sonnet, stating that the city, and court itself, constitute an "escuro laberinto" and "caos confuso" (l. 181), going on to suggest that:

> Ningún discreto y con salud escuso
> si por engaño en vuestra cárcel queda,
> esperando subir por una rueda
> que solo enloquecer tiene por uso.
> (ll186-9).

We note his exploitation of the wheel of fortune motif, putting an emphasis on arbitrary luck. This is reinforced even further by Álvaro's assimilation of the imagery we have come to associate with the genre by telling the Count of Lemos, his relation to whom he is appealing for service, of his fortunes: "Todo es menguar el crecer" (l. 44), foreshadowing what is to come. Álvaro finds a generous and willing patron in his relation the Count who tells him "Entre deudos no hay mercedes,/ obligación justa es" (ll. 64-5). Thus we see faint references here to the way in which families and factions in power help and promote each other. Indeed, this is but the first instance where such behaviour is seen, and whilst here it is essentially benign, it will become a source of considerable tension later in the dramatic action.

Álvaro is made *gentilhombre* in the count's household, and thus, grounded in typical topoi of the *comedia de privanza*, he begins his ascent. However, we quickly see that Lope takes these images beyond mere rhetoric. The confusing labyrinth of court becomes manifest when Álvaro and Gonzalo become lost in Valladolid's streets, unable to navigate their unfamiliar twists and turns (ll. 550-95). Whilst lost, and purely by coincidence, they come across the attempt on the king's life by Don Juan and Don Nuño[49]. Without realising it is the king, they decide to rescue

[49] The reasons why the king becomes the victim of an attack is an indication of his poor kingship. The plotting nobles reveal to us beforehand that they are aware of his illicit affair with Doña Leonor, with whom he even has several illegitimate children. This gives them the perfect opportunity to murder him. Although the adulterous relationship is not the motive for the attack on the king's life, it is still shorthand for his poor conduct. We have seen repeatedly that romantic relationships and passion are often catalysts of poor kingship, revealing a king's most human frailties. In this instance, although the affair does not drive the plot directly, it does so indirectly

him. Although this is certainly gallant (ironically, Álvaro's bravery inspires the envy of the king's attackers, demonstrating how envy of Álvaro is ingrained in the courtiers from his very first day in court: "yo quisiera/ que su valor de nuestra parte fuera" (ll. 891-2)), it is nevertheless pure luck that it turned out to be the king's life he was saving. Álvaro recognises this himself, asking "¿Hay ventura tanta?" (l. 1078). It is as a result of this that the king promotes Álvaro, and it is in recognition of this fact that he continues to reward him, making him the greatest man in the land. It is this excessive generosity, in response to an act that was pure luck, that comes under criticism in this *comedia*. Arbitrary luck, then, in Lope's hands becomes so much more than a motif calling for the practice of neo-stoicism. Lope will transform the wheel of fortune into a political image of over reward.

Although Álvaro is to all intents and purposes a perfect *privado*, the point of contention raised by other nobles is the rapidity of his ascent as well as his humble birth. Tello asks "¿Que tanto daño recibo/ de un hombre que ayer pudiera/ servirme?" (ll. 1648-50). Although Tello's grudge is personal, we see by the third act that his opinion is one that is shared by the other nobles. In his promotion of Álvaro to the *maestrazgo* of Santiago, the king has finally gone too far: it is a political miscalculation on his part. The promotions appear to be excessive to everyone on stage except the king: when marriage to the infanta is indeed proposed, she is horrified, her reaction contrasting neatly with Alfonso's back tracking and tardy recognition of Álvaro's low birth. So angered are they by the seemingly underserved promotion, the nobles form a delegation, fronted by the Almirante who argues:

> Pudiera haber alguno de más nombre
> que hubiera en las fronteras con los moros
> merecido esa cruz. Yo no te asombre
> que quien gastó su sangre y sus tesoros

because it makes the king physically (as well as, implicitly, morally) vulnerable, putting him directly in harm's way. The notion of the king being weakened by his affair is reinforced by his own claim that he is suffering from "enfermedad de amor" (l. 522). Although referring to love as a sickness is a frequent poetic commonplace, here is also alludes to the physical weakness and the danger his affair will put him in.

sienta que premies…
(ll. 2788-92).

It is a reasonable petition. The king, however, will brook no argument. He repeatedly tells the Admiral to watch his step, and makes it clear that he is not at home to gossip about his *privado*. However, he does at least have the sense to ask if the removal of the title would quell the rebellion, to which the Admiral diplomatically, but nevertheless emphatically states "Ley es tu gusto./ Honrar sus pechos has tomado a pechos;/ perdona su intención y a mí el disgusto" (ll. 2798-800). Although the king recognises that the promotion is troubling, he does not seem to recognise his hand in the civil unrest it has created. He states tellingly:

Yo empleo muy bien en ti
esto que llaman poder,
pues tu virtud conocí;
lo que no he podido hacer
es que te estimen ansí.
(ll. 2856-60).

Thus he seems to absolve himself of all responsibility; he cannot help that others do not like his *privado* as much as he does. However, he has missed the point: that Álvaro is a good *privado* is neither here nor there. The problem lies in his many promotions that reflect his actions. Lope perfectly contrasts Alfonso's clueless kingship with impeccable citizenry on behalf of the noblemen. As we have seen previously, Mariana emphatically argues in *Del rey* that it is the responsibility of the citizen to point out bad rule, and diplomatically present it to the king ("Se ha de amonestar ante todo al príncipe y llamarle a razón y a derecho" (1950: 482)). In their peaceful delegation, the nobles exactly answer to Mariana's philosophy. It is clear that in spite of his protestations, we should recognise the importance of the nobles' actions: for indeed, as a result, Álvaro is prompted to return his promotion, which is instead bestowed on Alfonso's son, and thus, as a royal, and more appropriate, candidate. The king has been steered towards better kingship thanks to his wisdom to listen to more voices than simply that of his *privado*. Moreover, he recognises the danger of excessive generosity, and through

his evocation of contemporary political theory, Lope shows us where our sympathies should lie. Álvaro's "wheel of fortune" was turned upwards due to the king's misguided rule; now, we see that it comes back down due to sensible reason of state.

As McKendrick states, *La fortuna merecida*'s seemingly flattering façade never slips (2002: 68), and indeed, references to Lerma himself are oblique enough not to appear direct. However, that does not mean, as Sánchez seems to believe, that the play constitutes nothing more than a propaganda exercise. In the second act, as Álvaro enters court service in earnest, the main tension of the act arises from the promotion of one of Álvaro's relatives to the position of Grand Prior. Sancho, a cousin to Álvaro, comes to court specifically to ask for the position, choosing to do so now because, as he tells his cousin, "la ventura/ tendré agora más segura,/ pues os tengo de tener/ por amparo y protector" (ll. 1506-9). Álvaro has no hesitation in helping his cousin, reassuring him that his request is not cheek: "No parece, y cuando fuera/ por no hallar mayor lugar/ vuestro intento, encomendar/ en priorato se volviera./ ¿Queréis que yo hable por vos?" (ll. 1517-21). However, Sancho is not the only candidate for the job. Don Tello, who will gradually transform into the *comedia*'s main antagonist, also wishes to petition the king for the position. Tello, on the other part of the stage, is already quietly putting forward his case, towards which the king is favourably disposed ("En vuestros méritos hallo/ para mayores empleos/ bastante capacidad" (ll. 1539-41)), and in Sancho's fear that Tello will beat him to the position, we see in Álvaro's response a first glimpse of arrogance: "Para tan notable amor/ como el Rey me muestra a mí,/ seguro estás desde aquí/ de mayor competidor" (ll. 1549-52). There is more than a hint of presumption here, but we see that it is not misplaced: within moments of mentioning his cousin for the position, in spite of having already implied to Tello that he would consider him for it, Alfonso seemingly forgets about the other petitioner, and does not even mention to his *privado* that there is more than one qualified candidate.

Indeed, we see that Sancho is only awarded the position because of his connections: “Su nombre/ me basta a mí solamente,/ y ser tu sangre y tu gusto” (ll. 1611-13). This cannot help but recall the way in which Lerma’s family and faction all grew in wealth and position thanks to Lerma’s position as *privado,* and also recalls Poyo’s similar evocation in his earlier works. Indeed, an obvious example comes from the ceremony in November 1599 where Lerma was raised from the marquis of Denia to the Duke of Lerma, whilst at the same time, Philip saw fit to raise both Lerma’s son and grandson to marquises also, honouring three generations of one family thanks solely to the power held by the grandfather. However, in spite of Álvaro’s bravado and what he might say to Tello’s face about his cousin Sancho’s ability (ll. 1692-7), this does not stop Álvaro attempting to convince the king to give the position to Tello instead (ll. 1728-35). Of course, it is a gesture that appears in sharp contrast to Lerma’s own behaviour, who never turned down a promotion for himself or one of his followers.

Such pointed allusions continue in the third act. When Tello plots Álvaro’s downfall by suggesting to Alfonso that Álvaro is building a castle and building an army against him, it forces Alfonso to travel to the town with his *privado* to ascertain the truth of the claims. McKendrick explains the importance of fortified castles, which medieval noblemen used to facilitate armed rebellion. Restoring one such castle with the aim of gifting it to the king, therefore demonstrates Álvaro’s utter obedience to his monarch (2002: 68). Álvaro states to Alfonso:

> Estaba antiguamente
> aquesta fortaleza fabricada,
> gastola el tiempo y solo había dejado
> ruïnas en la yerba deste prado.
> Así fue mi solar y antigua casa:
> la fortaleza fueron mis abuelos,
> que el tiempo cano por el suelo arrasa;
> yo, las ruïnas sobre yerba y yelos;
> tu mano soberana, la que pasa
> y el edificio sube hasta los cielos,

de suerte que el suelo la bajeza
puede llamarse hermosa fortaleza.
(ll. 2539-51).

In his contemplation of the castle, and evoking the image of it in ruins, Álvaro exploits a common poetic convention. José Lara Garrido demonstrates the tradition of the contemplation of the ruins of Antiquity (often Rome or Carthage) in classical poetry. Often these poems use ruins to convey conclusions about the ephemeral nature of power and glory, and thus constitute a warning against vainglory, or offer the consolation of the passing of time (1983: 223-33). However, in this instance, Álvaro ruminates on Spanish ruins, seeing them as a metaphor for his *privanza*[50]. Nature had once taken over the buildings, which had become ravaged by time. However, thanks to the king's generous promotions, the building reaches the sky once more. Indeed, here Álvaro is flipping the convention round: the evocation of ruins does not suggest past glories and current failures, but instead, he mediates on past failures to celebrate current success. It is a poetic iteration that should serve as a warning. Firstly, it ties in with the image of the wheel of fortune in the *comedia*, bringing together the scheme of imagery that Lope has been using throught the play, whereby "fortune" is seen as politically problematic. Equally, it cautions the viewer to recognise Álvaro's precarious state: the castle and its fortunes have taught Álvaro himself to recognise how luck can change. He should be more aware that what can rise, can also return to ruin. Moreover, his reversal of the convention shows his lack of awareness, and hints at the fall that will occur in a mater of verses. He has not learnt the lesson that a stoic study of the building provides.

There is a marked similarity here with Quevedo's *romance* 'Son las torres de Joray', which similarly uses a ruined castle as a conceit to warn greedy favourites in court. Like Álvaro's verse, Quevedo too recalls towers that reached the sky ("ayer coronaron nublos" (l. 6)), and

[50] Clive Griffin (2008: 93) argues that one facet of this tradition in Spain was a poetry that focussed specifically on Spanish ruins as a symbol of national decline.

ruins overrun with grass ("mortaja pide a las yerbas" (l. 27)), emphatically addressing the courtier to whom the *romance* is addressed "Tú que te das a entender/ la eternidad que imagines,/ aprende de estas rüinas,/ si no a vivir, a caer" (ll. 67-70), before going on to wittily attack the "corderos validos" that are in fact "dizfrazando lobos" (ll. 79-80). Dated at 1621, and written in a period when Quevedo was banished from court, Clive Griffin argues that the poem reveals Quevedo's "intense concern with contemporary political developments", as well as his "scarcely concealed fury at the machinations of favourites and sychophants" (2008: 114). Written after the latest date that Morley and Bruerton propose for *La fortuna merecida*, Lope was clearly not referencing Quevedo's *romance*: however, their common use of the image of the ruin to meditate on the transience of *privanza* demonstrates the poetic reciprocity between Lope and his contemporary poets, and provides yet another example of the contemporary nature of the poetics of the *comedia de privanza*. Moreover, the use of the image in a vituperative attack by another poet adds weight to arguments suggesting Lope's quiet criticism of Lerma's *privanza* in this play

However, beyond its use of imagery on the arbitrary nature of luck, it is a scene full of contemporary political commentary. McKendrick explains that Lerma, far from gifting property to the king upon the move of the court to Valladolid in 1601, where Philip had no palace, instead acquired buildings, did them up, and quickly sold them to the monarch at a profit. Indeed, she goes on to argue that the *privado* was a prolific property developer, and that given the possible dating of the play, this scene could constitute a possible nod to the 1613 renovations to the fortifications at Lerma (2002: 68). Use of the motif of ruins, therefore, works on two levels in this *comedia*: on the one hand, it taps into a field of imagery that recalls the arbitrary nature of luck, and the pointed commentary that over-rewarded *privados*, at some point, must face an inevitable fall. On the other, it constitutes a barbed allusion to Lerma himself.

La fortuna merecida, therefore, and the critical response it has received, serve as an excellent example of debate Lope's work is capable of inspiring. Whilst critics like Sánchez follow Maravall's contention that Lope's theatre "aparece como manifestación de una gran campaña de propaganda social, destinada a difundir y fortalecer una sociedad determinada, en su complejo de intereses y valores y en la imagen de los hombres y del mundo que de ella deriva" (1972: 13), critics such as McKendrick seek to question this orthodox contention. This is a debate amongst *comedia* scholars that remains open: as recently as 2012, Ruano de la Haza has been at great pains to explain, specifically in reference to Lope, that playwrights of the age lived so precariously that they could hardly dare to openly criticise either the king or the Duke of Lerma, suggesting that the bad kings of his drama were depicted merely because they provided better dramatic substance than good ones. "Lope de Vega," he argues, "far from being critical of the monarchy, craved to be accepted by the authorities and to take a seat, however humble, at the king's table" (2012: 65). Lope was indeed a creature of the court, and a certain bitterness at his own exclusion is clear in *Los Guzmanes*. However, in the light of the plays under consideration here, and their pertinence to the political environment of the time, it is hard to believe that Lope was not commenting on what he saw before him to some degree. Lope may have lived, as Ruano de la Haza remarks, "in a glass house", but this does not mean that his work was incapable of commentary, if not criticism. Indeed, Alban K. Forcione (2009) discusses Lope's works, including *El villano en su rincón* (whose similarity to *Los Guzmanes de Toral* is apparent), as "spaces for debate" which "[compel] their audiences to reflect critically on the foundations and implications of established political doctrines and commonplaces" (20)[51].

[51] Forcione's study uses the notion of the unrobing of the king to explore the complexities that lie at the heart of kingship on stage, in the relationship between public and private, king and human. In this sense, it exposes many of the tensions that are laid bare in the *comedia de privanza*.

Undoubtedly, *La fortuna merecida* is a product of patronage, and of all the characters in the play, Álvaro Núñez is the most sympathetic. However, our understanding of the political ramifications of this play need not stop at this fact. Suggesting, meanwhile, that if the play does indeed support the Count of Lemos at a time when his star was falling, then it must be a piece that lends its support to Lerma simultaneously, is to fundamentally misread the play's main scenes. The play's main dramatic force comes from the ramifications of over-reward and jealousy; Lope cleverly manipulates historical fact in order to avoid an overt parallel between a young king and a greedy *privado* who is executed for refusing to give away his titles, but his touch is deft enough that the viewer minded to do so could see the similarity to a rich and powerful Lerma. Moreover, Lope grounds his profound political commentary in his use of the conventions he has borrowed from Poyo. He has written the first half of a *bilogía*, but seems to have neglected to write the following play, perhaps, as McKendrick acknowledges, in tactful recognition of his patron Lemos. He uses the typical images of the court (labyrinth, sea, etc.) and combines them with Poyo's signature image, the wheel of fortune. However, this emphasises not stoic acceptance, but instead Alfonso's excessive generosity (no king, after all, was ever so generous as Philip was to Lerma). Finally, e pays lip-service to envy, but instead of demonstrating an unfair fall, uses it as a vehicle for exemplary reason of state. Of all Lope's plays under examination here, this is the most similar to Poyo's original blueprint. This is not to say, however, that it is any less sophisticated than either *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, or *La corona merecida*, where his reformulation of the *comedia de privanza* is more obvious. Indeed, the very simplicity of this play is what allows him to get away with such pointed political commentary. Doubling as as a *drama genealógico* with the aim of improving the reputation of a courtier who was falling out of favour, it demonstrates Lope's increased sophistication: compared to the political commentary Poyo offered, Lope's goes much further, and in his manipulation of Poyo's imagery, we can see a clear development.

Lope’s *comedias de privanza*, therefore, constitute some of his most pointed political work, demonstrating the potential of his theatre for political commentary. Each of the playwrights copying Poyo’s work manipulates and builds on it in his own way and with his own agenda. Lope’s *comedias de privanza* are set apart by their implicit political commentaries, and his poetic mastery. His ideas on *privanza* do not criticise the institution *per se*, but they certainly offer valid concerns: he dwells on the problem of reward and greed amongst *privados*, and explores the delicate balance between public service and adequate reward. Moreover, he has important questions for kings, exploring those relationships between both “good” and “bad” *privados* and their monarch, teasing out the nuances that can lead to corruption and bad rule. In his conclusions and his verse, we see how his ideas reflect and interplay with ideas of political commentators, and with other poets of the age. Lope’s *comedia de privanza* is therefore undoubtedly of its age, speaking to its moment of creation, in the middle years of Lerma’s powerful *privanza*, when his influence was at its greatest. However, in literary terms we can see hints of Poyo’s earlier works: he has taken several features of the original *comedias de privanza*, but has furnished them with new images, subverted those which he has maintained, and even managed to mix it with other theatrical genres and conventions. Lope, as a superior playwright, has taken Poyo’s earlier works, and imbued them with greater dramatic quality, and simultaneously, made the *comedia de privanza* more political. In this sense, he has developed Poyo’s genre, and innovated, whilst maintaining its norms, all to serve his own literary needs. Literary development is clear, as is the continued relationship between the genre and contemporary political events. Lope uses the *comedia de privanza* to create plays of astonishing dramatic quality that also serve as pointed pieces of political commentary.

LUIS VÉLEZ DE GUEVARA

The Playwright Inside the Regime

C. George Peale writes that Luis Vélez de Guevara "figuró en su día con Lope y Calderón como el tercer miembro del gran triunverato de la comedia áurea" (2017: 5). Ferrer Valls (2017) demonstrates that he was widely performed in the seventeenth century; Germán Vega García-Luengos suggests that he could count Cervantes, Quevedo, Góngora, Lope and Calderón as fans of his work, as all of them praised his talent as a dramatist (1996: 111). However, despite his popularity in his own life time, in the intervening centuries, he slipped from the notice of all but specialists[52]. This is due, in part, to the lack of published *Partes* of his work. However, thanks to the efforts of C. George Peale and William R. Manson and their endeavour to produce critical editions of Vélez's works, he is attracting critical attention once again. As is clear in Peale's 1995 paper, the scale of his thematic output is incredibly large, with his dramatic work covering no less than thirteen categories, according to Peale and Manson's classification. Notably, Peale and Manson list the first of these categories as his *comedias de privanza*.

Vélez was right at the centre of the court in the early years of the seventeenth century. Accordingly, many of his *comedias* have the court as their setting[53], dramatizing its machinations and intricacies. Davies tells us that he was in court in Valladolid in 1603, and from 1608, he was intimately connected to the Sandoval family itself, as a member of Lerma's second son, the Count of Saldaña's, household. Vélez could count Lope de Vega, Cervantes and Soto de Rojas as fellow poets who were attracted to Saldaña's literary circle (1983: 20).

[52] Maria Grazia Profeti (1983: 1-20) provides a wide ranging exploration of critical attitudes to Vélez across the centuries, from his seventeenth-century contemporaries, through to the relevance of his work to more modern schools of analysis within *comedia nueva* studies. More recently, Miguel Zugasti (2017: 41-68) has explored how Vélez's work was initially rediscovered in the early twentieth century, first by Cotarelo in 1917, and then by Spencer and Schevill in 1937. However, until the end of the twentieth century, he slipped back into obscurity.

[53] Zugasti (2017) deals in detail with eight such plays.

He managed to weather the storm of patronage, as once Philip IV acceded, he entered the new king's household, possibly thanks to his having won the favour of Olivares (Vega García-Luengos 2007: 306[54]). His relationship with Lerma's regime was therefore far closer than that of any of the other playwrights under examination in this study, and indeed, this can be seen in his *comedias de privanza*. Lope may have enjoyed the patronage of the Count of Lemos, another member of Lerma's faction, but his earlier *comedias de privanza* were penned in a period of his career when he was not enjoying court favour. The Vélez plays under examination here, however, were written from within the regime. Vélez subtly captures the delicate balance of power within Lerma's own faction, and by examining his contribution to the *comedia de privanza*, we can better understand how *privanza* was viewed from within the court itself. If playwrights took up the ideas and characteristics introduced by Poyo and manipulated them to suit their own abilities and agendas, Vélez's *comedias de privanza* show how Philip's own courtiers engaged with the genre.

Caparrós Esperante demonstrates that Vélez was aware of Salucio del Poyo's work, and indeed, directly refers to him in *La Baltasara* (published in 1652), praising Poyo as "un ingenio estremado/ que, con su pluma lucida,/ ingenioso, ofrece al mundo/ cómica latina y griega" (Caparrós Esperante 1987: 39-40). Moreover, it is indicative that Daniele Crivellari (2010) takes Poyo and Vélez together in his analysis of the use of the ballad tradition within the *comedia de privanza*, as one of the striking similarities between the two playwrights is in their use of the *romancero*. However, Vélez's career in court, and his literary patronage, have often served to hinder critical appreciation of his work. Vélez's work on *privanza*, and kingship in general, however, is far from homogenous. He draws across various source materials, including the ballad tradition, and takes up plots from Spanish history, as well as crafting stories of his

[54] See this article for more on Vélez's work in performance in Olivares' court.

own invention. Accordingly, his *comedias de privanza* are rich and varied. Exploring two plays from the central middle years of Lerma's *privanza—El lucero de Castilla y Luna de Aragón* (1613) and *Don Pero Vélez y Don Sancho el Deseado* (1615)—will illuminate how in spite of the constraints of his powerful patrons, Vélez managed to create work that was rich in political nuance: this is especially the case for the latter of the two plays under examination here, which was explicitly commissioned for performance in the Duke of Lerma's *huerto* at his palace in Lerma.

If critics have seen Poyo's *comedias de privanza* as somewhat two-dimensional, Vélez follows Lope's lead in investing greater dramatic quality into the genre. By combining his *comedias* with the *romancero* tradition, and indeed, by mixing them with popular myth and historical legend (which he plays with in order to offer endings we would not expect), he shows the growing dramatic complexity of the *comedia de privanza*. Indeed, these plays provide us with scenes and moments that could count as among some of the most ambitious of the Spanish Golden Age. In spite of their authorship and circumstances of performance, they are also intricately political works, that demonstrate their moment of composition: indeed, written by such a creature of the court, these plays are inevitably highly attuned to the political currents of the moment of their creation. Not only does Vélez tap into the intellectual currents surrounding *privanza* that were circulating during these middle years of Philip's reign, but he also shows the delicate balance of power that was at play. These years marked the start of the decline of Lerma's grip on the monarchical machinery: Feros records how from 1608, increasing numbers of appointments, including the king's confessor, were made not from Lerma's own faction, but instead that of his enemies. However, real problems began in 1609 when Lerma's own son, the Duke of Uceda began to align himself with courtiers outside of his father's own faction (2000: 219-21). The tensions between father and son, rumours of which began circulating in 1606-7, were acknowledged publically for the first time in 1614 (Feros

2000: 231). Vélez's ability to create intense dramas that deal with warring factions and competition between candidates for *privanza*, whilst managing to neither openly criticise nor privilege one side over another shows his careful navigation of court favour in these tricky years, and his astute judgement of the political environment. Indeed, it is worth noting, as Javier J. González Martínez highlights, that often Vélez's plays on *privanza* stand out for the happy endings their *privado* characters enjoy, rather than the tragic endings often found in those by other playwrights (2013: 20). The political circumstances in which Vélez wrote are perhaps an explanation for his more humorous *comedias de privanza*, which in spite of appearing superficially more concerned with amorous intrigue than with politics, always have a happy ending. Indeed, in the two plays under examination here, politics hardly provides the real substance of their stories. Nevertheless, *privanza* provides an important back drop that illustrates the increased visibility of the *comedia de privanza*'s topoi and conventions, upon which Vélez layers lovers' triangles, plotting and desires.

Vélez's contributions to the *comedia de privanza* are significant because they show both technical development and increased complexity, but also because they show an acute sensitivity to the politics of their age. Rather than showing the broader sweep of foreign or domestic policy, these plays reflect the delicate machinations of warring factions that was endemic in Philip's court during Lerma's *privanza*, showing small but perceptible shifts of power. Inevitably, Vélez's innovations on the blueprint conceived by Poyo look markedly different to those offerings by either Lope or Mira: however, this is due to his position in relation to the regime. As a result, one of the most marked innovations Vélez introduces to the *comedia de privanza* is the way in which he mixes the genre with other generic elements of the *comedia nueva*, in this case, the *comedia de capa y espada*, in order to make his plays more

pleasing to his patrons, and to simultaneously provide insightful political commentary. He makes changes to the *comedia de privanza* that provide a powerful *decir sin decir*[55].

Written in 1613, Vélez de Guevara's treatment of the Álvaro de Luna story in *El lucero de Castilla y la Luna de Aragón* bears all the hallmarks of its date of composition within the context of Lerma's own *privanza*. The use of a historical setting, and especially the court of Juan II and his infamous *privado*, is, as we have seen, typical of the *comedia de privanza*. Indeed, many of its traits, in addition to its obvious setting, could point, as Daniele Crivellari notes, to the play being labelled as nothing but a cliché of poetic and thematic motifs, playing to an audience familiar with and pleased by the now well trodden path first established some ten years earlier by Salucio del Poyo (2010: 69). These include an emphasis on jealousy, friendship and a by now familiar structure, built around the rise and fall of a seemingly faultless *privado*. However, several factors demonstrate that such a reading of the play is superficial at best: both Crivellari (2010) and Gareth A. Davies (2013) demonstrate that this is a delicately nuanced and carefully crafted play. Indeed, it is one of the most sophisticated plays of its kind, and thus a demonstration of how in Vélez's hands, the genre has continued to develop in sophistication since its first inception, and moreover, that each dramatist manipulated the conventions of the *comedia de privanza* according to their own circumstances.

Tracing the play's sources is just one way of showing how Vélez's *comedias de privanza* innovate on Poyo's to add more political in nuance. In his excellent analysis, Crivellari (2010) creates a direct comparison between Poyo and Vélez and their use of the *romancero viejo* in their relative treatments of Álvaro de Luna. He shows that where Poyo merely places whole passages of the ballads into the mouths of his onstage characters, Vélez wittily changes them

[55] For more on this concept, see Chapter 6 of Arellano (1999), where in his discussion of the theatre of Bances Candamo (whose theatre gave rise to the phrase "decir sin decir"), he argues that it constitutes "una llamada al necesario respeto con que hay que hablar a los reyes" (180).

in order to create an amusing, intelligent joke for a knowing audience. Crivellari concludes by demonstrating that, through his reproducing and manipulation of source material, Vélez's work fits into the Golden Age tradition of *culteranismo* (2010: 77-8). Certainly, his ability to manipulate the ballads, where Poyo merely reproduced them, shows Vélez's greater talent as a playwright. In addition to the ballads, Vélez draws from history in his framing of the *comedia*'s plot. It has been well established that Vélez did not feel constrained by historical realities in his *comedias*. Indeed, Peale (1996) points to a significant sub-genre within Vélez's work, that of "mito-drama", which relies not so much on history to tell the story, but instead plays to the audience's knowledge of the event, relying on their recognition of it as mythic, mixing the popular and the esoteric. Historical "reality" does not come so much from what the audience hears the characters say, but instead from witnessing and sharing in a communal experience[56]. This is an aspect of Vélez's work that has been teased out by other critics: Alexander Samson (2016) discusses it at length in his analysis of *Los amotinados de Falndes*. Ferrer Valls' (2008) edition of *El marqués del Vasto* and Thacker's (2019) of *La creación del mundo* point to Vélez's loose use of history in his plays: for Vélez, historical, and even biblical fact (as seen in *La creación del mundo*), come second to poetics.

This is no less the case in *El lucero*, and indeed, as we have seen, such a loose use of history is entirely typical of the *comedia de privanza*. Davies (2013) shows how Vélez felt free to change historical realities in this play. Juan II's court will have immediately situated the audience in terms of what to expect from the play; however, rather than focussing on Álvaro de Luna's rise alone, we see the focus on the Duke of Arjona, whose own trajectory forms the basis of the play's plot. Álvaro's role is as friend to the central *privado*, and as an increasingly important rising star in Juan's court. This play is not Vélez's only take on the character of Álvaro de

[56] In this sense, Peale's analysis resonates with Bradner's conception of use of history in Spanish theatre as seen in his analysis of Poyo's *comedias de privanza* (1971).

Luna. In *El espejo del mundo* (1612) he contrasts Juan II and Álvaro de Luna in the Castilian court with Portugal's Alonso and his *privado*, Don Basco. Playing on the audience's knowledge of Álvaro de Luna's eventual fate, Vélez uses the contrast to craft Don Basco's own trajectory and his process of *desengaño*. This play is remarkable for its use of the mirror motif, which it employs on several levels: the king is the mirror of justice and the law (ll. 267-53), the palace is the mirror of the world (ll. 791-2), the *privado* is the mirror of the king, and the *privados* are reflections of each other (Basco warns his Castilian opposite number as he languishes in jail, "Mírate en mí como espejo./ Veráis mi fortuna en ella" (ll. 2264-5)). However, these reflections are less substantial than they may seem. The court is an ocean, *privanza* a boat upon it; the king is the water itself, and the reflection this water provides can be distorted at a moment's notice (ll. 1550-64). The *privados* are moons, who wax and wane, and whose fortune is seen as a dream, as a comet or as air itself (ll. 1850-81). Crucially, the reflections of the play's symbolic mirrors are transient, reversed and distorted: the king fails to execute justice in his false imprisonment of his devoted *privado*; the *privado*'s fortune is reversed as quickly as it first appeared, and Don Álvaro de Luna is left to observe the fate of his contemporary, but fails to truly understand it. Although Basco is eventually exonerated and he chooses to give up his *privanza*, the audience knows that this is not a fate that will be mirrored in Álvaro's own political career. It is a masterful use of the *topoi*, both of the genre, and of the literary age. The reflection of the world in Vélez's play truly is a *mundo al revés*, just as the play's very title is inverted and distorted in its final line "Este es del mundo el espejo" (l. 2631). It is yet another example that shows Vélez's assured and masterful skill in crafting *comedias de privanza*.

Vélez is not alone in his use of Álvaro de Luna as a secondary character that will inform the trajectory of the protagonist: Poyo, of course, treated the character of Álvaro in this manner in his presentation of Ruy López de Ávalos, and Mira de Amescua will also use the character

similarly in the first half of his diptych of the Álvaro de Luna story. However, Vélez's version is altogether more sophisticated, creating a political plot that, in contrast to his fellow playwrights, is interwoven with an amorous one. Vélez's Duke of Arjona falls victim to the jealousy of the Count of Santorcaz; making friends with a young Álvaro de Luna along the way, the Duke suffers a brief spell of incarceration in Peñafiel, before Luna's loyalty persuades the king to release him. Davies (2013) notes that the Duke of Arjona was indeed a man of historical record who suffered incarceration in the summer of 1429. However, he never succeeded in becoming a *privado* to Juan II, and his arrest and imprisonment, far from being the result of envy over his position in court, was in fact due to his pronounced, and proven, sympathies towards the Aragonese (2013: 26-7). Although Vélez's Arjona is freed and has a happy ending (he does not return to his *privanza*, choosing instead to retire), the historical Duke dies in captivity. Moreover, Vélez's handling of the timeline of Álvaro de Luna's arrival and rise in court is ahistorical. If Arjona's fall was in 1429, in reality, by the earliest years of this decade, Álvaro de Luna was already *privado*, and indeed, by 1423, he occupied the title of *Condestable* of Castile. Moreover, Isabel of Portugal only became queen of Castile in 1445 when she married Juan II as his second wife; in this play, on the other hand, Vélez already has her in situ as queen. As we have seen, it was Isabel's hatred of Luna that precipitated his downfall, and so in the play text, Vélez makes the queen's jealousy of any rival, no matter whom, a defining quality of the character.

Vélez's possible motivations in his alteration of history here probably go beyond mere aesthetics. Davies (2013) suggests that the play makes deliberate use of a story where one *privado* is exchanged for another in the court of a weak king. One of the play's great strengths lies in the way in which it shows this shift in power without ever discrediting either the old or the new *privado*. Thus he creates an oblique parallel to the court of his day. Davies (1983: 20-38) states that as a member of Lerma's own faction, and as the Count of Saldaña's servant,

Vélez reached the position of *gentilhombre*; he will have been well attuned to the minute shifts of power in Philip III's court, but also, like many around him, he will have been thinking about his position in the future court of Philip IV. Davies (2013) suggests that in 1615, Lerma's position was at a crucial juncture. 1609 saw the humiliating signing of the Twelve Year Truce with the Dutch, and such an affront to Spain's national pride could only be overcome by the renewal of hostilities elsewhere. However, this failed to materialise, slowly eroding Lerma's reputation and that of his faction. Although Lerma's policy to pursue peace abroad had its merits, John Lynch points out that coming from Lerma, it lacked "moral conviction" (1992: 39). Moreover, he wasted the opportunity for retrenchment that peace afforded him. Instead, he enriched himself, his friends and his family, and this, coupled with the increasingly outrageous behaviour of his clients (most notably Rodrigo Calderón), led to Lerma's position becoming increasingly unstable. In October 1612, Philip had released a statement in support of his *privado*, reaffirming the position and power given to him at the start of the reign (Lynch 1992: 38). However, the need to release such a statement betrays the mounting opposition to the *valido*. Indeed, as early as 1609, the appointment of Fernando Carillo as president of the Council of Finance demonstrated Philip's recognition of the need to reform the administration (Lynch 1992: 39). Later, in 1615, Olivares had successfully managed to move himself from Seville, and had gained the position of *gentilhombre de cámara* to the future Philip IV; by 1616 he was already a *consejero de estado*. Although, as Davies recognises (2013: 31), it would be a stretch to suggest Vélez had spotted Olivares' potential, it would not take great political intuition, given the machinations of Lerma's son, the Duke of Uceda, and the shifting power in court post-1612, to sense change in the air and a delicate and gradual rebalance of power around Philip III. This is an atmosphere that saturates Vélez's *comedias de privanza* dating from these middle years of Lerma's *valimiento*. As a member of Lerma's faction, Vélez takes care not to alienate himself from his current master, but also not to cut himself off from other

jostling factions. Instead, he creates a *comedia de privanza* that does not criticise either side in the exchange of power between two *privados*. Shrewdly, Vélez observes and reflects[57] the subtle realignment of power in court on his stage, without aligning himself with any particular faction, preparing himself for when, or if, the regime were to fall.

Examining the dramatic text demonstrates the literary and political sophistication at work in the *comedia*. Vélez's characters are psychologically convincing and complex, and the plot of *El lucero de Castilla y Luna de Aragón*, whilst adhering to the structure we have come to expect from the genre, goes beyond that of its precedents, interweaving the broadly politico-historical story with a dynamic subplot involving the queen and Doña Aldonza, the Duke of Arjona's wife. Vélez creates an amorous misunderstanding and intrigue amongst the noblemen of Juan's court that we might expect to find in a *comedia de capa y espada* rather than a historical *comedia*. Thus in terms of genre, we find a striking innovation, and a more complex plot. This plot demonstrates two effects in terms of the development of the *comedia de privanza*, and the representation of *privanza* on stage more generally. Firstly, it shows how the genre had become established enough in order for it to incorporate the characteristics of other types of Golden Age *comedia*. If Lope incorporated the *comedia de privanza* and the *drama de honor* in *La corona merecida* in order to draw conclusions about the assaults to the body politic that can result from a dangerous *privanza*, Vélez's incorporation of other generic characteristics is no less sophisticated. Indeed, what is an isolated example in Lope's dramaturgy becomes a typical feature of Vélez's. Vélez takes the seemingly more light-hearted *comedia de capa y espada* and integrates the political concerns of the *comedia de privanza* into it. By doing this, he allows himself the leeway to offer more pointed political commentary, where farce and a happy ending

[57] See Gareth A. Davies "Luis Vélez de Guevara and Court Life" in *Antigüedad y actualidad de Luis Vélez de Guevara* (1983) for a full discussion of Vélez's position in court in these years, as well as his increasing sense of isolation at the end of Lerma's *privanza*.

distract from what are in fact deeply political works. Secondly, as we might expect from a play that dates from the middle years of Lerma's *privanza*, it shows how *privanza* itself as a political phenomenon was not always the principal issue at stake. Although the play offers some conclusions in terms of the *privado* and his eventual career, it shows that what interested this playwright far more was the careful negotiation of power in a court where *privanza* was already established.

Indeed, surprisingly, if the Duke is undone by jealousy in court, it is not jealousy for his positions and political power. The Count of Santorcaz, the work's antagonist, is driven mad not by the Duke's *privanza*, but by his own unrequited love for the Duke's wife, Doña Aldonza. If anything, jealousy of the Duke's political position is merely a convenient and believable cover for what really is at the heart of the Count's resentment. This is a revelation uncovered from the play's *in medias res* opening: the Count of Santorcaz storms onto the stage bemoaning his lack of recognition compared to the powerful *privado*. His complaints about the Duke are those we might typically expect from the genre:

> Tanto honró el Rey la persona,
> con demostración tan clara,
> del conde de Trastamara,
> y también duque de Arjona
> siendo, que parece hechizo
> tan excesivo favor,
> su Camerero Mayor,
> su Mayor Caballerizo,
> Condestable, Mariscal,
> Canciller Mayor, y tanto,
> que, dando a Castilla espanto,
> es a su persona igual
> (ll. 17-28[58])

These opening lines highlight almost immediately a real problem that will continue throughout the play: that of the power that the Duke seems to wield in the kingdom. Vélez carefully crafts

[58] All quotations are taken from Manson and Peale's 2013 edition of the play, and are given by line number.

the speech to demonstrate the Count's comical distress: he suggests excess through the listing of titles, where each one is grander than the last, but where each title becomes shorter by syllable length, building the pace of the diatribe. The chiasmus between ll. 23-24, and the repetition of "Mayor" adds to his hyperbole. As momentum builds, so flow disintegrates, with the last cited quatrain interrupted by caesura in three out of four lines. The Count's indignation is clear. However, it is the last line of the cited passage that should be the most alarming: "es a su persona igual"- thus encapsulating from the play's very opening the theoretical boundary which a *privado* must never cross. In his criticism of the Duke, the Count has chosen the very worst accusation available from those circulated by the *arbitristas* in early seventeenth-century Spain. The question, however, will be whether or not such a criticism—that he threatens the king's very sovereignty—is deserved.

There will be an element of truth to his arguments; however, we will see that these do not matter to the Count. The political criticisms that the Count levies against the Duke are merely a cover for his amorous envy. Indeed, it is a clear marker of the play's context of composition that the Count chooses to criticise the Duke using the grounds he does. It shows the accepted nature of the ideas of the *arbitristas* that whilst hunting for a believable reason to dislike him, he strikes upon reasoning that was intellectually current, even if it is not necessarily the case. However, Santorcaz eventually concedes himself that Aldonza is the real source of his envy (ll. 69-111), an envy that he allows to bleed into his perception of the Duke's political position (ll. 125-30). From this first scene, Vélez establishes his play as one that is far from superficial: he establishes a court setting that will be immediately recognisable to the audience, but subverts our expectations. This is a jealousy that is using political reasoning as a smokescreen for what is really amorous intrigue. Where jealousy has become a defining thematic concern of the *comedia de privanza*, Vélez is extending its use. If Vélez is using a set of characteristics that we might consider typical of the *comedia de privanza*, he is gently building on them to create

something new. Affairs of the heart have always been at the centre of conflicts in the *comedia de privanza*, and often serve to highlight a *privado*'s over-might (Álvaro de Luna'a arrangement of the king's wedding to Isabel of Portugal in Poyo's *Luna*, for instance). Here, however, Vélez takes this generic convention one step further. Not only are political concerns now a cover for amorous ones (previous examples of the *comedia de privanza* have had this the other way round, where amorous concerns demonstrate political problems), but Vélez ties together the personal and the private in an intricate plot that reflects the generic alterations he is making. If Vélez's *comedias de privanza* have taken on the characteristics of the *comedia de capa y espada* in a mingling of the comedic and the political, in the substance of his plot, Vélez also mixes love and politics. At every level, we can see how Vélez is using the ostensibly light-hearted as a vehicle for political commentary, where love informs politics and politics informs love in an inextricable relationship.

The main structure and story arc of the *comedia* are typical for a *comedia de privanza*: a capable *privado* is brought down by the plots of an envious rival. However, what is different about this iteration is firstly that the Duke does not have a blind spot or ineffective strategy when it comes to dealing with his rival. If other *privados*, such as Payo de Guzmán or Poyo's Ruy López, have a tendency to repeatedly forgive their scheming enemies, leading to an eventual downfall, then Vélez's Arjona is far more robust. This is a demonstration of the Duke's own commitment and ability in his role as *privado*. Although the historical Duke had a somewhat chequered reputation, Vélez's *privado* is disciplined, professional and generous. When he is approached by the *gracioso* Gavilán who wishes to serve him, and warn him of the hatred of his former master (the Count), the Duke refuses to listen to the gossip, stating "Yo/ sé quien es el Conde, y tengo/ satisfación de su sangre/ y crïados lisonjeros/ y chismosos en mi casa/ no he menester" (ll. 613-8). However, he balances generosity with a refusal to be undermined or plotted against. When the unscrupulous Count has the nerve to approach the Duke for advancement, the Duke

wastes no time in demonstrating exactly who is in charge in a blistering 82-line tirade, informing the Count of his royal pedigree and faultless service record, and stating in no uncertain terms just how inferior the Duke considers the Count to be. His culminating threat feels all too real to a suitably cowed Count: "si habláis mal en mi mengua,/ me obligaréis que la lengua/ os saque por las espaldas" (I, ll. 904-6). Unlike Poyo's Ruy López de Ávalos, this is not a *privado* who falls due to an unfortunate inability to understand or deal with envious enemies, or who is too Christian to suspect anything but equally pious behaviour in his contemporaries. This is a *privado* who knows how to stop gossip, but who can use it effectively simultaneously. For even though he reprimands Gavilán, he has the insight to believe him. Moreover, even though he takes the Count to task, he is still willing to approach the king with the Count's request for promotion immediately afterwards, whilst the Count is still on stage. Thanks to the Duke's ringing endorsement, the request is granted (ll. 939-82).

This scene provides a tense moment of dramatic irony as the audience can see the full power dynamic between all the characters on stage whilst the king is still in the dark; in its characterisation it far outstrips anything that we have seen in Poyo's *comedias de privanza*. If the all-virtuous *privados* can tend towards implausibility in their characterisation, then Vélez's *privado* is far more credible. Vélez's superior characterisation creates scenes of far greater dramatic force. In this instance, the king is enfeebled by being the only person in the room (both the onstage court chamber, and the *corral*) who is not in full possession of the facts, whilst we join in the Count's embarrassment at being admonished for behaviour of which he knows he is guilty before being put in a position of having to be publically grateful to the very person who just threatened and corrected him. It is an excellent moment of theatre, leading to conclusions in terms of the dramatic action ahead. Although he has inevitably further stoked the flames of enmity between himself and the Count (the Count vows in an aside "vengarme determino/ contra este loco Luzbel,/ este soberbio gigante!" (ll. 970-2)), the audience is left to

wonder what the Duke could really have done differently to avoid his fate. He could not allow the Count to continue to believe he could gossip about him behind his back without consequences, but he still kept him on side by generously (or perhaps cynically) securing the promotion the Count desired. In terms of his political skill and acumen in handling the problematic Count, the Duke is entirely faultless. The only way to mitigate the Count's actions would be to remove the source of his original envy: in other words, by somehow giving over his wife, Doña Aldonza. However, this is patently impossible. Politically and publically he must pay the consequence for a private envy he can do nothing to mitigate. That Vélez has presented us with a *privado* who is, politically speaking, beyond reproach is not an accident: it provides us with a battle of public versus private.

It is this precise set of circumstances that allows the audience to feel so acutely for the Duke at the moment of his fall. The Count's plot is redolent of the *capa y espada* play in its farcical nature. He violates all the Aldonzas in the city, and then claims loudly to be the Duke upon discovery. Thus he turns the people against the Duke, and the king is forced to act. Vélez could be justifiably accused of melodrama in the moment of the Duke's downfall and his ensuing horror: in a fifty-line exchange between the king and the Duke, in which the Duke's speech constitutes twenty-five of those verses, seventeen are given over to rhetorical questions, most of which are a desperate reformulation of the first, blank question "¿Qué es esto, señor? ¿Señor?" (l. 1913). Moreover, we see the Duke move on his knees from royal to royal, looking desperately for someone to intercede on his behalf. The moment where we see him grovel on the ground before the Prince Enrique, only to be told contemptuously by the child "Dejad/ de cansaros y de cansarme,/ Duque, y del suelo os alzad" (ll. 1974-7) is especially poignant. Thinking of the scene in performance provides further pathos and elegy: the spatial configuration of the Duke's desperate grovelling as he moves down the hierarchy of royals and across the stage will have made for uncomfortable viewing. In a moment of acute irony, the

Count finally comes to arrest the Duke, thanks to his new position as Captain of the Guard. It may be melodramatic, but in this scene Vélez drives home the point that the Duke is the victim of circumstances beyond his control. His melodramatic despair and horror in the face of circumstances he could do nothing to avoid serve to heighten our sense of perceived injustice but also how he is paying so very publically for the Count's private grudge.

However, although the Duke is beyond reproach in his own conduct, that is not to say that there is no substance in the Count's initial criticism of the *privado* usurping the king's power. That the Count chooses to disregard this or use it as a smokescreen for what he considers to be the bigger issue of his own amorous grudge speaks more to his own flawed judgement and integrity as a courtier rather than to the necessarily blameless nature of the relationship between the king and his *privado*. However, as is often the case in the *comedia de privanza*, the problem does not lie in anything the Duke does- instead, it is a problem in the king's own abilities as ruler. The king refuses to make even the most basic decisions without prior consultation with the Duke, and although there is merit in recognising and rewarding the talents of others when he sees he is lacking in himself, there is certainly a slight unease in the power of a *privado* whose wife admits he spends "la noche toda/ papeleando" (ll. 236-7). The idea of a husband spending his nights working on the king's affairs, and thus implicitly neglecting his wife, is an example of the privileging of the relationship with the king over that with a lover. Mira de Amescua will play on the same idea later, contrasting the relationships between a *privado* and his wife unfavourably with that between a *privado* and his king, where the latter is much more passionate than the former. It suggests that the *privado*/king relationship is illicit in its strength.

The king freely admits "En sus hombros/ justamente el peso apoya/ grave de las dos Castillas,/ la mitad de mi corona/ debo al cuidado del Duque" (ll. 239-43). We see this in action when the

Count first approaches the king for his promotion. The speech that the king gives in reply brings out some surprising admissions. Firstly, he tells the Count:

> [el Duque] es sola
> la inteligencia que mueve
> mi voluntad, mi memoria,
> la esfera de mi albedrío
> (ll. 328-31).

Before going on to state of his *privado* that:

> …pues hallo
> en él estas partes, todas
> acreditando las suyas,
> un substituto que toma
> sus cuidados a su cuenta,
> un Argos que a todas horas
> está mirando por él,
> un padre que se apasiona
> por sus aumentos, un muro
> que le defiende, una sombra
> que le acompaña, un cristal
> en que se mira, una atorcha
> que le alumbra y, finalmente,
> quien le alivia, quien le ahorra
> los pesares, quien le temple
> los desvelos, las cangojas
> y cargas que traen consigo
> los cetros y las coronas.
> (ll. 352-64).

The romance, whose ó-a rhyme scheme ties in with the Duke's title, "Arjona", which will become the final emphatic phrase of the speech six lines later, draws out the real nuances in the king's relationship with the Duke. In the list of metaphors, which in its sheer length is hyperbolic, Vélez's choice to put the noun at the end of the line, with its resulting enjambment, serves to exaggerate the prestige the king feels he is lending his *privado* in his flattering description. The fact that the choice of some of his metaphors is somewhat mundane seems to pass the king by. It has been demonstrated that Vélez was well aware of the work of his contemporaries, even taking direct inspiration from Góngora's *Soledades* as well as *Polífemo*

in his play *Don Pedro Miago* (Peale 2005: 44)[59]. The poetry that the king exploits, therefore, seems deliberate. It belittles the king, whose attempt at sweeping praise lacks the elegance of the age's poetry. Although the metaphors he exploits fall in line with the sort of imagery used by the *tratadistas* (especially the image of a *cristal*), this is nevertheless rather underwhelming verse, showing the king's inferior abilities.

Beyond this, repetition and anaphora seem to characterise the king's speech. This is especially the case in the final lines of the speech:

> Este es el Duque, y así,
> sino es su heroica persona,
> nadie conmigo despacha,
> nadie conmigo negocia,
> nada puede, nada vale.
> Hablad al Duque de Arjona.
> (ll. 365-70).

The tautological use of "despachar" and "negociar", coupled with the childishly simple syntax hardly lends this king the ring of true authority. This is reinforced by the flustered and anaphoric "nada"/"nadie", which just before his final command to speak to the Duke and his flounced exit from the scene leaves the audience with the sense of a king who is barely in control. It is little surprise that the king exercises very little personal authority, and is totally in the sway of the Duke. Indeed, it is probably no coincidence that in his later condemning of the Duke he ironically states "solicito/ que de Don Juan el Segundo/ tan retrato del Primero/ el nombre de Justiciero/ quede a Castilla y al mundo" (ll. 2338-42). The historical Juan II, of course, not only failed to earn the cognomen 'el Justiciero', but failed to gain one at all. To a knowing audience, therefore, Juan's statement here is nothing but an admission of his own powerlessness. Indeed, he admits that even his free will is influenced by the Duke. This, surely,

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[59] María Cristina Quintero (1991) explores the rich relationship between *gongorismo* and the *comedia nueva* in a book-length study that reveals how closely intertwined poetry and theatre were in Baroque Spain.

within the intellectual boundaries set by political considerations of the time, is concerning. Whether he aims for it or not, the Duke is indeed "otro yo" (l. 341) to the king. The king's weakness is not preyed upon by his courtiers, unlike so many other examples within the *comedia de privanza*, and yet, in this play that seems so much more dominated by amorous intrigue than political discourse, the king's position is alarmingly vulnerable. It shows that the *privado*'s power ought to have limits, and in the context of Lerma's *privanza*, draws an uneasy parallel to Philip's own grip on power. His 1612 statement in support of Lerma went so far as to suggest that orders signed by Lerma had the same authority as those signed by the king, and effectively placed the entire conciliar system at Lerma's disposal (Lynch 1992: 38). Rhetoric, therefore, of a *privado*'s power equalling that of the king proved prescient for Philip's own rule.

However, that Juan couches his relationship with his *privado* within the terms of an "otro yo" taps into the lexis of friendship that dominated both the *comedia de privanza* and the intellectual debate surrounding *privanza* in the seventeenth century. As we have seen above, Feros (2001) suggests that to the seventeenth-century thinker, true friendship should be the sharing of a soul in two bodies, or like looking in a mirror (an idea that will be even more heavily explored by Vélez in his later play, *El conde Don Pero Vélez y Don Sancho el Deseado*). In this slightly earlier work, we can still see how Vélez's play feeds into and responds to the intellectual debate around friendship. Indeed, unsurprisingly for a *comedia de privanza*, it is from friendship and betrayal that the play gathers most of its dramatic power. The lexis of friendship is exploited liberally throughout, across a variety of contexts: between the king and the Duke, more markedly between the Duke and a young Álvaro de Luna, and that between the Count of Santorcaz and his lackey, Tello. Looking at the play through the lens of friendship elucidates most clearly Vélez's use of the Álvaro de Luna material. For indeed, it is from the contrast in the use of friendship between the king and his *privado* and conversely,

between the Duke and Álvaro de Luna, that Luna derives his most powerful characterisation, and that the play finds some of its most pointed conclusions in terms of *privanza*.

For the king, there is no boundary between friendship and matters of state: in his great praise of his *privado*, he makes this clear, stating "cuando encuentra un amigo/ tan grande un rey, no lo compra/ a menos precio" (ll. 345-7). We see it again in the opening of the second act where, demonstrated in the switch to weightier *octavas reales*, the king and his favourite discuss matters of state. Tellingly, we note that Juan's interjections serve only to agree with the Duke's proposed course of action: moments of actual policy and decision making all come from the Duke, not the king. He tells his *privado* "pues esta confianza/ estáis acreditando cada día/ en mi fe, en mi amistad, en mi privanza,/ por propio valor vuestro y sangre mía" (ll. 1039-41). For the young king, there is no separation between his *privado*'s political function and his function as friend. Although in the case of the Duke, and later Don Álvaro, Juan has found trustworthy subjects for his confused political and personal affections, it leaves him vulnerable. This is demonstrated by the Count's plot and its ramifications. There can be no criticising the king for his condemnation of the Duke: he has seen supposed proof before his very eyes, and he is contending with the outrage of the whole city. However, his personal affection for the Duke, and the Duke's apparent manipulation of it in his misdeeds, is what so upsets the king. It magnifies the scale of the slight: ¡Sin mí estoy!/ ¿Así tan grandes mercedes/ como le he hecho me paga/ el Duque lo que me debe?/ ¿De él a descréditos cobro?" (ll. 1749-53). It is a 'friendship' built on uneasy foundations in the way in which the public and private are conflated, leading to the unjust imprisonment of the *privado*. In this way, the public suffers: the state is deprived of an able and arguably necessary *privado*, of uncommon skill and sense of service, because of a personal slight. Friendship like that which Juan portrays between a king and his *privado* is confused and damaging. On the one hand, it allows for too great a degree of control on the part of the *privado* concerning matters of state, and on the other, it

allows for an awkward confusing of public and personal, where the public is damaged by the personal (the state is deprived of an able statesman because of a perceived betrayal of personal friendship), and the personal by the public (the public offices heaped on the individual only serve to heighten the sense of betrayal the king feels).

This is seen all the more clearly by the contrast drawn with the friendship between the Duke and Álvaro de Luna. This friendship is healthier for it being between two men who can meet as equals. The Duke is naturally drawn to Don Álvaro, and Álvaro, similarly, takes a liking to him. Their friendship has its foundations on mutual respect and this is key. The Duke tells Álvaro: "que os quiero,/ Don Álvaro, *y que os estimo*/ y he de ser amigo vuestro" (ll. 780-2, italics mine). The line of logic is that friendship stems from respect, which functions in both directions. Indeed, it is this concept of mutuality that will underscore the relationship between them, for both will go on to benefit from the loyalty of the other one. Álvaro will gain advancement from the Duke thanks to the *privado*'s position in court, and Álvaro's impassioned defence of his friend the Duke will see the former *privado* forgiven and cleared of all charges in the play's final stages. Indeed, this impassioned defence of the Duke constitutes Luna's longest speech in the play, and it is clear that his greatest function within the play is as that of 'friend'. He only gains his position and subsequent promotions in court through the Duke and his friendship. The king states bluntly "que hoy me encargo por vos [el Duque] de su [la de Don Álvaro de Luna] fortuna" (l. 1085). This is an excellent example of how position and favour work in court. We see how through personal loyalty, factions are built. Indeed, a more cynical reading might suggest that by promoting his friends, and thus surrounding himself with loyal supporters, the Duke is able to secure his position when he is in danger. This is something that speaks to the increasing factions within Philip III's court, and indeed, the presentation of friendship between equals to underscore factionalism will find its finest expression in the later work of Mira de Amescua. More importantly, within the scheme

of the play, Álvaro de Luna's actions come only as a direct result of those of the Duke. His interjections always respond to the Duke's situation, in thanks for those promotions he received as a result of his friendship, or in defence of his benefactor once he has been imprisoned. However, what is striking is how his eloquent, courageous defence of the Duke, even in the face of his own imprisonment, is subsequently used by the king. The king states:

> Hombres que saben volver,
> aventurándolo todo
> por su amigo de este modo
> son los que yo he menester,
> porque me dan a entender,
> cuando tan fieros están
> en las señales que dan
> de que hoy he sido testigo,
> que teniendo un rey amigo,
> mejor por su rey lo harán.
> […]
> don Álvaro, desde aquí
> por mi amigo os he elegido,
> que el veros agradecido
> hará prodigios en mí.
> (ll. 2527-46).

It is clear that, to his credit, the king has recognised the loyalty of which Luna is capable, and moreover, that as king, he too needs similar loyalty. However, his understanding, or use, of the friendship lexis shows his flawed understanding once again. He has not noted that the friendship between Luna and the Duke must, necessarily, function differently to any which he can enjoy, he is not Álvaro's equal. The king cannot meet Álvaro in the same way as the Duke does. Therefore, when he states that such loyalty and friendship will be even better for the king than for an equal, he is wrong. Juan shows in his treatment of Álvaro that he will go on to repeat the same mistake with this *privado* as he did with the Duke of Arjona: he will continue to conflate friendship with affairs of state. The audience will have known, from the use of a historical character, that Álvaro will go on to pay with his life for his *privanza* to king Juan II. Therefore, in his various guises as friend, both to the Duke and to the king, we can see how

Vélez is using the most famous historical favourite to demonstrate the complexity of *amistad*, and its political ramifications.

However, as previously stated, this *comedia de privanza* is more far-reaching than the relatively simpler offerings of earlier playwrights. Although Vélez undoubtedly offers us new reflections on the nature of *privanza*, to ignore those features which make it less like its precedents would be to underestimate it. In the same way that Vélez has incorporated novel amorous intrigue, so he has created in Doña Aldonza and her subplot a real novelty within the genre. The subplot, and its perfect fit with the main story, is one of the first of its kind within the genre, and it is proof of the way in which the *comedia de privanza* continued to develop in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Aldonza is more than equal to her husband, the Duke, both in terms of eloquence and intelligence. Compared to other wives of favourites that we have seen before, she is a more complex, believable and more developed character. Indeed, if we have commented above on the Duke's impeccable political acumen, then this is no less so with Aldonza. Before the Duke takes the Count to task for gossip and impugning his reputation, Aldonza gets there first. She tells the Count scathingly "hablar del ausente mal,/ después de ser desigual/ correspondencia, es traidor/ achaque, afrentoso y vil" (ll. 178-81). Equally, if the Duke then went on to intercede on the Count's behalf for promotion, so Aldonza does the same (ll. 252-73). By foreshadowing the Duke in this way, we see how Vélez has made in her a character who stands on her own two feet, independent from her husband. Here is a character with her own thoughts, ideas and abilities. Indeed, if anything, she is the support to her husband, rather than the other way around. When the Duke is at his lowest point, it is she who picks him up. His courage, as he states himself (ll. 2007-11) is derived from her wisdom and fortitude:

> Pues valor, Duque, valor,
> porque es cuando importa más

en las desdichas, que nunca
lució en la prosperidad,
porque cuando todo el mundo
os venga, Duque, a faltar,
es faltaros vos a vos
última civilidad.
(ll. 1999-2006).

Indeed, it is in the third act, when she is forced to rely on her own wit and courage whilst her husband is imprisoned, that we see her true substance. Her long speech to her husband's portrait (ll. 2633-86) not only creates an excellent moment of pathos, but also serves as a moment of exposition for her character which is unparalleled in a female secondary character up to this point in the *comedia de privanza*. In fifty-three lines, we see her move through a series of emotions: jealousy turns to love, and as she contemplates her situation, her resolve turns to despair. It is convincing and compelling, and a first to see how the imprisonment of the fallen *privado* affects his wife. She is left to do all she can to secure his freedom (she lists the steps she has taken on her husband's behalf), but is still left to grieve for his loss. Having her address the portrait, rather than speak a soliloquy, hints at the use to which Vélez will put portraits in *Don Pero Vélez*. Lope uses of the portrait of the king as a reminder that the king's image is as powerful as his presence, and that it can act as a substitute for the king's body in his *comedia de privanza El servir con mala estrella*. Vélez picks up those ideas here, but manipulates them: the portrait, used as a stand in for her imprisoned husband, is a tool that adds to the pathos of the scene. It acts as a physical reminder of his absence, rather than as a substituted presence. Especially compelling, given the nature of the accusations against her husband, is how Aldonza dwells on the rumours and supposed proof that he has been with other women. She tells her husband's portrait "en las entrañas/ como veneno [mis celos] me afligen" (ll. 2660-1). Although she eventually resolves that he cannot be guilty, her jealousy, inflicted on her as the result of an amorous plot, is proof of the increased complexity of this *comedia de privanza*. The emotional substance that is given to Doña Aldonza is exactly what makes the subplot

involving the queen's jealousy of her so convincing. As previously mentioned, making the queen susceptible to jealousy is a nod to Álvaro's eventual fate. This is what ties the subplot so cleverly to the political plot. Indeed, that the queen is only able to get over her jealousy once the Duke has fallen and the Duchess no longer represents a political threat to her, represents the perfect interweaving of the plot and the subplot, and the amorous and the political. The character of Aldonza, in her intelligence and independence from her husband, and in the way in which she is both the victim of the queen's jealousy and jealous herself, again, is a real novelty in the *comedia de privanza*. The theme of jealousy may be a cliché of the genre, but Vélez's handling of it in this instance, and especially its different guises across the characters and both the main and subplot, is what makes his *comedias de privanza* more sophisticated. His work handles the thematic threads common to the genre more deftly. Again, we see how public and private have interwoven with consequences that push the genre beyond the purely political boundaries within which the *comedia de privanza* has remained up until this point.

El lucero de Castilla y Luna de Aragón, therefore, is a more mature example of a *comedia de privanza*, both in terms of form and content. Although it adheres to the norms of the *comedia de privanza* in many ways, it goes beyond those precedents set by Poyo. It takes a typical structure, but interweaves within it a compelling subplot; it takes historical characters, but manipulates history in order to make for a more compelling story; it takes an inherently political genre and subverts its motivations by making them amorous, thus combining the form of the *comedia de privanza* with other forms, taking the genre in a new direction. The real conflict within this play is that between public and private. The source of the dramatic tension and its development have to do with the way in which, in various guises, the characters confuse their public role, as understood by their positions, and mingle them with their private desires and relationships, either deliberately (in the case of the Count) or accidentally (in the case of the king). However, we can still see how the play taps into the intellectual debates around *privanza*

at the time, and is still influenced by contemporary political events. Vélez's *comedia de privanza* demonstrates just how far the genre developed in less than two decades. In Vélez's hands, it borrows elements from other genres, whilst still remaining identifiably of the type of play Poyo instigated. Moreover, it is still a political play. There can be little doubting the playwright's skill and moreover, the heights this genre is capable of reaching. Many of his innovations on Poyo's original *comedias de privanza* may be in order to deflect attention from Philip III and Lerma. Vélez's circumstances of composition demanded tact and subtlety, and indeed, in the humour, farce and amorous tangles of this play, there was enough dramatic content to prevent the play appearing to be an overt political commentary. However, it is a testament to Vélez's ability as a dramatist that through his innovations to the genre, he has created a play that is still rich in political content.

El lucero de Castilla does not stand alone in demonstrating Vélez's more nuanced handling of the genre. Of all of Vélez's *comedias de privanza*, Vélez's 1615 *El conde Don Pero Vélez y Don Sancho el Deseado* has probably received the most critical attention. This is perhaps because of its circumstances of composition and performance[60]. Written to be performed on the night of San Juan in 1615, it was commissioned by Lerma's second son, the Duke of Saldaña[61], to be performed in the town of Lerma, in the *privado*'s garden[62]. In his introductory notes to Manson and Peale's 1997 edition of the *comedia*, Thomas E. Case labels the palace at Lerma as "el colmo de lo que podría llamarse la arquitectura del poder en la España de Felipe III" (1997: 43). The gardens themselves stretched over three kilometres, and were split between park and more formal garden. He details the strong relation of the *comedia* to both its space for

[60] Richard Hubbell Olmstead's critical edition of the play (1944) presents copious details and evidence in his dating of the play. C. George Peale builds on this in his 1997 critical edition.
[61] Peale (1994) asserts that Vélez wrote this for his patron rather than Lerma himself, contradicting Olmstead.
[62] Ferrer Valls' 2017 article detailing and summarising the surviving documentation for the composition and performance information for Vélez's *comedias*, as we know it so far, is a valuable resource to scholars of Vélez seeking to put together his performance history.

performance and its date (the night of San Juan), which is especially evident in the third act. The play's climactic scene of the discovery of the love between the *privado* and the *infanta* takes place on the night of San Juan, which also happens to be king Sancho's birthday. Moreover, the characters themselves seem to move between and reference the spaces of the palace's gardens (1997: 46-7). The audience watching the play on that spring evening in 1615 will have included Lerma himself, and his invited guests, which will have included a circle of most influential nobles in Philip's court, and we can assume, members of the royal family (Case 1997: 47).

The play, then, is heavily influenced by its circumstances of performance; necessarily, this has also occupied many of the scholars who have chosen to examine the play, with many allowing it to entirely colour their reading of it. For instance, Odile Lasserre-Dempure, in her analysis of the stage directions and visual elements of the play, concludes by implying that the play's circumstances of performance undermine its value in terms of content, suggesting "De manera evidente… subraya la necesidad de tener presentes las condiciones de representación de una obra y remite al problema del mecenazgo" (1999: 119). Germán Vega García-Luengos concurs to a degree, suggesting that the play's many faults, are due in part, to its circumstances of composition (2007: 313). *El conde Don Pero Vélez* shares many similarities with *El lucero*: although it is a *comedia de privanza*, it is a very jolly one, which really has at its heart the amorous intrigue of the *infanta*, Doña Blanca and the *privado*, the eponymous Pero Vélez. Indeed, in the first two acts, the main dramatic force seems to come from the *infanta*'s repeated flirtations with the Count, and her invitations to him, followed by her rejections of him once he reciprocates. In this way, the play bears more than a passing resemblance to Lope's *El perro del hortelano*. Like *El lucero*, at first glance, it appears to share more in common with the *comedia de capa y espada* than with a more politically charged *comedia de privanza*. In spite of Don Pero's guilt (for although he has not slept with the *infanta* as has been alleged, they are

without doubt engaged in a secret relationship, cemented by Blanca's cry of "¡Conde esposo!" (l. 2029) at the end of act II), the play ends happily, rather that in tragedy as we may have expected. Pero Vélez, the protagonist, is the plot's undisputed hero: he is saved from execution by the *vox populi*, whose only intervention is to save their beloved *privado*, with the king eventually eschewing a politically prudent marriage in Navarra in favour of marrying Pero's cousin, Doña Sol.

There is no doubt here that Vélez has changed the history of the king, Don Sancho, to fit with his times. King Sancho III is a relatively unusual choice for the subject of a historical play: indeed, in his detailed panorama of historical monarchs featured in Golden Age dramas, Juan Matas Caballero (2015) has identified only two plays that draw on Sancho's reign. Reigning for barely more than a year between 1157-8, very little is known of this medieval king of Castile, to whom Doña Blanca is historically a wife rather than sister. This detail is not all that Vélez has seen fit to alter: Don Pero Vélez was not a *privado* to Sancho. Something of the historical reality of the character can be gleaned from the ballad "Alterado está Castilla", which was published in 1573[63]. In the ballad, the real Don Pero did indeed contract a relationship with a member of the king's family (this time his cousin). Again, the king sentenced him to death, but his standing saw his sentence commuted to life imprisonment. However, unlike in Vélez's reimagining of events, Pero was not released: instead, his end was somewhat grislier. The king ordered him placed in solitary confinement, where he was to see no one but the king. Every four months, the king came to visit, and removed a limb, "Hasta que", as the ballad concludes, "con el dolor/ Su vivir fuese acabado"[64].

[63] For more on Vélez's use of the *romance* in his *comedias de privanza* see Crivellari (2017). Vélez uses ballads extensively in this *comedia*.
[64] For the full texts of the ballad in question, see Case's introduction in his 1997 critical edition.

Vélez references the original ballad in the third act of the *comedia*, but tones down some of its more explicit verses, as Peale suggests, in recognition of the slightly more refined tastes of its intended audience (1997: 31). However, in the changes the playwright has made here, there is a clear raising of political stakes: Don Pero is more than merely a highly regarded nobleman, he is instead a *privado* and the king's best friend, in a dangerous mix of both private and public betrayal. This is heightened all the more when the liaison is with the king's own sister rather than a cousin, as in the original story. On top of this, Blanca has already been contracted in marriage to Navarra at the play's opening. The adjustments that Vélez makes therefore have repercussions for the ensuing relationship. Although the ending is also happier, and much of the play is given over to the merry confusions of an amorous intrigue, Vélez has sown the seeds of a highly political *comedia* within this apparently lighter comedy. For indeed, as Vega García-Luengos suggests, although the play is limited by the patronage to which it owed its creation, this does not limit its ability to criticize both the envy and slander that he saw as endemic in court. He concludes: "La sensación que transmite esta obra… es que supo conducirse con cierta libertad, a pesar del pie forzado que suponía servir a un joven aristócrata inestable y antojadizo" (2007: 314).

The raising of Pero to the position of *privado* seems deliberate for a play to be performed for a sitting *privado*: a nod to his known, and knowing, audience. However, the appearance of two framed portraits on stage carried by the *privado* on his first entrance puts an emphasis on the visual and the metatheatrical, underscoring the play's ability to *decir sin decir*. Thacker (2002) argues that Golden Age drama was self-consciously aware of its own artistry: life itself was inherently theatrical. Playwrights were able to step outside of the frames of their own art form, in a manner reminiscent of Murillo's *Self Portrait*, where the sitter/painter reaches out of the frame towards the viewer in order to play with the boundaries of their art. We only need to think of Calderón's *El pintor de su deshonra*, where one art form—portraiture—informs our

understanding of another—that of theatre itself—to discern the tight relationship between the visual arts as a point of self-reference and role-play. These are ideas on which Vélez plays in this *comedia de privanza*. He creates in Don Pero a mirror for other *privados*, and uses portraits as a metatheatrical reference to underscore the play's role as an *imago mundi* in an ingenious and audacious work that is full of rich political comment, which continues the precedent set in the previous work whereby he combines amorous intrigue and politics. It is a bold play that, through its self-reflection, forces us to examine the roles of the king, and the favourite; it is a boldness that is all the more pronounced when we consider for whom it was written and performed.

When Don Pero enters the stage, the accompanying stage direction from Vélez tells us "*Entre el Conde Don Pero Vélez, muy galán, a lo cortesano, con su llave dorada, y con dos retratos en la mano, y llegue haciendo una reverencia al Rey, y otra a la infanta*". The two portraits he bears, of the queen and prince of Navarra, are presented to Sancho and Blanca respectively, with the aim, as Sancho states (ll. 203-10), of contracting marriages between the sets of siblings. In so doing, we are reminded of the political necessity of marriage: where, in the moments before, we have seen Blanca's longing for a love match with the *privado*, we now see that in fact, as *infanta*, her marriage is a political tool. Moreover, borne in the arms of the *privado* who has successfully contracted the arrangements, the portraits are a visual reminder of his political role. The portraits, then, are full of political significance, as well acting as as a prop to further the play's amorous intrigue. As the scene progresses Blanca uses the portrait of the Navarran prince to pique the *privado*'s jealousy. However, the language she uses to do so also alerts us to the use of the metaphor of the portrait on stage: "¡Gallardo talle!/ Bien la hermosura, promete,/ del cuerpo, divinas partes/ en el alma" (ll. 237-40). She recalls the Petrarchan ideal whereby the beauty of the portrait (or image) reflects the beauty of the soul of the sitter. In other words, external appearance reflects the internal, or objectifier represents

object. Her remarks, that use the portrait to remind the audience of the link between appearance and reality, use one art form to reflect on another. If the portrait allows Blanca to discern the character of its sitter, so the on-stage portrayal of the *privanza* compels the audience to reflect on its real life counterparts.

Laura Bass traces the use of the portrait on the stage in Spain's Golden Age: the sister arts of poetry and painting informed each other, based on the Horatian ideal of *Ut pictura poesis*. She argues that "it was through the mirror of the stage that the playgoing public reflected on and learned how to negotiate its own technologies of representation and self-imaging—beside the theatre itself, painting and portraiture especially" (2008: 3). She goes on to recall in her analysis of *La dama boba* that the portrait fulfilled a social function in the practice of "El casar por retrato", whereby portraits were exchanged between dynasties in the negotiation of marriage (16-27). Where she argues that Finea's response to the portrait of Liseo flies in the face of, and comically deflates, the conceits and Petrarchan commonplaces that abounded, Blanca's response in Vélez's play directly echoes them. Vélez highlights the power and metaphor of the visual image in the play's opening scenes. Odile Lasserre-Dempure argues that the same principle applies to the theatrical representation of the *privado* on stage too, where an outward appearance worked as an external appearance of the internal soul, extending to the actor playing Don Pero: the part was almost certainly played by the nobleman Cristóbal de Avendaño. In his physical features and air, he would resemble the character he played. Thanks to the handsome man on the stage in front of them, the audience could draw the parallel between good looks and nobility and its spiritual and moral superiority (1999: 116). Blanca's words, in reference to one art form, serve as a reference point to the audience to judge another- the play before them. Lasserre-Dempure views the parallel as one that is flattering for the *privado*, and for the play's audience in turn. However, the use of the portrait, and its artistic link to the stage, an inherent reminder of the parallels between the portrayed subject and the real person—in other

words, between art and reality—calls to mind the stage as a mirror. Vélez calls on the audience to judge how the court on stage reflects the court in the garden in Lerma's palace.

The portrait in Pero's hands and under Blanca's gaze becomes a metaphor for Vélez's artistic endeavour. That Blanca does not, in fact, find the portrait of the prince attractive, in spite of her words, is in itself an indication of a reading that is more critical than that which Lasserre-Dempure suggests. She is using it to manipulate her real love, the Count. If we read the reminder to judge the content of the soul on the outward appearance as a false one, this in turn has implications for the nobleman on stage, and the character Don Pero. The portraits take on further significance when we consider them as a symbol for the marriages they are being used to contract. The play's final marriages, although happy for the main characters, hardly constitute rational statecraft. The choice to refuse a dynastically and politically advantageous match seems questionable. The portrait scene takes up very little stage time: indeed, the portraits do not appear again, and the marriages, rather than constituting a major driving force for the story, are, if anything, a very minor plot point. What pupose do they serve, then? They represent a problematic, subverted moment of visual metaphor, that carries ramifications for Sancho's Castile. The moment of visual metatheatre serves to show how the whole play can function as a "retrato", or indeed, "espejo" for the court around them. This will be cemented by Vélez's use of the images of *retrato* and *espejo* in later scenes.

Don Pero, as the king's *privado*, is described repeatedly by other characters as being superlative. However, analysis of the depiction of a seemingly perfect and universally well regarded *privado* should not be seen as an acknowledgement of Vélez's patronage by the Sandoval faction. Although it is claimed he is a superior statesman, his love for Blanca seems to make him incoherent at best (as demonstrated by his first stumbled utterances on stage), and rude and impolitic at worst. His brusque dismissing of his uncle, who has come to court to

arrange his marriage, is met with the well deserved character assessment: “necio,/ grosero y mal cortesano” (ll. 925-6). This is a far cry from the courtier that the king claims “es tan cauto y prudente/ que no le he sentido nada” (ll. 156-7). This could be an indication of the disruption that the illicit and forbidden love between the lovers causes, or, it could be an indication of the inconsistent characterisation that has been identified by critical readers of the play. Alternatively, it provides an invitation to the audience to judge for themselves the character on stage. Whatever the case may be, Case’s claim that the *privado*’s “carácter moral es intachable” (1997: 22) is not convincing on the evidence of the character’s behaviour on stage alone.

However, it is in the relationship between the king and his *privado* that we find evidence of Vélez’s further playing with the notions of reflection. Blanca and Elvira have the following exchange when Blanca describes the unknown man whom she loves:

ELVIRA Estoy mirando, señora,
quien en la corte merece
tu cuidado.
BLANCA Busca en ella
el más noble, el más valiente,
el más cuerdo, el más galán,
el más airoso, el más fuerte,
el más cortés y agradable,
el más largo y, finalmente,
entre esos máses, el menos
confiado de sí, y ése
es quien le merece, Elvira.
ELVIRA Ya que ser el Rey no puede,
porque es tu hermano Don Sancho
el Deseado, que tiene
las mismas partes que dices,
y es tu igual, aunque no aceirte
al gusto tuyo, al de todos,
si todos juntos no mienten,
es…
BLANCA Mas ¿qué aciertas, Elvira?
ELVIRA el Conde Don Pero Vélez.
(ll. 69-88).

Aside from the anaphoric superlatives that Blanca uses here, what stands out in her description is the response that it elicits from Elvira. From the description Blanca provides, she can recognise not one man, but two, because this same description applies to both of them. Such is the similarity in character between the king and his *privado*, that to describe one of them is to describe both. Odile Laserre-Dempure reads this as a reflection of the benefits of proximity to royal power, suggesting that intimate contact with the king is reflected in a corporeal reciprocity, where royal divinity falls on those who come into contact with the king's person.

Sancho himself builds on the similarity between himself and the Count when he claims:

> yo aseguro que dijese
> que merece mi privanza
> el Conde Don Pero Vélez,
> porque, demás de las partes
> que en la persona prometen
> la correspondencia hermosa
> que con las del alma tienen,
> su agrado y cortesanía
> inclina, confronta y vence
> las ajenas voluntades
> que comunica de suerte
> que le adoran en Castilla
> los hombres
> (ll. 137-50).

His rhetoric here, of souls corresponding, builds on the lexis of portraiture that Elvira and Blanca have already foregrounded. Later in the play, Sancho will state that he wants his friend to get married at the same time as he does so they can share their joy (ll. 507-14); more gravely, he will later state to the Count: "parece/ que parta, como merece,/ con vos también la corona" (ll. 2108-11). His declaration of "Otro yo mismo he de haceros" (l. 1514) is a clear indication of how he conceives of their relationship. This sense of a common soul, and of correspondence between two friends mirrors the theoretical discussions of friendship we have seen previously. In the light of the moment of visual metatheatre of the play's opening, however, it also calls to mind the idea of reflection. It is another occasion where the audience is asked to consider the

reflections, correspondences and the nature between appearances and reality. The behaviour of the two men will bear on our impression of the other, and it calls to mind the larger mirror: that of the stage and the play unfolding in Lerma's garden.

It is in the third act that the threads of Vélez's political commentary come together. When Elvira sings the *romance* that is so close to the truth about the *privado* and the *infanta* and their illicit relationship, every noble gets up and deserts the scene, so discomfited are they by the ballad's uncomfortable contents. Only Manrique, the play's antagonist, stays behind, prepared to tell the king a rather distorted version of the truth. When the king discovers he is the last to find out about a love affair that concerns him so personally, his reaction is one of hurt and extreme anger: in a moment of dramatic irony that demonstrates the flawed attitudes he has towards friendship and loyal service, he tells Manrique: "¡Ah, Manrique, solamente/ tú me has servido con alma/ de hombre leal, de hombre noble!" (ll. 2401-3). His inability to see things clearly is reinforced even further by his use of imagery. Before the revelation of his affair with Blanca, the Count had left the room in order to get the king a glass of water: however, he is unable to bring it back, as three times he has smashed the glass:

> Si de agüeros caso hiciera,
> hoy un suceso esperara
> siniestro, pues sin tocalles
> en la misma mano y salva
> tres vidros se me han rompido.
> (ll. 2412-5).

Again, Lassere-Dempure reads this in conjunction with the stage direction of Pero's trembling hands, and concludes that the fragility of the glass is an image for the fragility of his position as *privado* (1999: 118). This seems fitting, especially if we consider the *gracioso* Martín's satirical sonnet from the first act, which calls to mind the water wheel: "¡Fortuna, Fortunilla, Fortuneja,/ que como macho en una anoria atada,/ de llenar y vaciar no estás cansada" (ll. 712-4). His imagery finds physical manifestation in the water in the cup that Pero brings the king.

The king, refusing to drink from the cup, causes Pero to tremble with fear, in turn causing the water to spill and the glass to shatter once again, in a fruitless cycle that recalls the waterwheel. Both the king and *privado* use this as a moment for reflection. The king tells a startled Pero:

> No se os derrame. Guardalda
> para que de espejo sirva,
> en ese cristal mirada,
> a vos, a Castilla, al mundo,
> como han de ser las entrañas
> de un vasallo con su rey.
> Ven, Manrique.
> (ll. 2440-6).

It is a moment of irony: it is the king, rather than Pero who could do with taking stock of the situation in order to gain a more accurate impression of reality. Sancho's appeal to Pero to reflect on truth only serves to highlight his own inability to do so himself. Leaving behind a loyal and able statesman, he walks off stage with an inferior, less able noble, who has openly deceived him. That this is immediately followed by Manrique's lie denying knowledge of why the king is upset cements this interpretation. The Count's subsequent soliloquy, meditating on the broken cup as commanded by the king taps into the same imagery:

> ¡Ah, vidro, de la privanza
> retrato, a quien hace el mundo
> de lisonjas de oro salva,
> y a un tris te quiebras, qué bien
> en ti las mudanzas varias
> de la Fortuna se miran!
> (ll. 2458-2463).

It is a key moment of imagery for the play as a whole: using the term *retrato* to describe the broken glass recalls the portraits of the first act, and brings the careful audience member back to the moment of visual metaphor at the play's opening. In this moment, the play's dramatic climax, Vélez repeats the metaphor of the stage as mirror: the glass may be a *retrato* of *privanza*, but so is the play unfolding before the audience. Both the king and his favourite have looked into the mirror that has appeared on stage, created by broken glass and spilt water, but

only Pero has looked accurately. It is a call for us, and possibly even Lerma, sat in the play's audience, to look accurately into the mirror that is the play before us.

In a play with heavy intertextual references from the ballad tradition, as it hurtles towards its conclusion, both the king and the *privado* will be confronted by ballads that will provoke different reactions. Once again, we have other art forms, this time music, as a vehicle for "truth" in the play: in the *merienda* scene, it was Elvira's ballad that forced the other nobles from the room, unable to deal with the confrontation with reality that was presented in the ballad. However, ballads, and the willingness of both the king and the *privado* to recognise the truth of their content, will provide key insight to both characters. Where Pero is frequently able to use music to accept the truth of the fragility of his own position, the king will fail to use it to reach a *desengaño* of his own. The song that the Count overhears in the third act, "Que la noche le prendieron/ de San Juan, madre, a la gala de los condes/ la flor de Oñate" is almost identical to the famous *cantarcillo* included in Lope's *El caballero de Olmedo*. We can speculate on the extent to which Lope was inspired by Vélez's use of the ballad, but what is certain is that Vélez was the first to use this ballad to dramatic effect (Case 1997: 36). As Case points out, just as in Lope's masterpiece, its inclusion here prepares the viewer, and Pero himself, for a tragic ending. However, although initially the music frightens him, eventually he concludes "Pues ser tan dichoso amante/ es antídoto que puede/ de la muerte reservarme" (ll. 2614-6). It is music that sends him up to Doña Blanca's balcony, which provides one of the most striking spatial moments in the play. They enjoy their final, heartbreaking goodbye; meanwhile, unbeknownst to him, the king and Manrique are down below, waiting in the dark. Laserre-Dempure unpacks the physical significance conveyed by the Count's occupation of the literal high ground of the balcony. The king, stumbling in the dark, trips over Martín in an uncomfortable moment of humour: who, we wonder, are we really laughing at? The king or the *gracioso*? (1999: 119).

It is a scene that is preceded by the singing of another ballad, 'Que despertad la blanca niña': the king's reaction to it is telling: "No veo cosa ninguna,/ Manrique, que no me dé/ envidia" (ll. 2777-9). It is indicative of Sancho's determination to find proof of a slight, even if none exists. Critics have pointed to Sancho's inconsistency in characterisation as well as Don Pero's: Case suggests that his sudden decision to execute such a well beloved *privado*, whose achievements he has lauded from his first lines on stage, is positively unrealistic (1997: 32). Equally sudden is his decision to change his mind: again, it is a moment of music that provides the dramatic catalyst for this. The ballad "Alterada está Castilla" once again causes Don Pero to reflect. He uses it to prepare himself for the tragic fate that he, the folk who sing it, and the audience, believe awaits him: "Escuchar quiero" (l. 2990), he declares. Pero yearns for the truth. On the other hand, Sancho is only brought to sense by the threat of rebellion. The voice of the people coming from off stage ("¡Danos al Conde, Don Sancho!/ ¡Viva el Conde! ¡El Conde viva!" (ll. 3111-2)). It is a moment, that, no doubt, would be incredibly challenging to stage realistically: in a mere two lines, Sancho performs a total volte-face. It is significant, however, that it must come from the faceless *vulgo*, in a statement of blunt forcefulness achieved though use of the imperative, and a ringing chiasmus. Having missed so many opportunities to take stock and reflect, Sancho only does so when failure to do so would result in popular unrest.

This play, then, revolves around moments of fractured and flawed recognition. Peppered with confrontations with artistic output, be that portraiture or music, Vélez presents us with a complex metaphor for art providing opportunity for self-reflection. The stage becomes a portrait, or mirror, for the nobles gathered to watch this *comedia de privanza* on the night of San Juan in 1615. Although its more amorous and light-hearted content make it initially appear to be so different from the more serious, tragic *comedias de privanza* we have seen, it is important not to let appearances deceive us (as they deceive Sancho in the play at hand).

Indeed, Davies (1983: 30) briefly suggests that the amorous content of the play acts as a reflection for its real political content: "In this play *privanza* is looked at… from the point of view of the wife or beloved who jealously sees it as a mistress who demands complete submission from her man" (1983: 30). Seen in this light, the amorous intrigue of the play, and Doña Blanca's capricious whims, seem less humorous. They reflect the whims and tastes of the king himself, and the *privado*'s delicate position as lover stands as a fitting representation for his political position, in yet another example of the intermingling of the amorous and the political.

Moreover, it is a further example of reflection within Vélez's *comedia*: this time, the main plot is reflected in the subplot. Just as in *El lucero*, we see that Vélez thematically ties together his main and subplots, creating an example of much more compelling and coherent drama, and a piece that remains political rather than comedic in tone. Certainly, there is enough satire from Martín to demonstrate that, in spite of his patron and the circumstances of performance, Vélez did not feel the need to relentlessly flatter. Martín's satire permeates the play, and indeed, his interventions are those which recall most clearly the topoi closely associated with the *comedia de privanza*, such as the mutability of fortune. However, he also comments critically on the nature of the court: his positively Quevedan *romance* in act I (ll. 609-64) stands out as particularly pointed. In act II, he famously suggests that he both is, and is not, Pero's servant, going on to expand in another satirical *romance* on the blurred lines between truth and deceit in the court (ll. 1080-146). It is perhaps unsurprising that this voice of social commentary should convert the chain that he is gifted by Blanca into cash (ll. 2257-8): cynically, he is unwilling to gamble on the value of intangibles. In a world of instability that only he seems to recognise, he is ready to trust only in that which he can quantify This play is metatheatrical and intertextual. Those critics who suggest that the play's composition and performance limit its significance have overlooked the overtly political overtones of this play. Moreover, the fact

that it was written and performed for the Duke of Lerma allow for a more nuanced reading of the play's political ramifications. Playing with the concepts of world as stage, Vélez has created a complex, nuanced *comedia de privanza*, that because of its circumstances of performance, constitute an overtly political work.

In the crucial middle years of Lerma's *privanza*, criticism against him was becoming increasingly hard to ignore. 1615 was the year of publication of Fray Juan de Santamaría's attacks on theories and images of royal favouritism that had been used to justify Lerma's position. Throughout 1615, Lerma was engaged in the arrangement of the marriage of Philip's daughter Anne in France: however, although successful, he refused to accompany Anne to the border in France, going directly against orders from the king. It was a demonstration of the increasing distance between king and *privado*. Uceda went instead (Wiliams 2010: 193-202). This context of dynastic marriages in Philip's court corresponds to the attempted contracted marriages on the stage. For Lerma, the French marriages constituted a success in his foreign policy: the abandonment of the Navarran matches in the *comedia*, might, therefore, influence the contemporary audience's opinion of the overall conclusion. Whatever Vélez's intentions, the inclusion of dynastic marriage is a potential parallel that Vélez has chosen to include from his contemporary political milieu.

By the end of 1615, Lerma would have "retired" from his *privanza*, transferring power to Uceda. 1615 was a pivotal year in Lerma's waning power in court: the cracks that had first appeared earlier in the decade, and his diminished control over his own faction were to have a tangible effect on Lerma's authority. Court will have been alive with whispers about the rift between father and son, and king and favourite. As can be expected from the play's provenance, *Don Pero Vélez* is obviously not as overtly critical as plays penned by others that either precede or follow it. However, in terms of the development of the *comedia de privanza* more generally,

it is nevertheless significant on two levels. Firstly, it shows that the *privanza* storylines that have become typical have now been invested with the theatrical complexities that we associate with the likes of Lope's *El castigo sin venganza* (a particularly apt point of comparison in this instance given the imagery of reflection and metatheatrical overtones of this piece). In *El Conde Don Pero Vélez y Don Sancho el Deseado* we find a genuinely engaging piece of theatre. Secondly, taken in conjunction with *El lucero de Castilla*, we can see how influenced Vélez was by the court's intrigue and machinations, and the gradual exchange of power between Lerma and Uceda, and their separate warring factions. Vélez de Guevara's *comedias de privanza* are undoubtedly the product of an exceptional dramatist: his carefully crafted theatre is sophisticated and highly watchable. On the other hand, however, they are the result of shrewd penmanship, by a playwright who was himself caught in the delicate shifts of power of Philip III's court.

These plays show once again how the *comedia de privanza* is so closely linked with the context in which it was written, developing as the political situation evolved. However, what sets Vélez's works apart is that he was writing from inside the regime: Vélez's close links to the Sandoval faction do not limit our appreciation of the plays. Instead, it sheds new light on them, and indeed, on the genre as a whole. In Vélez's hands, the *comedia de privanza* becomes a more considered genre, capable of greater theatrical merit, perhaps because of his very place within court. Inevitably, Vélez's *comedias de privanza* are more political and more closely linked to its political context. Looking back to the *comedias* written by Poyo, we can see how the genre has developed, away from stock structures and topoi of turning fortunes and arbitrary luck. Although Vélez's plays do exploit these, and he works them into his *comedias*, we can see how much better developed his offerings are. Thematically, Vélez reflects in clever secondary subplots those generic themes, such as jealousy or competition, that in Poyo, only affect the political protagonists. He interweaves plot and subplot with a thematic unity that

brings his *comedias* together as a more coherent whole. If Poyo uses imagery, such as the moon or the wheel of fortune as recurrent reference points, we see how Vélez develops this: the image of the portrait, foregrounded in the first scenes *El conde Don Pero*, and subtly alluded to again in the third, bringing together a whole scheme of intricate metatheatrical imagery, is a far cry from Poyo's simpler examples. Even the use of balladry, which Poyo and Vélez have in common, is an example of Vélez's increased sophistication: where Poyo merely copies ballads in their entirety into his work, we have seen how Vélez instead manipulates and alters the ballads to new effect. Indeed, we see in Vélez's poetry a marked innovation and increased complexity: Vélez's plays exploit metre and aural effects to striking use in a way that we do not note in Poyo's much simpler poetry. This goes hand in hand with his more convincing characters. Although critics have been quick to criticise Vélez's characterisation in his *comedias de privanza*, a comparison back to Poyo's original plays is enough to demonstrate Vélez's superior touch. This is especially true of his secondary characters. Doña Aldonza in *El lucero* is a striking example: a secondary, female character, who if compared to Poyo's female characters, shows a remarkably more profound psychological depth.

In terms of form, Vélez also innovates: the way in which his *comedias de privanza* integrate elements of the *comedia de capa y espada* shows a development in the genre. It reflects how the *comedia nueva* changed and evolved in these years. Of all the *comedias* under examination in this study, in form, these are the least like Poyo's originals; however, this speaks to Vélez's unique position within Philip's court. He uses the generic conventions of the comedic *comedia de capa y espada* in order to advance more subtly the political points that are typical of the *comedia de privanza*. His fusion of genres is reflected in the interweaving of the political and the amorous in his plots. Moreover, in the metatheatrical overtones of *Don Pero Vélez*, it invites self-reflections that are startling in their boldness. In Vélez's hands, therefore, the *comedia de privanza* undergoes a transformation that reflects his own circumstances, abilities and agenda.

That the *comedia de privanza* remains inherently political is truer than ever in Vélez's case: his daring in choosing to stage a *comedia de privanza* in Lerma's own garden is proof of his audacity and of the political nature of the genre in his hands. However, Vélez's *comedias* also demonstrate development in terms of form, content and characterization, in order to produce work that is recognisable as owing its roots to Poyo's original plays, but that is also more assured and intricate.

ANTONIO MIRA DE AMESCUA

Imitation and Innovation at the End of the Reign

If Salucio del Poyo's *bilogía* on Ruy López de Ávalos can be said to be the nascent attempt at the *comedia de privanza*, then the *bilogías* of Mira de Amescua can be said to be the point at which the two-part *comedia de privanza* reached its full potential. Mira's work frequently dwells on the themes of luck and fortune, something which critics have been quick to remark on (Arellano 1996; Gutiérrez 1976; Villanueva 1991), with James A. Castañeda going as far as to state that the turn of fortune's wheel is a "constant" in his dramaturgy and an "obsessive interest". He goes on to argue that this best manifests itself in plays concerning the fallen *privado* (1997: 24). The two *bilogías* under examination here, the first about Don Bernardo de Cabrera (*La próspera fortuna de Don Bernardo de Cabrera*, hereafter referred to as *Próspera Cabrera* and *La adversa fortuna de Don Bernardo de Cabrera*, hereafter referred to as *Adversa Cabrera*), and the second based on Ruy López and Álvaro de Luna (*La adversa fortuna de Ruy López de Ávalos y la próspera de Don Álvaro de Luna*, hereafter referred to *Próspera Luna* and *La adversa fortuna de Don Álvaro de Luna*, hereafter referred to as *Adversa Luna*), both have questions of date and authorship hanging over them[65]. With regards to dating, Cauvin places the Cabrera *bilogía* at 1618; meanwhile, Serrano Agulló suggests two possible but separate windows of 1610-2 or 1620-5 (2006: 5). Although the dates of the four plays are

[65] Of these four plays, Mary Cauvin (1957) only attributes one to Mira (*Adversa Luna*). Authorship of both parts of the Cabrera *bilogía* has frequently been attributed to Lope de Vega; meanwhile, even until quite recently, *Próspera Luna* has been attributed to Tirso de Molina. Morley and Bruerton (1940) list both parts of the Cabrera *bilogía* under Lope's "Plays of Doubtful Authenticity", concluding that Mira is a more likely author. Both Cauvin (1957: 145) and Serrano Agulló (2006: 3-5) provide detailed summaries of the authorship debate, centering on Cotarelo (1893) and Anibal (1940) as the main proponents of each playwright, backing Lope and Mira respectively. However, Cauvin and Serrano Argulló reach a different conclusion in terms of the *bilogía's* authorship. This study will follow modern consensus in attributing these plays to Mira. For discussion of the authouship of the Luna *bilogía*, see Sandra L. Brown (1974). Due to the appearance of the play in Tirso's *Segunda parte*, critics have often attributed these plays to him. Blanca de los Ríos, for instance, dedicates all of her introduction to the play in her edition of Tirso's complete dramatic works to arguing the case for Tirso's authorship, and then based on this assumption, the dating of the play (1989: 1003-13). However, Mira is more generally accepted as its author. See McCrary (1958) or Gutiérrez (1975: 107-9) for a more thorough examination of attribution. Again, this study will follow modern consensus in accepting Mira as its author. However, the question of attribution does not impede the purposes of this study.

relatively tentative, we can nevertheless place them with certainty at the end of Lerma's tenure as *privado* to Philip III[66].

From a structural and thematic point of view, Mira's *comedias de privanza* are those that appear most similar to Poyo's original *bilogías* (not least in his own reformulation of the Álvaro de Luna story). Both diptychs use paired protagonists, ubiquitous images of transience and mutability, frequently drawn from nature's cycles, and the fortunes of the protagonists as a structuring principle. However, they do not merely reformulate what has gone before, and they demonstrate how in the twenty years that have elapsed since Poyo's first examples, the genre has developed. They nuance and refine those ideas which are introduced by earlier playwrights, integrating these ideas into the now familiar structure and network of images. Where friendship has been repeatedly emphasised and explored in previous works, in Mira's *Cabrera* plays, we find the finest exploration of this issue in the unique way in which Mira compares friendship not only between king and *privado* but also between two equals. In the *Luna* diptych we see how Mira has repurposed the source material of Poyo's play in his refined crafting of a character who undergoes a perfect process of *desengaño*, thus finally assimilating the neo-stoic message upon which the *comedia de privanza* rests. In literary terms, it is the very similarities to Poyo's original *comedias de privanza* that allow us to discern development and increased maturity: Mira's superior use of imagery and characterisation allow him to reach conclusions that Poyo also extends, but in a much more convincing and assured way. Moreover, his use of the Álvaro de Luna story especially demonstrates how in Mira's hands, the *comedia de privanza* continues to reflect on contemporary politics of the day. His reformulation of the source material to craft a story with a completely different dramatic focus, but that still bears

[66] See Aurelio Valladares Reguero (2004) for more on the editions of Mira's *comedias*. González Dengra, Suárez García and Valladares Reguero's *Guía para la interpretación del teatro de Mira de Amescua* (2009) is also useful as regards dating and editions of Mira's work.

an uncanny similarity to the Spanish court at the time of its writing, proves the *comedia de privanza*'s continued relevance to contemporary politics. This does not mean to say that Mira's aims were necessarily political in and of themselves, and indeed, these works continue to demonstrate, more than anything, Mira's emphasis on the importance of neo-stoic values, and a continued statement on the transience of the human experience, as typical for the literary age. However, there can be no doubting that if Mira was attempting to write general didactic and moralistic works, he caught his audiences' attention by framing them with characters and in plots that bore a similarity to the contemporary Spanish court.

The *Cabrera bilogía*[67] tells the story of two friends, the eponymous Don Bernardo de Cabrera, and Don Lope de Luna. Both men seek to serve the king in order to gain riches and fame. However, only Don Bernardo finds himself in favour, whilst Lope is constantly thwarted in his attempts, through no real fault of his own. Nevertheless, in the second part, just when Bernardo has reached the peak of his power, he sees himself thrust down, whilst conversely his friend Lope finds his star rising, with little change in their conduct or circumstances. The friendship between the two men is the central motif of these plays. It is a feature that Arellano (1996) and Gutiérrez (1975) argue is used to demonstrate the centrality of the theme of arbitrary luck. Indeed, in his introductory notes to his edition of the play, Serrano suggests that Mira "suele tomar como base de la estructura de estas comedias a la Fortuna tal que agente principal de las venturas y desventuras del privado" (2003: 28). In this sense Mira's *bilogía* demonstrates a clear parallel with Poyo's earliest *comedias de privanza*: the fortune of the protagonist(s) used as a structuring principle, and the use of two *privados* set up in contrast to each other. Indeed, it is in this *bilogía* that we find perhaps the most emphatic example of this latter characteristic of the *comedia de privanza*, and Mira's more dextrous handling of his contrasting characters

[67] All quotations, given by line number, are taken from Mira de Amescua *Teatro Completo III* (2003: *Próspera*.35-194, *Adversa* 195-326).

shows the increased maturity of the genre. However, unlike in Poyo's plays, the two dichotomous characters in this instance are not enemies, but instead close friends, adding another layer of complexity. We have already seen how friendship between the king and a *privado* is a key thematic device in the *comedia de privanza* that causes political friction in the contrast between public and private. However, here, the two men are nobles, and thus equals. Their friendship will therefore serve a different function to other examples we have seen previously, and will further nuance our understanding of friendship within the genre. Their friendship helps to structure the two parts of the *bilogía*, but its use goes beyond a structuring tool or a thematic leitmotif. Looking more carefully at these two characters and how their friendship develops in *Próspera Cabrera* will show us that Mira's presentation of *privanza* is more complex than a mere dramatic tool to show the arbitrary forces of luck.

As is almost always the case in the *comedia de privanza*, Mira draws on real historical figures in the Cabrera *bilogía*. As a favourite to Pedro IV of Aragon, the story of Don Bernardo de Cabrera is one that is picked up in other *comedias de privanza*: James Rambo suggests that Lope's *Las mudanzas de fortuna y sucesos de Don Beltrán de Aragón* (1611), Mira's *No hay dicha ni desdicha hasta la muerte* (1628) and Rojas and Vélez's *También tiene el sol menguante* (earliest manuscript 1655) are all linked in dealing with the historical figure. Indeed he goes on to show that *También tiene el sol menguante* is a *refundación* of the *bilogía* under study here (1972: 59-71). Mira's version, then, acted as a source of inspiration for later playwrights. However, with regards to the source material, both Arellano (1996) and Serrano (2006) point out that these plays are not to be considered as merely historical. Instead, Serrano suggests that rather than being classified as historical plays (a tendency amongst other Mira critics, such as Castañeda (1977)), this is instead a play "de *pretexto* histórico" (2006: 11), due

to the rather loose use of source material[68]. In other words, like the playwrights before him who chose to write about *privanza*, Mira by no means sees himself as a prisoner to historical fact-history merely serves as a base from which to work[69]. Although king Pedro IV and Don Bernardo remain relatively faithful to their historical models, Don Lope de Luna does not: the historical Lope was well off and successful, and a close personal friend of Pedro IV from infancy (Serrano 2006: 28). A far cry, then, from the impoverished, unlucky courtier we see in Mira's *comedia*. An explanation may lie in that the diametric opposition of the fortunes of the protagonists can only work if, initially, one is less lucky than the other. Mira may have chosen Luna as the unlucky one in a desire to play with the imagery associated with Luna's name: in having his fortunes change over the course of the play, his trajectory follows the natural cycles that dominate the plays', and indeed, the genre's, ubiquitous moon image.

Gutiérrez is quick to establish that the two men come together in the play's initial scene from very different backgrounds (1975: 181). In an *in medias res* opening, Lope immediately enumerates to Bernardo—a man who, until moments before the curtain came up, was presumably a total stranger—the litany of his misfortunes, and how good luck has constantly eluded him:

> Hijo segundo soy, aun es mi vida
> en extremo notable desdichada:
> no escapé de pendencia sin herida;
> pretendiendo, jamás alcancé nada;
> ni jugué sin perder, ¡estrella airada!
> que debió de ser mi fortuna ocasionada;
> fue ascenidente, y soy tan desdichado,
> que quiero siempre amar sin ser amado.
> (ll. 9-16).

[68] See Serrano (2006) pp.7-29 for a full examination and discussion of the source material, historical characters and Mira's use of history in the *bilogía*.
[69] For more on Mira's manipulations of history see Miguel González Dengra (2001) "La fabulación de la historia en las comedias de Mira de Amescua"

This speech cannot help but recall Quevedo's burlesque ballad 'Parióme adrede mi madre', which similarly lists the ways in which Fortune has eluded the speaker (an enamoured Fabio). Mira's verse here is not necessarily intended to be overtly comic in the same way Quevedo's ballad is, but the similarity may demonstrate Mira's mocking of his own character, whose hyperbolic enumerations elicit exasperation rather than sympathy. Lope's recourse to hyperbole and superlatives ("extremo", "jamás", "tan desdichado", "siempre") stands out, contributing to a rather elegiac assonance. It is a speech that will come to be characteristic. On the other hand, Bernardo's reply demonstrates that his experiences have been the opposite. In almost matching terms to his new friend, he assures us "nunca reñí sin herir/ nunca jugué sin ganar/ no pedí sin recibir/ y no amé sin alcanzar" (ll. 44-7). His snappy, upbeat response, aided by the switch from hendecasyllables to octosyllables, provides a stark contrast. Arellano suggests that Mira's recourse to opposites is proof of his interest in characters as archetypes or structural mechanisms; indeed, he states that his characters are unrealistic in their responses or actions precisely because of this tendency to archetypes (1996: 55). Certainly, Mira's characterisation is not as assured as that which we see in Lope de Vega; however, although the binary of good and bad fortune will continue to define them, there is another layer of understanding to be extrapolated from the set up of the two characters rather than merely as "lucky" and "unlucky". They are two distinct characters, with very different personalities.

Bernardo represents the constant, stoic *privado* that we have seen in Poyo's Ruy López, or Lope's Payo de Guzmán. In his opening lines of the play, he gently reprimands his friend for his attitude towards his luck in a speech that will come to define his own attitude towards fortune in the shifting sands of court:

> No entendáis que dese modo
> os trate a vos la fortuna:
> Dios es el dueño de todo,
> que sin Él, no hay causa alguna

[…]
Y ansí en los vanos temores
que en juegos, fiestas y amores
mostráis de vuestra desdicha,
dicen que tenéis la dicha
guardada en cosas mayores.
(ll. 24-44).

Gutiérrez argues that Bernardo's outlook is profoundly Christian, and that he represents the moral answer to the ultimate quandary of the play: how to deal with unpredictable fortunes (1975: 182). He understands that luck is arbitrary, and that it moves in cycles. He knows that he is in God's hands, and thus, he is optimistic. In contrast, Lope's outlook does not match this optimism and stoic constancy. Although he frames their friendship in the classical commonplace of the communion of souls, ("Si hacemos dos almas una/ no temo desdicha ninguna" (ll. 113-4)), in reality, these are not two identical souls: where Bernardo is virtuous and constant in his attitude to Fortune, Lope is complacent and self-indulgent. Throughout the first play, Lope's repeated bad luck serves only to prove to him that he is unlucky, and he wallows in self pity. When, for instance, the two men are first presented to the king, Pedro misses most of Lope's petition, as he is distracted by the entry of Leonor, the object of his desires. Instead of rewarding him, Lope is told to submit his *memorial* for consideration. The king's response to Lope's request—to hand over a *memorial*—was not necessarily unfair: it was hardly a direct dismissal, and indeed Lázaro, Lope's loquacious servant, remarks in response "¡Por Dios, yo tengo/ amo dichoso! ¿Memorial le pide?/ Digo que tengo buen olfato de amos" (ll. 303-5). Ironically, Lázaro will make the wrong choice of master twice, serving Lope in the first play, and Bernardo in the second, switching master just when the fortunes of the two men reverse. This is therefore a pre-emptive joke at Lázaro's expense, but the point still stands that both servants, not just Lázaro, consider that Lope has been lucky in his petition's outcome. Lope's response only begins to feel unfair after Bernardo's is so warmly accepted. The king, now alert and concentrating, enthusiastically welcomes him, immediately

making him a member of his household. Lope had fulfilled the necessary criteria as well, but fell foul of the king's lack of attention. He complains bitterly:

> No sé como quejarme de mi suerte:
> ¿Son los servicios de mi padre menos?
> ¿No soy tan noble como Don Bernardo?
> ¡Que dé yo memorial y llave al otro!
> Él la merece bien, Dios se la ha dado,
> ¡paciencia, pues nací tan desdichado!
> (ll. 344-9).

Lope's elegiac rhetorical questions betray his lack of understanding; meanwhile, the last line demonstrates a return to the passive attitude of pessimism with which he opened the *comedia*. His attitude here shows that he is happier to accept his bad luck rather than do anything to change it, or his perception of it. He recognises that God has deservedly rewarded his friend, but complacently denies the role of God in his own luck, opting instead for an arrogant self pity.

Ironically, Lope only adopts a more stoic vocabulary once he has been promoted in the second play. In the opening scenes of the first act, Lope had killed a musician in a fit of pique. However, in the face of promotion that he did not dare hope for, his speech and attitude take on a tone very similar to Bernardo's in *Próspera Cabrera*. He thanks God for his deliverance from bad luck (ll. 1059-61), but tells his servant Roberto loftily:

> Mas si agora preguntase
> "¿estás con esto contento?"
> dirá "no, que todo es viento;
> no hay gloria que no se pase".
> Solamente la virtud
> da fruto que siempre dura,
> y ésta se halla segura
> en soledad y quietud.
> (ll. 1092-99).

This is a radical change in attitude, not to mention an untruth given the lengths he goes to in order to hold on to power. More importantly, we see a man who seems to have forgotten his

own past and is failing to take his own advice. Whilst he tells his servant that a virtuous life is the only rewarding way to live, he seems to have conveniently forgotten the musician murdered by his hand, a crime to which he has failed to own up (to anyone except Bernardo). It is this lack of honesty that will allow the culpability for the murder to come to rest on Bernardo's shoulders, which in turn, will take him one step closer to the executioner's block. This is but one instance demonstrating that in his change of luck he has become pompous. He has learnt nothing from his years of bad luck, and thus his proto-stoic preaching lacks the ring of authenticity: this was not how he lived his life in the lows, and in spite of what he may say, this is certainly not how he is living in the highs. Where Bernardo lives a neo-stoic life in court and is constant in his attitude to changing fortunes, Lope fails to live up to his example, exploiting mere rhetoric. So whilst Lope exploits the classic language of friendship in the image of the communion of souls, he will fail to live up to the very maxims he proposes. Although both men enter into the friendship in good faith and mutual affection, Lope's flawed attitude towards luck and court service will eventually sow the seeds of his friend's downfall. This more complex presentation of friendship makes Mira's work more sophisticated: the two protagonists may be equals, but they are not identical, and the contrast between them in attitude will reinforce the stoic morals of the *comedia* more effectively than Poyo's initial attempts.

Despite the fluctuations in their fortunes, however, the one constant of the first play is the unwavering affection between Lope and Bernardo. Although they may have differing outlooks, their friendship is characterised by the loyalty, honesty and support that can be expected when two men are social equals. From the outset they aspired for their friendship to match the likes of Castor and Pollux (l. 104), and superficially, the reality does not fall short of this aspiration. Lope is never affected by jealousy or anger; indeed, the generosity he affords his friend in the face of his own disappointment is remarkable. When he goes unrecognised for his courage at war and Bernardo is promoted, he tells his friend: "Que yo pobre y desdichado,/ en mi aldea

retirado/ tendré perpetua alegría/ mirando a vueseñoría/ en tal pompa levantado" (ll. 1450-4). When he is on the point of being expelled from court and his name may not be even mentioned in front of the king, he tells a sheepish Bernardo "Buen vasallo eres del rey,/ no habrá quien mejor le sirva" (ll. 1769-70). At the very end of the play, Bernardo is willing to walk away from all of his glory and promotion just to put an end to his friend's suffering. Meanwhile, both men provide the other with sound advice with regard to their situation. Bernardo is always quick to remind his friend, just as he did when he first met him, that his bad luck in some matters means that he will be lucky in others. Meanwhile, when Bernardo acknowledges his thirst for further promotion after his first *mercedes*, Lope kindly tells him "Pequeñas mercedes son,/ más merecéis alcanzar,/ y ansí no os hartan" (ll. 577-9).

Their relationship demonstrates all the benefits friendship can bring; however, all too often in the *comedia de privanza*, it is when this kind of friendship is attempted between two men who are not equals, i.e. between a king and *privado*, that problems occur. Certainly there can be little doubting the strength of feeling that the king has for Bernardo in this *comedia*. At the opening of act II the only thing that eases Pedro is the thought of his *privado*'s return. At the start of act III Pedro states "quiero a Don Bernardo de Cabrera/ de modo que mi amor igual no tiene" (ll. 2221-2). Pedro is wrong in this, however, in that the mutual love between Bernardo and Lope far exceeds that of Pedro for Bernardo. The point Mira is making, perhaps, is to highlight the fickle and potentially false nature of the "friendship" that can exist between the king and a *privado*, and he does this by juxtaposing it with a genuine friendship between equals, and as we shall see, Pedro's understanding of *amistad* is warped. Indeed, in their friendship, Bernardo and Lope make an important point about the nature of *privanza*. Their hope is that between them, they can overcome the swings of court favour:

> Un árbol es la privanza
> que en su abril suele ofrecer

fruto, y flores de esperanza,
y a veces suele caer
el que las flores alcanza.
Si el favor un árbol es,
y a mí de subir me priva,
mi desdicha, como ves,
trepa bien, y sube arriba,
porque la mano me des.
(ll. 615-22).

The image serves to illustrate another point of difference between Lope and Bernardo. Rather than exploiting it as an image of fragility and transience, Lope uses it as an image of advancement. For Lope, *privanza* is about success, glory and promotion. His friendship with Don Bernardo, whilst affectionate, warm and genuine, rests on an understanding of court service that is warped. Bernardo's typically stoic pronouncement "los bienes del mundo/ ya se dan, y ya se quitan,/ como los tantos del juego./ Que es juego la humana vida" (ll. 1755-8) demonstrates that, unlike his friend, he understands the mutabilities of fortune. Although Lope states "Gustosa es la privanza,/ mesa es espléndida y rica;/ pero cuelga de un cabello/ un testimonio, una envidia" (ll. 1717-20), the nature of the image—of *privanza* as a richly laid table—speaks more to his own envy rather than his true assimilation of the understanding of *privanza*'s fragility. Whilst Lope pays lip-service to the fragility of their positions, Bernardo understands the concept better. It is instances like this that set Mira apart from Poyo. His use of the imagery of fortune and the subtle distinctions in how it is employed and understood by his characters stands in contrast to Poyo's use of a small range of images (the wheel, the moon), that are applied uniformly across all his characters. Mira employs a more varied and complex range of images that are executed to differing effect amongst his characters, and that speak to the intricate subtleties of *privanza*.

Beyond this, however, in the image of the tree, Bernardo and Lope perfectly articulate the danger of *privanza* from the *privado*'s perspective. In these quotations, we see that the *privado*'s duty and loyalty must stretch in two directions, both to the king above him, and to

others below him. Most importantly, it suggests that *privanza* is a fragile chain. Where one rises, so others may follow, but with the understanding that no position is unassailable. It focusses our attention on *privanza* as a self-perpetuating system, but it also suggests that successful *privados* are those who are conscious of their duties down the chain as well as up it. It speaks to factionalism, demonstrating how one person in power can build a base of followers and *hechuras* who owe their position to their proximity to a *privado*. If previous playwrights hinted at this concept, then by the latter years of Philip's reign, Mira brings it to full fruition in his *comedias*. Critics have often seen the two friends in the *Cabrera* diptych as a structural binary. However, it is more accurate to state that although the two suffer contrasting luck in the play, their friendship's function is to overcome the binary, rather than perpetuate it. By being part of a common faction, Bernardo can help Lope overcome his bad luck, and this is what the image of the tree demonstrates. The similarity to Philip III's Spain, riven as it was with its own factions thanks to Lerma's *privanza* is clear: not only had Lerma built up his own chains of *privados* behind him, but moreover, the sudden change of fortunes and switching of one favourite for another at the *bilogía*'s midpoint cannot help but recall the rise of Lerma from seeming obscurity, and the gathering pace of his fall. Lerma's influence over the king had begun to wane as soon as he announced his desire to become a cardinal; Williams states that Lerma's income reached its peak in 1613, and that thereafter, he received no further promotions. As the king and his *privado* grew increasingly apart, the king's ear was now open to other voices, and indeed, Williams shows how the manner of Philip's dismissal of Lerma reflect the influence of others in court (2010: 184-209).

However, it is not merely outlook that distinguishes the two *privados*. Their trajectories at court are also affected by their reception by the king and the other courtiers. They can present the king with similar pedigrees, as both have fathers who have served the father of the current king-connections upon which they hope to trade in order to gain a position. Arellano reminds us that

as an emanation of God on Earth, it is the king's responsibility to hand out *mercedes* and punishment according to merit, as the mouthpiece for God's justice (1996: 46-7); the king in these plays, however, will fail to do this. In a public audience, we see that king Pedro is naturally inclined towards generosity, and in being so, demonstrates a modicum of political awareness, recognising that public appearance is important for both the king and the citizens[70]. Indeed, Pedro has an understanding of what is expected of a good king, but this knowledge is self-conscious and clumsy. This is because as earnestly as he understands his role, his fruitless adoration of the scheming noblewoman Leonor, lady-in-waiting of the *infanta* Violante, frequently takes precedence over matters of state. As Lope approaches the king to petition him for service, a *secretario* arrives simultaneously with a letter of rejection from the lady in question, rendering Pedro unable to concentrate on Lope's petition. Having stated that he understands the importance of public audience, he goes on to undermine it by failing to listen to his supplicant. Although Lope admirably ploughs on, the king is forced to recognise:

> Yo he estado divertido, y no he escuchado
> lo que éste me ha dicho; encubrir quiero
> esta poca atención, que es gran defeto
> en el rey, y en el juez.
> (ll. 299-302).

Pedro is aware of what his duty should have been, and that he has failed in it. However, his attempt to hide his error is questionable. If Poyo, Lope and Vélez played with notions of bad kingship in their plays, Mira deals with it head on in one of the best examples of affairs of the heart interfering with affairs of state.

[70] He states "Importa algunas veces;/ que se gana ansi todos los ánimos,/ quiérenle bien al Rey, y los vasallos/ hablarle pueden sin dificutades" (ll. 220-3). We could speculate that in this Mira makes a pointed reference, whether intentional or not, to the increasingly private manner in which Habsburg monarchy was conducted, where access to the person of the king became an exclusive privilege of those men closest to the *privado*. See the Introduction to this study for more on this.

Again and again, we see the king distracted by Leonor as Lope approaches him. In the first act, he gives the king his *memorial* just as Leonor teasingly enters. The king lets the *memorial* fall to the ground unread. We know that she is in love with Don Bernardo, and moreover, that she knows that her mistress, Violante, is equally enamoured by him. To see the king willing to drop (literally) everything for a woman we know is only leading him on is condemnable. As Leonor whisks him off for what he thinks will be an assignation, Lope's *memorial* is forgotten. Lope's response is characteristically self-indulgent and melodramatic: "Ya reconozco/ mi sobrada desdicha, el Rey, sin duda,/ le arrojó, que merced no quiere hacerme" (ll. 1101-3). When both men return from war at the start of the second act, the king falls asleep during the dispatches due to a restless night spent dwelling on Leonor. Unfortunately, he misses only Lope's commendable report. Again, just as in the first act, the king's reaction is to recognise that his behaviour is not kingly, but that he needs to hide his slip. This prompts the incredulous reaction from Lázaro: "¿es cristiano el rey? ¿Es hombre?" (l. 1355). More worrying, later in the act he has a secretary imprisoned for writing his own love letter to Leonor. As the wretched secretary is hauled off stage begging forgiveness, the king states tyrannically:

> No pretendo ser cruel,
> ser justiciero pretendo.
> Entre el rigor y piedad
> es un medio la justicia,
> azote de la malicia
> y amparo de la verdad.
> (ll. 1573-8).

Mira plays on Pedro I's cognomens in a chiasmus that throws Pedro IV's actions into relief. Moreover, his use of opposites (cruel/justiciero, rigor/piedad, azote/amparo) underscores the binaries that Mira uses to structure his *comedia* and its protagonists. Pedro demonstrates a chilling awareness of how he is supposed to act with his use of rhetoric that we would associate with Christian kingship, but its application here is tyrannous. The knock on effect of this is that it prevents Bernardo from pressing Lope's case once more, as the king erroneously thinks

Bernardo is defending the secretary. This is confirmed by his further, defensive reaction to ban the very mention of Lope's name (ll. 1636-9). Lope may have suffered bad luck, but only because first he has been the victim of bad kingship. Mira is using *privanza* to go beyond commentary of the *privados* themselves. There are ramifications for both the king and the *privado*, and Mira seems to be making points about both roles. Lope's failed ascent is down to a lack of prudence on the part of both the *privado* and the king himself, in a commentary on kingship that is entirely missing from Poyo's earlier offerings.

It is easy to criticise the men in this play, but the actions of the female characters are the real driving force behind much of the action. Leonor, Violante and Dorotea and their various amorous tricks have a direct impact on matters of state; of this, Leonor's preventing the king from promoting a worthy candidate is just one example. Leonor's lies keep the *infanta* and Don Bernardo apart; Dorotea tricks Lope into believing the *infanta* is in love with him; Violante's encouragement sees Bernardo promoted beyond his wildest dreams in the final act in order that he will make a worthy match for her. Gutiérrez states that the nets these women weave makes this *bilogía* some of Mira's best *capa y espada* work, and that rarely are women so prominent in the dramatic action of a Golden Age work. In this regard, we can again trace literary development: like Vélez de Guevara's *comedias de privanza*, we can see that Mira's use of scenes and plots that would not look out of place in other *comedias palaciegas* demonstrates the evolving nature of the genre. More importantly, Gutiérrez goes on to argue that Leonor represents the very figure of bad luck, thwarting both men in their quests, Lope for position and Bernardo for Violante's hand; she is the goddess Fortuna personified (1975: 181-203). Certainly, these well-developed female characters rank with Doña Sol of *La corona merecida* and Doña Aldonza of *El lucero de Castilla* as some of the most engaging, well-developed women within the genre. Although there is no doubt that the female characters' machinations reinforce the theme of the mutability of fortune, they say more about human frailty. The king

is the most obvious example: his ardent desire for Leonor, even in the face of her rejection and love for another man, prevents him from exercising his duty. Serrano points out that Violante and Leonor's position on the balcony when the two *privados* first enter court visually demonstrates the men's ambition to climb the social ladder (1991: 222-4); they strive to reach the *infanta*, and indeed, their political trajectories are inextricably linked to their amorous trajectories. Violante, and her choice of lover, will end up deciding which of the two men end up in the position of *privado*. If in Poyo we saw the seeds of Díez Borque's contention that discord over affairs of the heart is what brings about the fall of the favourite in the *comedia de privanza*, then here we see its full flowering.

The threads that Mira weaves in the first half of the *bilogía*—Bernardo's stoic virtue, Lope's conceited pessimism, the king's poor statecraft, the intrigues of the women—come together in the second half, where Bernardo and Lope will exchange fortunes, and Bernardo will eventually be executed. As the second play opens, nothing has ostensibly changed. Dorotea and Leonor continue to scheme, and indeed, it is their machinations in the first act that provide the touch paper for the rest of the drama. In a confusing love triangle, Dorotea tricks Lope into meeting her, playing on his adoration of the *infanta*; meanwhile Bernardo and Violante are meant to be meeting. Lope, as he waits for the arrival of Violante, is angered by musicians playing, and in a surprisingly brutal reaction, murders one of them when they refuse to move on. It is an act that will overshadow the rest of the play: by stumbling upon the body and removing it respectfully, Bernardo misses his tryst with Violante, earning her displeasure. Meanwhile, mistaking him for Bernardo, Violante ends in a romantic embrace with Lope. Although initially angry, she is nevertheless taken by the gallant stranger. She decides to call off her marriage to Bernardo, and exchange him for Lope. This, then, is the point in which we most clearly see the importance of the female characters in this *bilogía*: the turning point of Bernardo and Lope's luck comes in this exact moment in Violante's arms.

However, in his changing fortunes, Bernardo is able to demonstrate the constancy that he professed in the first half of the *bilogía*. If reversed fortune demonstrated Lope's flawed conception of Bernardo's stoic outlook, Bernardo demonstrates his innate assimilation of his words. When he hears the musicians sing, he discerns in their lyrics an omen. Upon hearing "porque el bien y el agua/ no saben parar./ Que alegres cosas/ trocadas están…" (ll. 219-22), he recognises the truth, and hears a warning of his waning fortunes. The discovery, by chance, of the body of Lope's murdered musician confirms his suspicions. In the dark of the night, one of the recurring symbols of the play, he is left to ponder:

> Torres que dejan el viento
> con chapiteles extraños,
> tardan en crecer cien años
> y caense en un momento[71].
> Este tiempo que ha de haber
> hasta la mañana clara,
> para subir no bastará
> y basta para caer.
> (ll. 321-8).

Significantly, in the dark and away from the symbolic light of the king (a scheme of imagery that will be seen even more emphatically in Mira's *Luna* diptych), it is only when the sun rises that relief sweeps over him: "Este es el claro día/ que tanto ha deseado el alma mía" (ll. 583-4). His *lira* (ll. 565-94), however, which praises the rising sun and the cycles of day and night, speaks to us more clearly than any of the omens he saw the night before. Once again demonstrating Mira's mastery of the imagery of the genre, the *lira* is dominated by imagery that, far from suggesting the renewed optimism Bernardo claims to be celebrating, in fact reinforces the precarity of his position: the sea, eclipsed light, the moon. Addressing the sun, whose rays are reflected in the sea and in the heavens, we see a clear reference to the king whose power is reflected in the *privados* who are so frequently represented in this scheme of

[71] See Chapter 2 of this study, and analysis of Lope's *La fortuna merecida* for more on the image of fallen masonry as a conceit in Golden Age Spain.

imagery. In a moment of dramatic irony, when we know that Violante has transferred her affections and his downfall is in motion, his consideration of natural cycles is an uncomfortable reminder that just as he fears, everything that rises must also fall.

As the first act closes, he meditates that "Como el mar es la privanza,/ que tiene flujo y reflujo;/ crece en uno, en otro mengua" (ll. 982-4). Recognising the truth in these images, which abound in the *comedia de privanza*, the solution he reaches is eminently sensible: to retire from court. He recognises that he has had good luck, and that he has enjoyed great power and influence, but that ultimately, he can sense his luck is running out (ll. 1024-34). His solution, then, like Payo de Guzmán, that other stoic *privado*, is to extract himself from a situation in which he knows he will not prosper. He eschews court life, and enters a monastery, in contrast to Lope's Guzmán who merely returns to his *aldea*. This is a choice on Mira's part that draws a clear parallel to Lerma's retiring from court. From 1612, Lerma made his desire to be cardinal known, and he repeatedly petitioned Philip to leave office. Williams explains how Spanish princes had an innate mistrust of anyone who owed primary loyalty to foreign princes- even if only to a sovereign pontiff. They were therefore extremely unlikely to appoint a cardinal to a senior government position; only a handful of men, who were Archbishops of Toledo or Inquisitors General, managed to rise in this way. In declaring his ambition to become a cardinal, the clear implication from Lerma was that he wanted to withdraw from the court, and was preparing to force the king to release him from his obligations; Philip chose to let him go (2010: 184-6). The implication, then, of Bernardo's retreat to a religious order, regardless of whether or not it is directly commenting on Lerma's attempts, demonstrates a clear rejection of court life, as court and church positions are fundamentally opposed to each other.

Why, then, does Bernardo's rejection of court life for religious tranquility fail? If Payo de Guzmán's desire for seclusion is respected by the king and court in *Los Guzmanes de Toral*, in

Mira's *comedia*, Bernardo's is not. He is taken away from the "más derecho camino" (l. 1167) of his monastery, and back to the "ancho y… peligroso" (l. 1171) *camino* of court life thanks to a very determined campaign of emotional blackmail from the king. Pedro appeals to him in a sonnet:

> Vengo por vos, y ansí será imposible
> volver solo a palacio;
> […]
> No puede un Rey estar sin un privado,
> que Dios también lo tuvo en otros tiempos.
> […]
> En vos puse mi amor y mi privanza;
> Don Bernardo, no es bien haya mudanza.
> (ll. 1242-55).

Important to note here is Pedro's reminder that a king always rules with a *privado*. It demonstrates the accepted nature of *privanza*, and the accepted wisdom that a king always rules with help and advisors. Mira, in this sense, follows the thinking of his time. However, the final couplet that links "privanza" to "mudanza" in rhyme subtly underscores the *comedia*'s main argument of the precarity of *valimiento*. His final argument, that "la obediencia/ se debe preferir al sacrificio" (ll. 1304-5) is what finally persuades Bernardo to reluctantly return. He knows that a second period as the king's *hechura* is bound to provoke the envy of court, but as Serrano points out, in Bernardo de Cabrera, we find a servant who is absolutely not motivated by the lure of power or influence, but who instead is purely dedicated to loyal service to the crown (2006: 42-3). In fact, loyalty, both to the king and to his friend Lope de Luna, is perhaps the defining facet of Bernardo's personality, and yet these very friendships will be decisive in his downfall. Castañeda argues that Bernardo's fall is rendered more tragic because of its result from circumstance, rather than an obvious flaw in the protagonist (1977: 64). This is true to a certain extent, and it would be incorrect to label loyalty as a flaw, but had Bernardo stuck to

his own convictions and listened to the sound instincts that led him to withdraw from court, he would not have suffered the fate he does[72].

His fall is quick: the events put in motion by the women are compounded by the inadequacy of the king. By the play's conclusion the king will have become cruel, tyrannical and hypocritical, having undergone a significant transformation in his attitude to Bernardo that demonstrates his failure in his "friendship" with his *privado*. The king's first entrance and speech in the second play was characterised by superlatives to describe Bernardo, his Admiral, Majordomo, and *privado*: "[el] hombre que más quiero en este mundo" (l. 741), "el hombre más valiente que/ España tiene" (ll. 746-7). However, when Violante announces that she wants to cancel her wedding to him, Pedro is horrified. Despite his protestation to his sister that "Mira, Violante,/ que quiero tiernamente al Almirante" (ll. 764-5), we see that his affection is powerless. The romantic love of Violante outstrips the love for a king and his *privado*, despite the fact that in the previous play, it was his direct command as king that ordered the marriage. He has therefore failed both privately and publically: his love for his friend was not enough to save him from his capricious sister's change of heart, and politically, in her violation of his command, he is incapable of seeing his writ carried through. Violante is able to justify her actions using the images of human frailty and the mutability of fortunes that have dominated Mira's *bilogía*:

> La humana voluntad es como cera;
> varias formas se imprimen y se borran
> en ella fácilmente; el gusto es vario,
> y más en la mujer; lo que hoy desea
> aborrece mañana, y otro día
> lo que dejó otra vez estima y quiere.

[72] Ruano de la Haza points to Bernardo's soliloquies and asides as an indication of his psychological complexity, suggesting that the real cause of his fall is not arbitrary luck but instead his anxiety at the realisation that luck *is* arbitrary. His inability to enjoy his good luck and benefit from it (as seen by his decision to retire from court prematurely), rather than any capriciousness on the king's or Leonor's parts—in other words, his own character—is more to blame than his luck (2005: 437-451).

(ll. 776-81).

Her use of a lexical field that could just as easily reflect fortune as taste demonstrates the close connection between Violante and Bernardo's career.

When Leonor starts the rumour that the *privado* murdered Leonido the musician, this is eventually fed back to the *príncipe*, who accuses the king "¿Es justo/ que no castigue el Rey los poderosos?" (ll. 1494-5). This accusation will bring out two facets of the king's poor conduct. Firstly, the *príncipe* puts forward a simple, reasonable point, which alludes to abuse of power. That the king does not, and has not, seen fit to investigate the accusation shows his lack of respect for the law. We will later see that he is only willing to exercise "justice" when the perceived attack affects him personally. Secondly, his response to the accusation is telling in terms of how it will reflect on his later conduct. He tells his son:

> No des crédito, Príncipe, a las lenguas
> que quizá con envidia lo murmuran.
> El Almirante no le mataría;
> pero si le mató, razón tendría.
> No me murmure nadie a Don Bernardo,
> porque es amigo mío y mi hechura.
> (11.1519-24).

In his urging of his son not to listen to gossip, he demonstrates at the very least his sensitivity to the nature of *privanza* in court and the envy it inspires. However, the last four lines cast doubt on the integrity of the first two. He is not even sure that Bernardo is innocent, but he suggests that such is his love for Bernardo that the *privado* stands above the law. We see the lexis of friendship used to obstruct justice.

Equally, his advice not to heed gossip is not something he will follow himself. At the end of the act, the king overhears Bernardo reading out a letter with treasonous undertones and mistakes the sentiment to be Bernardo's own. The farcical nature of the scene underlines its tragedy, and the fit of anger that follows it is full of pathos. The last time Pedro was on stage,

minutes before, he was defending Bernardo against rumour. Now, hypocritically, he has forgotten this advice and at the first instance is condemning a perceived offence without investigation. Spitefully, he takes all his titles and lands off Bernardo, and bestows them on an incredulous Don Lope, condemning Bernardo to house arrest. The king's sudden change in tone and his shift to anger is unnerving. Ironically, again, he plays on the idea of friendship to enforce his tyranny, emphasising that Pedro harbours no real friendship towards his servants: "Ansí muestro ser Rey y ser cristiano;/ ansí enseño a premiar y dar castigo:/ no me repliques más, que será en vano./ Obedezca mi ley quien es mi amigo" (ll. 1743-6). "Amigo" in this vengeful conception of it does not mean the warm, mutual, supportive loyalty that Lope and Bernardo share; instead it implies simply not being an enemy, and staying on the right side of tyranny. It shows that Pedro has had a fundamentally flawed conception of "friendship" all along. In a final, devastating moment of a total lack of self knowledge, Pedro proclaims:

> […] Desde hoy procure
> que me llamen el Justiciero.
> Ninguno en mi favor viva seguro
> si en mucha virtud no está estribando,
> que un monte se estremece y aun un muro.
> El que sirviere bien iré premiado;
> aquel que me ofendiere no confíe
> en el dulce favor del pecho blando
> […]
> Y es justo que contemple aquel que priva
> el castigo que dan el derribado,
> porque con ojos vigilantes viva.
> (ll. 1765-81).

The ironies and inconsistencies here scarcely need pointing out: that Bernardo's treatment is far from just (as echoed by other nobles (ll. 1782-92)); that Bernardo is only serving him because Pedro begged it of him; that punishment was not required to remind Bernardo or Lope of the inconsistencies of fortune in court; and of course, most obviously, that Bernardo is in fact innocent of all charges.

It is fitting, therefore, that in the final *jornada*, it should be an act of loyalty misinterpreted by a wrathful king that finally seals Bernardo's fate. When a *villano* he has previously helped comes to tell him of a plot to murder the king as he goes out hunting, Bernardo breaks his house arrest; however, being forewarned of the plot, the king catches Bernardo, assumes he is the plot's instigator, and has him summarily executed. This final misunderstanding on the part of the king is unsurprising and tragic: it springs from his vast overreaction to Bernardo's attempt to save the life of a king who has already punished him unfairly. An obvious question to ask is what could possibly have provoked such a strong reaction from the king over such a short space of time: over the course of only a few hundred verses, he goes from outright adoration to hatred, and so extreme is this conversion that it feels unrealistic. The explanation, however, may lie in the former emotion- the king's unbridled and unwavering adoration of his *privado*. Over the course of the play, we have seen Bernardo increasingly accused and beleaguered by others, yet the king continued to defend his man. It is perhaps in the crushing moment of hearing what sounds like a plot to serve another king that persuades Pedro that what he hears is a devastating dereliction of duty, made all the worse by having dragged him up from nothing but a lowly *hidalgo* to the greatest man in the land. Pedro placed so much love and trust in Bernardo, and so high were Pedro's expectations of the *privado* that any betrayal, no matter how small, would seem a terrible crime. Bernardo here pays the price for an illicit friendship that the king entertained for him: Pedro's reliance on and adoration of Bernardo was over-familiar, and lacked dignity, and correspondingly, Bernardo's fall from grace exhibits that strength of emotion.

The licit conduct of friendships has lain at the heart of this play, and Mira's portrayal of two friendships—one between a king and his *privado*, and one between two equals—leads to firm conclusions on the role friendship has to play in a court setting. In 1615, Lerma worked hard, but without success, to limit the circulation of Fray Juan de Santamaría's pamphlet *República*

y policía cristiana, which, more powerfully than other *arbitristas*, managed to obviously and publically criticise friendship and favouritism in court in a thinly veiled attack on Lerma. The pamphlet argues that kings and their favourites cannot be friends: either the king is lowered to the level of the *privado*, and thus below his sacred position, or the *privado* is raised above his position into an over-mighty semi-king. The pamphlet became something of a bestseller, being published in Madrid (1615), Barcelona (1617, 1618, 1619), Valencia (1619), Lisbon (1621) and Naples (1624) (Feros 2000: 236-8). That friendship should be such a prominent theme in this play is a nod to thought of the later years of Philip III, rendering the contrast between the friendship of the *privados* and that of the king and Bernardo more politically significant. It is his treatment of the theme of friendship in these plays that marks Mira's more mature handling of the *comedia de privanza*: in his contrast of two different types of friendship he explores the issue in more depth and nuance. Moreover, he develops the scheme of imagery common to the *comedia de privanza* in order to support this, as well as the genre's structural features of contrasting characters.

Lerma's own exit from court could not have been more different; in his latter years: as we have seen, he embarked on a largescale building project he could ill afford and eroded confidence in his own power by occasionally neglecting his duties, or oscillating between wanting to withdraw from court and maintain his position. These are not character traits we see in Bernardo, and neither are there many scenes which speak directly to concrete incidents. Indeed, Serrano is at great pains to stress that the *bilogía* is most emphatically not a reflection of the court of its day, and that there is no proof that suggests that Mira was in any way interested in public affairs (2003: 28-9). However, Mira's plays capture the tumult of the replacement of one *privado* by another that was playing out with the fall of Lerma and his replacement by his son Uceda, who much like Lope in the *bilogía*, was a somewhat lacklustre substitution. Regardless of Mira's desire to participate in or reflect on events in court, this *bilogía* continues

the *comedia de privanza*'s ability to capture contemporary political events and thinking. Moreover, in his use of the name 'Luna' and its attendant imagery, his use of images that demonstrate fragility and mutability (the sea, tumbling towers, the wind, the tree etc.), his contrasting paired protagonists and a two-part structure shaped by the fortunes of its characters, we can point to Mira's similarity to Salucio del Poyo's earlier works. This *bilogía* is set apart by its masterful and sophisticated examination of friendship in court: Bernardo's tragedy lies in his being let down by his two friends: the king, and Don Lope. Additionally, Mira's use of the image of *privanza* as a tree, through which courtiers can help each other stands alone in its redolence to factionalism: we could infer that had Lope and Bernardo shared the latter's stoic outlook, tragedy could have been avoided. Moreover, in his presentation of Pedro IV, we see once again the dangers of a king who cannot separate public from private and who enjoys too affectionate a relationship with their *privado*.

Twenty years separates Mira's treatment of Ruy López and Álvaro de Luna and Poyo's first attempt to dramatise the same story. Critics agree that Poyo's plays served as Mira's inspiration in his own crafting of the Luna story[73]. In their edition of the plays, María Concepción García Sánchez and Miguel González Dengra date the play between 1621-4. *Próspera* appears in the 1635 *Segunda parte de las comedias del maestro Tirso de Molina*; meanwhile, an autograph manuscript of *Adversa*, dated 17th October 1624, can be found in the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona. There is a further manuscript edition of *Próspera* under Mira's name from the seventeenth century in Madrid's Biblioteca Nacional. (Ms. 17.101). Although, like its predecessor by Salucio del Poyo, it takes the most famous *privado* as its source material, as Ivy McClelland states: "The difference between [Mira] and Poyo is the difference between man and child" (1946: 90). Margaret Wilson agrees, arguing that Mira's treatment of the

[73] Wilson (1958), McCurdy (1978), García Sánchez (2005), Wise (2014), amongst others.

subject matter is notably more mature, and that any similarity with Poyo's version is only superficial (1956: 29). As we saw in the *Cabrera* plays, in *Próspera Luna*, Mira sticks to the formula of contrasting luck in two protagonists; however, Feros demonstrates how the relationship of the fortunes between the two *privados* are in fact completely separate. Although they have opposite trajectories, unlike in Poyo's plays, they are independent of each other: the rise of one does not depend on the fall of the other, and vice versa (2013: 132). Moreover, they do not share a bond of friendship, and where the friendship theme will really come out is between the young king Juan II and his rising *privado*, Álvaro de Luna. We see an ageing favourite in Ruy López, who fails to prove himself useful to a young, capricious king, and who falls victim to public disgrace and private betrayal. In the second part, it is Álvaro who must now reach the peak of his power and then fall as a result of the envy and ingratitude of his own *hechuras*.

Critics have been divided over the political nature of Mira's *bilogía*: Sánchez Arce (1965), MacCurdy (1978), Kennedy (1980), de los Ríos (1989), Martínez Aguilar (2001), Muñoz Palomares (2007), Feros (2013), and Wise (2014) are amongst those who argue in favour of a sharp historical parallel between the plays' representation of *privanza* and the events of the end of Philip's reign, most especially the fall and execution of Rodrigo Calderón, Lerma's own *hechura*. They recognise in Ruy López a veiled reference to Lerma, and see Álvaro de Luna as a representation of Calderón[74]. Meanwhile, Arellano (1996, 2011), Serrano (1996) and García Sánchez (2001) either overlook or attempt to down play such overt historical parallels: indeed, in her thorough discussion of the issue, García Sánchez suggests that such parallels are mere coincidences (2001: 222), with Mira's main aim being to moralize on the inconsistency of

[74] Manfred Engelbert (1998) deals in more detail with the representation of Rodrigo Calderón in Golden Age theatre, focussing on Lope's *El caballero de Olmedo* but considering Mira's *bilogía* in passing.

humans (225). This study will agree with the former interpretation, suggesting that Mira was indeed referring, if only obliquely, to his own times.

There is enough similarity between Poyo's work and Mira's *bilogía* to suggest a conscious re-use of the same material; however, the alterations that Mira makes, and indeed, his entirely different characterisation of both Ruy López and Álvaro de Luna, will demonstrate Mira's manipulation of the Álvaro de Luna story to fit better with the end of Philip III's reign. Moreover, Mira's superior characterisation demonstrates a more mature handling of the philosophical and neo-stoic concerns of the *comedia de privanza*. In crafting his characters differently to Poyo, the resulting *desengaño* that Mira's Álvaro de Luna undergoes presents a more convincing portrayal of the frailty of humans and arbitrary nature of fortune than Poyo's attempt, that corresponds better to the literary fashions of the time. Using the same story and source material, Poyo and Mira have created subtly different *comedias* that are pertinent to their own period of Philip III's reign, and it is by thinking of Mira's plays in relation to Poyo's that demonstrates the highly contemporary, political nature of Mira's work. He has reworked Poyo's plays, beyond mere coincidence of a familiar shape of rise and fall, to create a piece that is inescapably a reflection of Rodrigo Calderón and the Duke of Lerma. Such parallels do not necessarily mean that Mira's aims were political, and indeed, there is enough Molinist (Wise 2014) and philosophical content to demonstrate that political commentary was not necessarily Mira's primary concern. However, these parallels demonstrate that the *comedia de privanza* continues to be shaped by the events of contemporary Spain.

Although the title of the first play refers to Álvaro de Luna and Ruy López equally, this is actually somewhat misleading, as Ruy López receives far more attention from the dramatist. Luna's part is relegated to a secondary role, as the drama focuses on Ruy's fall. However, as Wilson argues (1958), it is Don Álvaro's presence in the first play that will give the two works

their unity. In watching Ruy López's fall, Álvaro will learn valuable lessons that will govern his conduct in the second part. However, as MacCurdy (1964) points out, it is a lesson that is only partially learnt: although Álvaro attempts to *obrar bien*, it is not until his execution that he learns what Ruy López really meant when he advised the younger man to *obrar bien* in the earlier work. Mira's treatment of Ruy López is radically different to that of Poyo: where in Poyo's work we find a loyal and able statesman who is beyond reproach, both in court and on the battle field, Mira's portrayal is of an elderly, flawed man, whose public fall comes as a result of a private miscalculation. The first scene shows Ruy in his house, alone with his two servants, García and Herrera, as they dress him. This opening will be indicative of the whole play; instead of seeing the *Condestable* in a position of power, at the heart of the court, we see him at this most vulnerable, in a state of undress. It is an intimate, private introduction to a man who will be very intimately and closely presented by the playwright in his exploration of his private disgrace. His very first lines similarly highlight his frailty rather than his power; asking if he is late, he states "A la vejez cualquiera mal se atreve./ Tarde me levanto/ mis continuos achaques lo han causado"[75]. From the outset, this is a man who is defined by his old age. Indeed, at the play's conclusion, Alfonso, king of Aragon, takes Ruy into his service, claiming "Yo estimaré este vejez", whilst Juan takes Álvaro into his with the parallel line "Yo estimo esta mocedad" (ll. 2354-5). Ruy's old age has a dual function: it represents his vast and superior experience, but it also weakens him, and in a court run by a teenager, makes him rather tiresome. We see a projection of the very human man behind the grand titles he holds. On the one hand, this emphasis on humanising the protagonist makes for a more tragic *comedia* with more pathetic resonances (as, indeed, is McClelland's argument (1946)), but on the other, it is also making a significant political and moral point: it will be increasingly difficult for the

[75] All quotations, given by line number, are taken from García Sánchez and González Dengra's edition of the plays in volume VI of Mira de Amescua's *Teatro Completo* (Universidad de Granada, 2006). *Próspera* is found pp.37-116, and *Adversa* pp.117-225.

audience, or for the king, to see the protagonist's true worth or political potential. Although the advice he gives is frequently accurate, it is also equally easy for us to sympathise with Juan as he complains "¡Cansada cosa es un ayo!" (l. 1311), because he irks us too. If all humans are frail, the play tells us that this is just as true for Ruy as it is for everyone else. Moreover, it makes the flourishing friendship between Juan and Don Álvaro, and the latter's astronomical rise, all the more credible. Ruy's main role, however, is in providing an example from which Álvaro can learn.

Ruy's fall is caused by the ingratitude of his servant García, and by Juan's failure to protect his *ayo*. Mira uses the motif of reliance on trustworthy servants by setting up two characters in contrast, comparing Juan's reliance on Álvaro to Ruy's reliance on his own servants. This will be another point which will demonstrate Ruy's weaknesses. Early in the play, Ruy receives a prediction that of his two servants, García and Herrera, one will prove to be treacherous, whilst the other will remain steadfastly loyal. García will turn out to be the play's main antagonist, but Ruy will miss every opportunity to identify his disloyalty, and will repeatedly choose García's company, whilst rejecting Herrera's. Ruy demonstrates he is a poor judge of character, missing vital clues that could have indicated which of his servants was loyal, and which was not. Their reaction to the prediction, for instance, demonstrated Herrera's quiet stocism, ("Que el prudente predomina/ los Astros de luz divina, / y sobre todo es Dios" (ll. 40-2)) in contrast to García's defensive overreaction and ready temper as he accuses Herrera of writing the prediction himself (ll. 47-54). At the opening of the second act, García provokes Herrera into a fight where swords are drawn. In a moment of dramatic irony, where we have seen Herrera tell García "Temple, señor Juan García,/ el enojo, que está en casa/ de Ruy López, mi señor/ a quien respeto y amor/ debemos ambos" (ll. 600-4), Ruy enters the room and immediately blames Herrera for his lack of respect, bizarrely putting it down to his Andalusian heritage, rather than stepping back to either hear both sides of the story or indeed to evaluate the situation

based on the behaviour he has seen before. It is a moment suffused with dramatic irony designed to intentionally discredit Ruy López, and it is reinforced by the later exchange between the mutinous servant and his master after an unfairly treated Herrera has been sent away. García explains that his anger springs from what he perceives as inferior treatment compared to Herrera. However, Ruy's handling of the situation is inadequate. He platitudinously fobs off his servant by telling him "Otro día/ hablaremos más García/ en esto" (ll. 662-4). Left alone to reflect, Ruy comments:

> ¡Con qué furor, con qué extremos
> de soberbio y loco error
> nos engaña el propio amor,
> y nunca nos conocemos!
> Nadie sus defectos ve,
> amor propio es ciego.
> (ll. 693-8).

His ironic philosophising intended as a criticism of the *criado* is far more a criticism of the old man, who is seen to be failing to take his own good advice. Where is his self knowledge? To what extent has his love for his servant blinded him? Here, Mira cleverly foregrounds Ruy's fall: when he is under house arrest we see him blindly walking into the walls of his home. Álvaro comments: "Topando con las paredes/ va Ruy López. A los ojos/ les falta luz" (ll. 1434-6), the fracture caused by the mid-line caesura perhaps reflecting in verse a rather painful collision with the wall. The metaphorical blindness Ruy refers to in criticism of the servant he has misjudged becomes literal blindness in Ruy's fall, provoked by his determination to see things as he wished them to be, rather than in their true light. This subtle and sophisticated manifestation of carefully foregrounded imagery is something entirely missing from Poyo's earlier offerings. We see here a *privado* whose private failings cannot help but have an effect on our judgement of his abilities as a public figure.

It comes as no surprise that García will go on to betray his master. Ruy gives two blank, signed pieces of paper to García to write to his sons, telling him he will not check what he has written, because “Soy confiado, aunque viejo” (l. 782), once again framing his error within Ruy’s old age. García takes the papers, forges letters of treasonous content signed by his master the *Condestable* and passes them on to the king. Ironically, Ruy very much values the servant he has managed to alienate. In his lowest moment of shame, as his supposed treason is revealed, alone in his house, it is for García, the very author of his misery, that he calls. He repeatedly sends away the loyal, much maligned Herrera, constituting another ironic twist- had García looked more closely at the relationship Ruy had with both servants, he would have seen that he was Ruy’s clear favourite. The purpose of this private deception in the play is to provide a tension with his irreproachable conduct in his public office. It shows that we can all be misled in our private relationships, and moreover, it demonstrates how Ruy himself is susceptible to and author of human misunderstandings and failings. Where Poyo’s Ruy López was unrealistically faultless, Mira presents us with a Ruy López who gives good advice in his office as *ayo*, but who in his own household, is capable of poor judgement. It is a subplot that adds a depth and complexity to the main plot that is not seen in Poyo’s original *comedia*. It adds new dimensions to the character of Ruy López, who in Poyo’s play, is somewhat two-dimensional.

Moreover, the subplot adds nuance to the philosophical and political conclusions Mira’s plays reach. Ruy’s elegiac soliloquy at the end of the second act is one of the finest, most heart-rending speeches to be found in these plays. That he is alone in the darkness of his private home, banished from the light of the king, plays into the scheme of imagery of light and dark common to the *comedia de privanza*. That it is tied in with the blindness motif that demonstrates Ruy’s failings demonstrates Mira’s superior touch, tying together in imagery the public fall and private disgrace. The long-serving royal servant is left alone to question repeatedly what could possibly have led him to this place. Ruy only confirms his own error

when Herrera comes to him, symbolically bearing a light, but sends him away saying "García, quizá por verte,/ a consolarme no ha entrado./ Vete allá fuera. ¡Ah García!" (l. 1566-8). Crucially, in his very flaws, Ruy is both the victim and the epitome of his own message that we can only trust in God, and attempt to do good:

> Obrar bien es lo que importa,
> Don Álvaro, no me turban
> accidentes, que Dios tiene
> en su mano la Fortuna.
> (ll. 589-92).

However, it is the friendship between Álvaro and Juan that lies at the problematic heart of these *comedias*[76]. As we have already seen, one of the defining features of the *comedia de privanza* is playwrights' recourse to natural imagery of cycles, especially the moon[77], and moreover, how this intersects with light/dark imagery that reflects the sun/moon binary of the king/*privado* relationship. In this *bilogía* we perhaps find one of the finest expressions of this topos. Carl Wise (2014) reads the use of light and dark in the *comedia* to explore free will, arguing that as the plays progress, Juan increasingly loses his free will to Álvaro, who steals his "light", noting his progress from a forthright young king who demands to take on his majority early, to a trembling shadow whose own wife controls him, puppet-like, in the signing of Álvaro's death warrant. It is a trajectory that outstrips Poyo's handling of the character: where Poyo's Juan was manipulated into taking on his majority early by a scheming Gonzalo, Mira takes Juan on a much more fundamental change in character, whose independence is subsumed by Álvaro de Luna. The friendship between Juan and Álvaro is all-consuming, and indeed, Serrano comments on the overtly intimate nature of their exchanges (1996). Ruy López, from the first act, had recognised Juan's susceptibility to Álvaro: "La juventud de los dos/ sus

[76] See Muñoz Palomares (2007) for a detailed examination of friendship within this *bilogía*, and Mira's *comedias de privanza* more broadly.
[77] See Arellano (1996 and 2011) for a list of Mira's imagery in his *comedias de privanza*.

nobles ánimos junta,/ que no siempre la Razón/ contradice la Fortuna" (467-70). On Juan's part, it is a friendship that is immediate in its depth and affection:

La más pura
fe y amistad que los libros
en sus historias ocultan,
Álvaro, ha de ser la nuestra;
y en reinando te asegura
mayores honras mi pecho,
como lo verás, […]
(ll. 508-14).

In a *biliogía* where prophecy is emphasised as crude and baseless[78] (showing Mira's increased sophistication compared to Poyo's rather more blunt *comedias de privanza* that exploit prophecies to demonstrate the inevitability of the fall of the *privado*), this early statement from Juan proves to be prophetic. It highlights the two problems that their friendship will cause for the court, and the realm: its intimacy and its generosity. However, that Juan is incapable of recognising the illicit nature of their relationship lies at the crux of his poor kingship, as demonstrated by the fact that he actively aspires to excessive intimacy and reward. The friendship that Mira crafts between Álvaro and Juan is the best example of the flawed friendship that *privanza* can provoke.

Juan's affection for his *privado* is seen in various situations throughout the two *bilogías*. The problem with his intimacy is that he frequently places his love for Álvaro before his duties as king. Moreover, it dulls his critical faculties as king: such is his regard for Álvaro that he loses sight of what is best for the realm. Álvaro is not inherently a malign *privado*. Indeed, often we see that his advice is well founded, and crucial in the face of Juan's poor political instincts. It is Álvaro who prompts Juan to reward the poet who comes to court to document the coronation

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[78] Juan himself will later refuse a prophecy to be made for his son, Enrique, claiming "Sólo Dios lo sabe todo./ Suya es la muerte y la vida,/ Él alcanza lo futuro" (*Adversa*, ll. 240-2).

in act II of *Próspera* (ll. 1052-3)[79]; as Ruy falls, it is Álvaro who tries to persuade the young king to consider that his *ayo* may be the victim of a plot. Although there is little doubt that the young king is flawed, there is credit to be given to McClelland's argument that as weak as he is personally, Juan at least has the sensitivity to gift power to anyone he sees as a natural superior (1948: 97). This is certainly the case in practice with Don Álvaro, although we must question the extent to which this is more than happy coincidence: did Juan really give power to Álvaro recognising his superior ability, or just because he liked him? The answer is probably the latter: from the first instance of setting eyes on him, without discovering the quality of the advisor, Juan is drawn to the court's new arrival, in a manner that feels almost inevitable (ll. 345-54). Just as the *privado* is the victim of the inescapable forces of Fortune, the king is too, seemingly drawn to his new courtier without reason. However, choosing courtiers on the basis of personal inclination rather than talent risks trouble.

In *Próspera* it is Ruy López who picks up on Juan's alarming desire to be close to Álvaro. Having already advised the king to not go out carousing at night, in the second act, he pulls aside Don Álvaro to speak with him. Álvaro considers the talk to be a telling off: in sparking Álvaro's displeasure, Ruy sparks Juan's, and thus lays the foundation for his fall. The criticism, however, is spot on:

> Sin vos el Rey no salía;
> sale por salir los dos;
> por sí miraba, sin vos;
> tal es vuestra compañia.
> […]

[79] This poet is Juan de Mena. See footnotes to García Sánchez and González Dengra's edition of the play to ll. 925-1063 for more on the significance of this figure. McCurdy (1964) discusses Mena's appearance with the emphasis it places on the role of arbitrary fortune. Mena's appearance is significant too in Juan's reaction to the poet: he insists on reading some of his own clunky, immature love poetry to the poet, who naturally praises his (questionable) talent. Indeed, Juan's verse appears all the poorer when compared to Pablillo's spontaneous, improvised, satirical *octava real* (ll. 973-80). When Juan asks Álvaro if he writes poetry, Álvaro tellingly responds: "Mucho a oíllos/ y estimallos, no escribillos./ Mi inclinación me ha llevado/ a las armas y a justar,/ y, si vuestra alteza gusta,/ mantener pienso una justa/ cuando comience a reinar" (ll. 1021-7). Thus, he espouses views and tastes that we might consider more laudable in a warring medieval king: seeing Álvaro propose them perhaps indicates his future usurpation of Juan's kingly role.

Y ansí aunque vos no sois viejo
sois hombre ya de razón,
y tenéis obligación
de darle el mejor consejo.
(ll. 1324-35).

Ruy knows his young master and has recognised his complete dependence on Álvaro, and is forced to remind Álvaro that being Juan's friend and *privado* involves more than just having fun with him. Ruy recognises that Juan lacks good judgement of his own: he is therefore reliant on the advice of his friend. It is a weakness that is dangerous: even though Álvaro does not set out to deliberately manipulate Juan, Álvaro will nevertheless fall because of it. Juan's relationship with Álvaro is troubling for two reasons: firstly, because it causes him to abdicate his own role as king as a desire to please Álvaro gradually erodes his autonomy; and secondly, because it causes him to make Álvaro overmighty, rewarding him excessively and causing trouble with the rest of the realm.

Juan's self-negation in the face of his friendship with Don Álvaro is most clearly manifested in their relationships with women. In the second act of *Próspera*, Juan claims that "hay una dama a quien tengo/ una grande inclinación" (ll. 849-50). However, when Álvaro discovers that it is Doña Elvira, the same woman that he has also taken a shine to, Álvaro's disappointment is clear to the king ("Parece que te ha pesado" (l. 859)). Within moments, Juan completely overcomes his own love for Elvira, giving her up for his friend: "Por ti sólo hablarla quiero,/ y, si te agrada, será/ tu mujer" (ll. 889-91). Juan's desires are completely negated in the face of his *privado*'s. When Álvaro thanks him it is to state casually "Necio, que agradeces humo,/ ¿doyte yo sino esperanza?" (ll895-6). The comment is correct: for the rest of the diptych, Álvaro can always rely on Juan to realise his every whim. However, in using the image of smoke, Juan taps into a field of imagery that abounds in the plays, and demonstrates the very fleetingness of his generosity. At the end of the second *comedia*, as Álvaro faces his eventual downfall, Mira brings the scheme of imagery together when the *privado* laments "Si humo,

nada, sombra y viento/ es la vida, ¿qué será/ el bien que el mundo nos da?" (*Adversa* ll. 2345-7)[80]. He uses the imagery of transience in order to reflect on the fleeting nature of favour and life; it is a field of imagery that Mira carefully employs at the opening and close of the *bilogía* to demonstrate inconstancy. Once again in his use and careful placing of imagery throughout the plays, Mira's examples outstrip Poyo's attempts. Moreover, the echo of Góngora's 'Mientras por competir con tu cabello' shows Mira's greater poetic sophistication. Having the king use the same image of smoke here, so early in the *bilogía*, underscores Juan's own humanity and frailty, and becomes a warning of the downfall to come. Just as Álvaro's *hechuras* will let him down, so will Juan, whose own lack of autonomy in the face of Álvaro's own desires will, ironically, spell the downfall of the *privado* he loves so much.

Juan's refusal to pursue Elvira provides an early foreshadowing of the much greater change of heart he undergoes in the second *bilogía*, where he willingly gives up his own love for Resiunda of France in favour of Álvaro's own candidate, Isabel of Portugal. Álvaro has learnt from the previous play that he can always have every reason to expect to have his wishes granted; although he has sound reasons of state for suggesting the match with Portugal over France ("Con guerra está Castilla;/ Portugal nos dará gente" (ll. 1639-40)), it is clear he has far more personal reasons in advocating the match. Having organised it himself, he says:

> Si reina obligada tengo
> a mi maña y mi cuidado,
> podré vivir descuidado.
> Hombre es el rey, y prevengo
> con aquesto otra coluna
> que la envidia no derribe
> y en quien la máquina estribe
> de mi próspera fortuna.
> (ll. 1575-82).

[80] See footnotes to García Sánchez and González Dengra's edition of the play for more on the significance of these lines in relation to Góngora's sonnet 'Mientras por competir con tu cabello'.

The king's initial ire is considerable (¿Cómo, Don Álvaro, vos/ me casáis a mí sin mí? (ll. 1647-8)), but in a telling aside, Álvaro screws his courage to the sticking place: "Ahora, Fortuna/ he menester que en mi Luna/ tus rayos prósperos den" (ll. 1604-6). Once again, the king is willing to give way to Álvaro's desires in place of his own, in spite of Álvaro's clear decision to put his own career above the king's happiness. Although Juan points out France could be just as useful an ally, Álvaro has the audacity to remind him that kings must marry for reasons of state, and lay aside love, taste and antipathies (ll. 1631-40). When Álvaro threatens to leave court in disgrace for his temerity to marry the king without his consent, Juan relents, as he is incapable of putting anything before the needs of his friendship with Álvaro: "Álvaro en nuestra amistad/ no cabe dificultad./ Reina será de Castilla/ Isabel; no os enojéis" (ll. 16647). Strikingly, this is a ploy not dissimilar to that used by Lerma himself on Philip III: Feros records how in October 1607, he made the startling announcement that he was to retire from court. However, his intentions soon became clear when Philip rejected his request: he was seeking a public demonstration of the king's favour in order to consolidate his position following the potentially ruinous fall of his own favourite minister Pedro Franqueza a few months earlier (Feros 2000: 185). In Mira's play, this scene demonstrates that for Juan, friendship with Álvaro comes before matters of state, even before matters of his own heart. That Álvaro has manipulated the friendship for his own ends, whilst the king subjugates his own happiness to satisfy him, demonstrates an uncomfortable self effacement, especially as the king feels he is receiving good advice.

We might ask what has happened to the young king who demanded to take on his majority early in the opening of the first play? It is an indication, perhaps, of Ruy's superiority as *privado*, under whose tutelage Juan was able to test his wings. Under the all-consuming adoring friendship of Álvaro, however, Juan's reliance on help merely grows as time progresses. His power slowly diminishes until, ironically, he is unable to defend his favourite from his

enemies[81]. A fitting contrast can be drawn between the king, and Álvaro's wife, Doña Juana Pimentel in Álvaro's arrest and downfall. Where Juana literally takes up arms, and prepares to fight those who have come to arrest Álvaro and confiscate his property (ll. 2537-46), the king can hardly bear to even look at his *privado*, refusing to reply to his impassioned petition for his life (ll. 2703-5). This is not the only place in the *bilogía* where Mira uses contrast between Álvaro's lover and the king in order to demonstrate the king's flawed relationship with his favourite. At the end of the first act of *Adversa*, the infantes of Aragon orchestrate Álvaro's banishment. However, although Juan whines piteously for the loss of his friends, it does not occur to him to stand up to the grandees; his lack of valour is such that he cannot even bear to tell the unfortunate Álvaro himself of his fate, instead getting Juana to do it for him. Childishly, he decides to sit in a corner and feign sleep to get out of doing it (ll. 741-6), leaving even Juana to comment "al Rey le falta el valor" (l. 748). Álvaro accepts the news graciously and stoically: he notes that the handwriting is that of Robles, his servant, but comments wryly "Quien hace bien a un villano,/ quien a un traidor favorece/ esta ingratitud merece" (ll. 829-31), and eventually concludes that it is no great loss to him personally if the king and the kingdom are the better off without him. In response to this, the king jumps up, apparently forgetting that he is meant to be pretending to be asleep, to shout at his friend: "Sois ingrato y desleal/ a mi grande amor" (ll. 847-8). For him, the real issue is the thought that their friendship might not be mutual: "no es/ amistad la de los dos" (ll. 855-6). The final departure between the two is melodramatically sentimental, and more closely resembles a farewell between lovers. Mira exploits the ridiculous nature of the situation by juxtaposing the farewell between the king and his *privado* with that between Juana and Álvaro- real lovers. Juana quietly states "Responder no puedo. Adiós,/ Condestable" (ll. 970-1). Meanwhile, the men utter that they can barely look

[81] Similarly, García Sánchez (2006) argues that in Juan, we find a king who never really grows up: he remains as immature and disposed to error in his middle age as he was in his teenage years.

at one another, and bemoan their grief and pain. It is a contrast that is designed to portray the king in an extremely unflattering light.

Juana's reactions to Álvaro's departire and later arrest allow us to see how an adequate protector would defend an innocent Álvaro. In the contrast, Mira demonstrates how Juan betrays his friendship just when Álvaro needed it the most. Juan's inaction in the face of Álvaro's arrest and downfall show how weak he has become, brought down by an intimacy that turned into a reliance, and that subsequently denied him the chance to develop his own ruling style and abilities. If the *comedia de privanza* often puts an emphasis on the education of princes, this example is no exception[82]. The conclusion Mira offers us here is that, at the tender age of fifteen, Juan learnt only to outsource the business of ruling to a favourite: never having learnt to stand on his own two feet in government, he becomes increasingly unable to rule alone, haemorrhaging authority as the *bilogía* progresses. Juan is incapable of recognising and fulfilling the expectations of his role as king: his priority is his role of friend. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the third act of *Próspera*, where Álvaro is knocked to the ground unconscious. Believing him to be dead, Juan states "que no quiero la corona/ si he de perder tal amigo" (ll. 1636-7). Juan will never learn how to carry out his role as king without his friend. As Álvaro lies unconscious on the floor, Juan heaps promotion after promotion on his friend to try to rouse him. It is the fool Pablillos who slyly suggests that "aunque oiga, ha de estar callando,/ porque le vayas llamando/ con más títulos" (ll. 1655-7). It is the title of "amigo" to which Álvaro finally responds; in keeping with Pablillos' satire, it emphasises that in Juan's Castile, the role of friend is the most powerful one in the land, and moreover, it demonstrates the flawed, dangerous nature of the "friendship" that exists between king and *privado*.

[82] It goes without saying that political literature of this period frequently had as its aim the education of princes: it was for this reason that many of the *tratados* under examination in this study were dedicated to Philip III (Mariana's *Del rey*) or Philip IV (Quevedo's *Política de Dios*). They form part of the *specula principum* tradition of the Renaissance, through which the majority of political theory was disseminated.

Juan's problem lies in his total lack of political awareness, and his excessive intimacy towards a single individual. His tendency to over-reward is symptomatic of these twin flaws. In a telling moment with the king at the end of the first act, the king forgets that he has given the city of Ayllón to Álvaro, prompting the shocked reply "¿Tu merced olvidas?" (l. 904). In contrast to Álvaro's minute tallies of favours, the king responds that where true friendship exists, you do not keep tabs on individual favours and presents; Álvaro cynically replies "Sólo se debe acordar/ quien ve que el que no recibe/ desagradecido vive" (907-9). It demonstrates the contrast between the two men and their attitudes towards reward. Juan, lacking as he is in political ability, and who only cares about friendship, does not even know exactly what he gives away. Álvaro, on the other hand, will keep tabs on exactly what he gives to whom, in order that their gratitude will ensure service in the future. Álvaro has a better sense of the political ramifications of reward. Indeed, this is demonstrated by Juan's failure to learn the lessons of Álvaro's first brush with the envy of the grandees at the end of the first act of *Adversa*. The grandees approach Juan to express their dissatisfaction at Álvaro's amassing power and positions. They appeal to the king "Señor, el reino intenta" (l. 701), implying that such is the extent of his power, he may as well be ruling it himself. They conclude "En justa razón hallo/ que importa más un reino que un vasallo" (ll. 707-8). They present him with a document, appealing for the *Condestable*'s expulsion from the realm. The king is pitched into turmoil. His concern, however, does not seem to spring from political concerns:

> Confuso estoy. ¿Que pida
> el reino tal crueldad? Si de mi vida
> es la mitad. ¡Ah cielo,
> el consejo me falta y consuelo!
> Si no les satisfago
> su envidia torpe, mi poder deshago;
> si a Don Álvaro pierdo,
> ni soy dichoso rey, ni amigo cuerdo.
> (ll. 733-40).

The speech is revealing in the way that Juan conflates friendship and statesmanship, demonstrating again the way in which friendship impinges on Juan's kingship: *consejo* and *consuelo* in his mind go together. For Juan, the role of friend and advisor are interchangeable; he sees the demands of his political kingdom as a personal cruelty. In suggesting that Álvaro constitutes his "second half", Juan echoes the language of the *arbitristas*. This is seen again in Álvaro's execution, when the infante suggests "Sentir debe el propio daño/ que era *otro él* el que muere" (ll. 2792-3). The friendship between them is therefore established in the most intimate of terms. However, they are images that explicitly equate the two men. As we have seen in the *Cabrera* diptych, this is manifestly problematic.

In Álvaro, Juan is incapable of seeing the distinction between personal and public. He is correct to identify, however, that jealousy is at the root of the problem, and to reach the conclusion that to keep Álvaro close to him is to undermine his own power. However, this insight does not alter his conduct. After his return, Juan's rewards become increasingly generous. Álvaro himself recognises the danger of so many rewards, and on many occasions attempts to dissuade the king from making grand gestures, acknowledging that the heaped rewards inspire envy amongst the grandees (e.g. ll. 2017-20). Typically, however, Juan is not to be persuaded, failing to spot the danger that his more politically astute *privado* can discern. Álvaro has learnt the lesson that Juan failed to. Although the rest of the court recognises that Álvaro is neither especially ambitious nor arrogant (*Adversa*, ll. 2082-90), they nevertheless recognise that the economic favours granted by the king are too generous. In the third act, the grandees come together once again, and Vivero, the king's *contador* tells the king:

> Gran señor,
> lo que siempre digo: presto
> no tendréis hacienda, y esto
> lo sé como contador.
> Mucho a Don Álvaro dais;
> todos los grandes lo sienten.

¡Plega a Dios, que ellos no intenten
remedios que vos sintáis!
Remadialdo como sabio;
rico está; basten, señor,
tanta amistad, tanto amor.
(ll. 2097-2107).

The stark claim that Álvaro's rewards will soon dispossess the king himself makes a clear point about the king's grandiose generosity. Although, just as in the first act when Álvaro is banished from Castile, the king recognises that jealousy is at the heart of the issue, he again finds himself powerless to do anything. As news pours in from all quarters of opposition to the *Condestable*, he knows he will be forced to punish him. In a scene of unusual pathos, the king cannot bring himself to look at Álvaro[83]. In a series of sad asides, he instead meditates on Álvaro's innocence, but in so doing, unknowingly hits on the crux of the issue: that his treatment of the *privado* is what led them here:

Si yo le di cada día
aun más de lo que él querría
mal usupara mi hacienda.
Si a todos piedad mostró,
que mis ojos son testigos,
¿como ha ganado enemigos?
Es envidia, culpa no.
(ll. 2146-52).

The similarity of his rhetoric from the first act is a sad reminder of his inability to take heed of the political lessons that have unfurled throughout the *bilogía*. It is left to Álvaro to elegiacally ask his friend and his king "¿Por qué me hicisteis dichoso/ para hacerme desdichado?" (ll. 2637-8)[84].

[83] García Sánchez (2005: 152) discusses the physical gestures of the king in this scene, and how they, rather than his words, demonstrate to Álvaro that something is amiss.

[84] In the signing of Álvaro's death warrant, Mira copies Poyo's original in having the Queen take Juan's hand and sign for him. Charles Oriel (1996) (see note 31 in Chapter 1 of this study) analyses this moment in the light of Derridean theory, where the written word is seen as metatheatrical. Where the king "makes" in this genre (as the above quotation suggests), it is in the written word, and in the seven characters he puts on the death warrant in his signing of it ("yo el Rey"), he also "unmakes": the written word becomes the vehicle of damage. However, in the use of the word "caracteres", Mira creates a metatheatrical field of reference, where once again the king is seen as author, thus again demonstrating the fictive nature of the *privado*.

Juan makes it clear that he is never going to stop rewarding his *privado*: when Vivero is accidentally killed by falling off a balcony, it is the excuse needed to accuse and execute Álvaro, in spite of his innocence. The manner of Vivero's death, and Álvaro's guilt is one of the biggest differences between Poyo's handling of the legend and Mira's. In both plays, the death is the mechanism that provokes the final downfall. Where in Poyo, we see Vivero murdered at Álvaro's own hand, who is therefore deserving of his final execution, in Mira's handling of the material, Álvaro is innocent of the crime. Poyo's Álvaro is arrogant, over-mighty and thoroughly unsympathetic: his final murder of his servant is final proof of this. On the other hand, Mira's treatment of the death, and indeed, the Álvaro character, is more nuanced. In having Álvaro pay the price for a death he played no part in, Mira leads the audience to question exactly why it is that Álvaro is left in a position where he is executed for the death: it leads us back to the envy of the grandees, and more importantly, their recognition of the damage that Álvaro is causing the realm. Vivero's death, in Mira's hands, throws light on the relationship between the king and the *privado*, and why it was that it was seen as so pernicious that Álvaro had to be removed at all costs. Mira does not criticise Álvaro outright in the way Poyo does. Instead he manipulates the story to reflect more meaningfully on the history between the king and the favourite across the two plays: the tragic conclusion, where both king and favourite are left bereft of each other, with a king unable to carry the weight of his own crown, and a favourite who, in spite of his best efforts, ends up falling, even though he attempted to create a network of *hechuras* who would save him in exactly such an event. It is Álvaro himself who, in his appeal for his life to the king, unknowingly states the problem that has existed between them all along: "son ya trienta y dos años/ los que os serví con lealtad/ más de amigo que vasallo" (ll. 2618-20). Their friendship, in spite of its execution on the most public of stages, was always enjoyed by the king in its strictly private function. Álvaro was not a *vasallo*: he was strictly an *amigo*, and as such, it prevented the king from learning good

government. Moreover, there can be no denying that Álvaro manipulated this: knowing the king would always grant him his wishes once he made them known, he manipulated the king into a marriage that was against his inclination in order to shore up his own position in court.

It is curious, then, that critics should view Don Álvaro in such a positive light: Feros goes so far as to claim that he is the perfect *privado* (2014: 133). He is certainly a more ambiguous character than Poyo's Álvaro de Luna, with both character strengths and weaknesses. We might attribute this to Mira's superior skill as a playwright, capable of crafting far more psychologically complex characters (take, for instance, Mira's Ruy López whose contrasting public and private conduct points to a complexity unseen in Poyo's drama). Whilst this will certainly play a part in our understanding of the play's eponymous protagonist, it is also clear that Mira's manipulation of the character is a final demonstration of how playwrights of the *comedia de privanza* crafted their plays to reflect the contemporary political context. The conduct of Mira's Álvaro without doubt speaks to the events that succeeded the end of Lerma's *privanza* and the shifting sands of the end of Philip's reign.

Álvaro has watched the events of *Próspera* carefully: at the end of *Próspera*, he had stated:

> Sírvanos de ejemplo grave
> la desdicha de Ruy López;
> mas el mismo condestable
> "obrar bien es lo que importa"
> dijo una vez. Semejante
> es mi parecer. Fortuna,
> o ya firme o ya constante,
> obremos y sirvamos.
> (ll. 1765-72).

Certainly, the first play's title, that emphasises Álvaro's role in spite of the fact that he enjoys relatively little stage time, is indicative of Ruy's role as *exemplum* for Álvaro, and the importance of his fall in the forming of Álvaro's *privanza*. He will go on to use Ruy's maxim "obrar bien" throughout the second play; however, it becomes increasingly clear that he does

not in fact understand the true meaning behind his words until his final execution, where he undergoes a process of *desengaño*. In creating a character who undergoes this process, Mira's characterisation and sophistication outstrips Poyo's first offering of the same story. Álvaro's initial understanding of "obrar bien" is that acting well towards others has a clear sense of transaction: to do others a good turn is a worthy pursuit not for its own sake, but because of the potential to get something back out of it. Álvaro seems to have noted Ruy's betrayal at the hands of those who are supposed to be grateful to him with horror- the main thrust of his attitude in *Adversa Luna* seems to be affording favours in return for loyalty, and doggedly reminding all those he helps of the gratitude they should be feeling. Castañeda neatly sums up Álvaro's main flaw: "Álvaro is often hopelessly ingenuous in not realizing that creditors, especially ones who constantly remind us of our debts, are not usually our most intimate friends" (1977: 55).

Throughout the *bilogía*, Álvaro is fastidious in creating *hechuras* of both his inferiors and superiors. Firstly, he is the promoter of his underlings and servants, Vivero and Robles, and he makes sure to remind them to whom they owe their loyalty. He tells Robles:

> …De tu lugar
> te he sacado y te he traído
> a mi servicio. Oy estás
> en el del Rey porque vas,
> de mi amor favorecido,
> medrando más cada día.
> Sin ser noble o principal,
> tesoro general eres.
> (ll. 333-42).

As part of the same conversation he calls over Vivero, telling him:

> También cabéis en mi pecho;
> su magestad os a hecho
> ya su contador mayor.
> (ll. 364-6).

Vivero's response is somewhat tongue in cheek: "Alexandro aragonés,/ Nuevo César, Nuevo Eneas/ católico Numa, veas/ tiempo y fortuna a tus pies" (ll. 367-70). He is oblivious to the disingenuous tone of his servant: "Esas lisonjas no os pido;/ mayores puestos espero/ que habréis de tener, Vivero;/ solo os quiero agredecido" (ll. 371-4). However, in spite of Álvaro's irritating treatment of his servants, he underscores a vital point. He reiterates repeatedly that all he desires in return is gratitude and appreciation. He is convinced that "Solamente es desdichado/ el que mal por bien recibe" (ll. 361-2). It reinforces a deep-seated fear, and explains his patronising but emphatic insistence on gratitude. Ironically, of course, it is his very insistence on the point that prevents him from keeping servants on side, even if he did put them in their high position. Meanwhile, in the woods outside the palace, Álvaro comes across the *infante* in trouble and saves his life. Although modesty initially impedes him from revealing his identity, once the game is up and the infante has recognised him, he immediately gets to the point: "Sólo quiero que agradezcas/ mi voluntad, porque yo/ hago bien sólo con esta/ ambición" (ll. 642-5). There is no evidence in the scene that Álvaro's calculation is such that he only helps in order to place the *infante* in his debt; once the action is performed, however, this is the first thing he thinks of. As far as the *privado* is concerned, it would appear, there is no such thing as a generous gift or action: every favour, every small act, is an opportunity for advantage and represents a debt in Álvaro's favour.

Although the *infante* assures Álvaro that he has no need to fear ingratitude, Álvaro tellingly replies "Sí temo, porque eres hombre/ y tal es su naturaleza" (ll. 695). Álvaro pays lip-service to his understanding of the frailties of man, but it is clear in his final fall that he did not actually believe it; he has not in fact learnt the stoic lesson that such a pronouncement would suggest. When his fall actually comes, he cannot believe that his strategy of building his own faction has not worked: Álvaro appeals to the queen in horrified desperation: "Yo os hice, solo en un día,/ majestad de señoría;/ reina os hice, ¡vive Dios!/ El ser me debéis" (ll. 2242-5). Although

he accepted his exile from Castile with a constant attitude (ll. 907-10), and attempted to reject his many promotions from the king, it is clear that he falls short of the sort of stoic hero other *privados* represent. Comparing Mira's Álvaro de Luna to, for instance, Lope's Payo de Guzmán, demonstrates just how misguided Feros is when he claims that "La doctrina estoica de sufrir los evites de la fortuna es la que guía a Don Álvaro" (2014: 133). Álvaro may believe that he is following a stoic philosophy, but his understanding of it was warped. Therefore it is only at the very end that he undergoes his *desengaño*:

> Bien sé que atalaya soy,
> que subí desde la cuna
> al monte de la fortuna
> y avisos al hombre doy,
> porque se guarde y asombre,
> diciendo con voz incierta:
> "¡Alerta, hermanos, alerta,
> no confiéis en el hombre!"
> (ll. 2891-8).

Before, Álvaro used the words associated with the moral message, but only understood them in the context of his personal gain and ambition. It is only at the moment of death that *paracer* becomes *ser*, and he is transformed into the proto-stoic he imitated throughout the play. He finally understands the true importance of the words he had abused all along[85].

He believed that by building up a network of people who are only in power because of him (not unlike Lerma), he would make his position unassailable; by being facilitator to the powerful, he will become powerful himself, and that to counteract the envious nobles of other factions, his newly promoted, powerful friends will protect him. It is a clever scheme in theory, and recalls the image of *privanza* as a tree from the *Cabrera* plays. He used the *árbol* of

[85] William R. Blue (1989) argues that the function of this *comedia* is to ask the audience to judge the action on stage. The conflicts that we see, we must eventually conclude, are not those *between* characters, but those that instead exist *within* them. However, the death of Álvaro at the king's hands invites us to question the partial nature of judgement, both on stage, and our judgements as readers. "The critic's decision to judge the moral, tragic, or political messages of the play is also an act of favouritism", he concludes (149).

privanza for strictly personal gain. However, in this second *bilogía* the image of the tree takes on a new meaning. It is Ruy López in *Próspera* who unpacks the image's real meaning in these plays:

> Bien dicen que el hombre es árbol:
> hojas y flores produce,
> su belleza son los ramos,
> sus riquezas son las flores,
> compitiendo con los rayos
> del sol y los arreboles
> de las nubes del ocaso
> en colores y hermosura.
> Sopla el cierzo, sopla el austro
> y antes de llegar el fruto,
> pimpollos verdes y blancos,
> derriban en la campaña
> verdes blasones de mayo.
> (ll. 1491-503).

Álvaro and *Cabrera*'s Don Lope understood the tree as a chain of promotion in order to prevent their own fall. They failed to see it as an image of transience. By crafting Álvaro's character trajectory across the two plays in a perfect arc that ends with his final understanding and assimilation of the true instability of luck, and the necessity to rely only on God, Mira's plays achieve a unity that goes beyond Poyo's own attempts. They may reach the same conclusion, but Mira's handling of the Álvaro character and his development is infinitely more effective.

In his repetitive dwelling on the transitory nature of fortune and the frail, unreliable nature of man, Mira's *comedias de privanza* thematically look very similar to Poyo's original *comedias*. His use of the *bilogía* means that his offerings structurally appear most similar to those early works also. Equally, in his use of the dual trajectories of two *privados*, his works may superficially look similar to their predecessors. However, Mira does not merely produce copies of the earlier works. By decoupling the trajectories of his protagonists, and making it so one's rise and fall is not dependant on the other, he is able to focus on the moral message of his plays more effectively than Poyo's originals. Moreover, although thematically similar, they

demonstrate one of the key features of the genre as it has developed in the twenty years that have elapsed since Poyo's first examples: the ability of the *comedia de privanza* to capture and explore contemporary court politics. Where Poyo's Álvaro de Luna story spoke strongly to the opening of the Lerma regime and his rapid enrichment in the face of vast tax increases, Mira's manipulation of the Álvaro de Luna story reflects the political uncertainties of the end of the regime. A sound *privado* and malleable king should have been able to make their *privanza* work; the tragedy here is that it did not. Implicitly, the play comments on the system of chains of patronage and favouritism by having Álvaro's collapse around him.

Cotarelo (1893) and Kennedy (1948) both date this play to around the time of the execution of Rodrigo Calderón in 1621, a vastly unpopular emblem of the Lerma regime, representing the corruption that dogged Philip III's court. As Lerma's right hand man he was part of a chain of favourites himself, promoting others behind him. His corruption—including promotion of his friends and family and personal enrichment (by 1607 his personal wealth had already exceeded that of most of the old nobility (Feros 2000: 186))—made him particularly vulnerable after Lerma's fall in 1618. He was executed at the hands of a rival faction at the start of Philip IV's reign, thus attesting to the "ruthlessness of the patronage system and the vindictiveness of the 'outs' when they became 'ins'" (Lynch 1992: 36). Feros suggests that although the cruelty of Calderón's execution was seen as excessive and a sour tone upon which to open a reign, it nevertheless served as a moment of cleansing, where the old regime was shown as one of utter political corruption, as a dark age and a reign of wasted opportunities and decline (2000:258). Calderón had been arrested in 1618, on Lerma's fall, but as long as Philip lived, his fate hung in the balance. He was finally executed three months after Philip IV's accession, representing "the propitiatory example of the new king's commitment to justice and the restoration of the monarchy's former glory" (2000: 257).

Álvaro's fate attests more to the ruthless struggle for power between factions that emerges when *privanza* becomes a way of rule, and it puts the strength of the king at the heart of that struggle in a way that very much speaks to these later years of Philip III and the start of the sixteen-year-old Philip IV's reign. Seeing an executed *privado*, who builds up a chain of *hechuras*, and a young king who at the start of the plays is merely fifteen years old cannot help but bear an uncanny similarity to Spain at the point of Philip IV's accession. Mira's concerns are principally moral: the play emphasises the didactic, philosophical messages that are common to all *comedias de privanza*. However, he comments on factionalism and the education of princes in a manner that shows a sensitivity to his moment of writing. Moreover, we find in his work perhaps the strongest example of the clear boundaries that need to exist within government if a *privado* is also a friend. Juan's loss of autonomy and dereliction of his crown in the pursuit of his friendship with Álvaro provide stark lessons, and in his weakness, he provides a clear warning on the office of the king, as well as on the office of the *privado*. He uses a scheme of natural imagery in order to demonstrate the moral lessons of *fortuna voltaria*, but uses those same images—of smoke and transience—to make similar points about the office of the king. Moreover, in his deft handling of his source material, he is able to make far more convincing reflections on the didactic message that all *comedias de privanza* have in common- that God is the only stable, reliable force on whom we can rely. Whilst these plays may be the most similar to those originally produced by Poyo we still can see distinct manipulation and development, both to suit the political times and a more nuanced presentation of similar philosophical concerns.

Mira's diptychs, therefore, and their structural similarity to Poyo's work, reveal the developments that have occurred in the time that separates them from these initial efforts. We find the ideas and questions first posed in Poyo's work—such as friendship in court, generosity of rewards, the value of constancy and the process of *desengaño*—nuanced and reformulated

in Mira's. Moreover, in his use of the images of mutability and transience, we find the full poetic expression of the neo-stoic message the *comedia de privanza* never fails to emit. Finally, they demonstrate that as the reign of Philip III has progressed and developed, each stage of Lerma's *privanza* has been reflected on stage in the *comedia*: Mira's retelling of the same story of Álvaro de Luna in a completely different way that reflects the political concerns of the end of Philip's reign is testament to this. Mira's continued probing and development of the quandaries around the issue of *privanza* show development and a continued ability for the genre to remain contemporary to historical and intellectual developments. Moreover, these plays show that by the end of Philip's reign, the *comedia de privanza*, as a genre with its own distinct plots, images and philosophical concerns, was well established. Mira's decision to copy the Luna story and reformulate it is evidence of this. Mira's work therefore cements the features—both formal and philosophical—of the genre as established by Poyo, but demonstrates the maturity and development of ideas that grew between the start of Philip's reign and its end. The features of Mira's *comedias de privanza*, therefore, are their similarity to Poyo's originals in terms of structure, but also their increased poetic and moral sophistication, imitating and innovating in equal measure. Moreover, their presentation of friendship represents the finest, most complete exploration of the issue in the genre. He takes Poyo's initial plays, furnishes them with greater characterisation and poeticism, and thus equips them to reflect the concerns of the end of Philip III's reign and the start of Philip IV's.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to fill a gap in existing *comedia* scholarship. The *comedia de privanza* has long been overlooked or neglected by scholars of the Golden Age stage. Where studies do exist, they have analysed these plays in relation to larger thematic questions (such as Gutiérrez's study on Fortune, or MacCurdy's emphasis on tragedy). Moreover, these studies are far from exhaustive, and have tended to brand the plays they analyse as poorly executed and clumsy. This study has sought to redress the balance left by previous critics by exploring the *comedia de privanza* as a genre in its own right, teasing out the literary characteristics and thematic concerns that set it apart from other *comedia nueva* genres. In so doing, this study represents the first of its kind. It explores the genre from the moment of its creation, and seeks to demonstrate how it is approached by different playwrights subsequently, demonstrating the artistry of each playwright individually and tracing developments where they occur. Furthermore, it has shown the relationship that exists between these highly political plays, and the historical and political circumstances that may have inspired them. This includes the reflections of contemporary political thought that can be found within the *comedia de privanza*. Indeed, the oblique parallels the study has revealed are the most far reaching of any work examining the *comedia de privanza*. The study therefore succeeds in taking plays that are almost entirely unknown and shedding light on their complexities, both individually and as part of a wider literary genre.

Inevitably, however, this approach has disadvantages. Whilst it remains unclear quite what evidence there is for the repeated assertion of previous critics that Poyo's examples of the *comedia de privanza* were the first of their kind, this study has been unable to find any further evidence to prove this beyond doubt. Thus it has been forced to rely on the contentions of previous scholars. This has been exacerbated by problems of dating. Moreover, it is impossible to prove the extent to which the playwrights under examination in this study were influenced

by Poyo *per se*. It has demonstrated that at the very least, they were all aware of Poyo and his work; at this distance, however, we can only speculate. The similarity of these later works to Poyo's first examples, however, demonstrates that even if they were not imitating Poyo directly, they were nevertheless building on and developing a genre that Poyo instigated.

Moreover, in literary terms, there is inevitably overlap between the images, symbols and motifs used by the playwrights of the *comedia de privanza*, and those employed more broadly throughout the Spanish Golden Age. However, the study has shown that the *comedia de privanza*'s systematic use of images of mutability derived from nature, with an emphasis on cycles, furnishes this common set of symbols with a political flavour. If this genre borrows from wider literary fashions, just as it borrows from the intellectual ideas of the *arbitristas*, it does so in order to make specific points about the subject matter it seeks to explore: the political career of a *privado*. Use of images of transient luck may be widespread in Golden Age Spain, but in the *comedia de privanza* they are ubiquitous, and all employed to demonstrate the fragile fluctuations of favour and power in court.

This study has shown that *comedias de privanza* share formal and literary characteristics that make them distinct from other *comedias*: their structures are often shaped by the political careers of their protagonists, and the inclusion of paired protagonists, whose opposing luck often highlights this structure. They share a common set of poetic symbols, images and metaphors that illustrate shifting fortunes and neo-stoic values. Often these images are drawn from nature. Thematically, the plays share a common insistence on the frailty of man, and the necessity for reliance on God: protagonists often only reach this understanding through a process of *desengaño*. This emphasis is brought out through the themes of friendship, envy, greed and ingratitude. Taken together, the presence of these characteristics is enough to suggest that the *comedia de privanza* is a type of play that stands apart from other genres. Whilst not

all plays demonstrate all of these qualities, the use of a collection of them demonstrates a desire to evoke the sort of play that previous playwrights had written.

In identifying Salucio del Poyo's connections to the playwrights who took up ideas Poyo instigated, this study brings a new perspective to the analysis of the *comedia de privanza*. Poyo's plays set the tone for those playwrights that followed his example. Critics of Poyo's plays have argued that they are frequently poorly executed, citing such evidence as his unrealistic characterisation, and his heavy-handed and confusing plots, shoehorned into over-crowded scenes. However, the value of his plays should not be underestimated in their establishing of the characteristics that his fellow playwrights would go on to imitate. Each playwright took ideas from Poyo's first plays, whether consciously or not, and ran with them, copying and developing in order to serve his own purpose. Moreover, his subtle allusions to the start of Philip's reign and the parallels of his ideas with those of the *arbitristas* of the age constitute the nascent examples of a genre that will be defined by its engagement with the political world around it. However, on the whole, Poyo's work remains philosophical rather than political in thrust. The falls of both of his *privados*, in spite of their vastly different outlooks and behaviour in office, show the truth on which the genre will rest: a fall will always follow a rise, and the mutability of fortune is inevitable.

As one might expect of such a gifted playwright, Lope de Vega's examples of the *comedia de privanza* are more layered and complex. In literary terms we can see how his work follows on from that of Poyo: he has taken several features of the original *comedias de privanza*, but has furnished them with more complex images, and even subverts certain elements of Poyo's drama. Lope mixes the characteristics of the *comedia de privanza* with other theatrical genres and conventions. This demonstrates Lope's creativity and innovation and the constantly evolving nature of theatre in Spain's Golden Age. His plays, with their poetic unity, constitute

some of the finest examples of the *comedia de privanza*: in Payo de Guzmán we find the poetic epitome of neo-stoicism, and in Doña Sol and her *fuego* we find the most compelling set of images for the destructive force of bad advice. Lope's work is characterised by a clear political engagement with court, born from his position as outsider; his works reflected the times at which he was writing during the court's move to Valladolid. His work demonstrates his relationship with the court and courtiers at the time, and his plays are inevitably full of a more pointed political commentary than Poyo ever achieved, and indeed, to a greater degree than many of his contemporaries.

Vélez de Guevara's own relationship to Lerma's regime impelled him to produce works of even more ingenuity. He and Lope may have shared a patron in the Duke of Lemos, but where Lope was court outsider, Vélez's *comedias de privanza* engage much more meaningfully with the faction, producing works that we know were intended for performance for the Duke of Lerma himself. The political nature of Vélez's work is therefore much more intricate. His creation of *comedias de privanza* that appear to be *comedias de capa y espada* shows how individual playwrights' personal circumstances influenced the development of the *comedia de privanza* as a genre. In Vélez's work we find the most revealing cases of the close relationship between court and *comedia*: Vélez's fraught position in the power struggle of the end of Lerma's *privanza* is captured by the shifts of power we see in his plays. Although in form his *comedias de privanza* seemingly eschew the precedent set by Poyo, in his weaving of the thematic concerns of the *comedia de privanza* into his subplots, and his use of the recurrent imagery typical of the genre, we see his clear contribution to the *comedia de privanza* model.

Mira de Amescua's drama look more similar to Poyo's original examples, in his return to the *bilogía* structure, and the exploitation of the Don Álvaro de Luna story. However, his imitation allows us to discern the ways in which the genre has developed in the years between Poyo's

first *comedias de privanza* and Mira's later attempts. His presentation of friendship in court represents the finest exploration of the issue in the *comedia de privanza*, thanks to his multi-faceted approach. In addition, he uses these friendships to expose the neo-stoic themes that his *comedias de privanza* emphasise. Moreover, in his handling of the imagery of the genre, we see how Poyo's first attempts have come to full poetic maturity by the end of Philip's reign. His rewriting of Poyo's Don Álvaro de Luna story is compelling for his manipulations of the source material: he has managed to reflect the tensions of Philip III's own court at the end of his reign, where Poyo reflected those at the start. Mira's work, especially when compared to Poyo's, shows how the *comedia de privanza* is defined by its close relationship with contemporary political events of Philip's reign.

Across all four playwrights, therefore, we see a clear set of common features, established by Poyo and taken up by others. In its development, we see how like the *comedia nueva* more generally, it has undergone refashioning and innovation in order to suit the desired ends of individual playwrights. The plays under consideration here have been chosen in order to demonstrate this: their variety shows the richness of the genre, whilst their commonality represents its unity. They come together in broad, common philosophical and political conclusions: man can only trust in God, kings require advice, and the *privado* must be of incorruptible character. However, the sheer range of variety of plots, sub-plots, forms and features used by our playwrights to reach these broad, common conclusions is noteworthy. Even when drawing upon common characters and legends, such as Álvaro de Luna, we see changes in nuance and emphasis that betray development in engagement and ingenuity.

Taking these playwrights and their work together, we can see the breadth and depth that was achieved by the *comedia de privanza* in the short span of Philip III's reign. Whilst sharing characteristics in common, each playwright took the genre in his own direction, developing it

according to his own tastes, abilities and circumstances. However, what this study has demonstrated is that the features these plays that deal with the *privado* have in common is more than enough to constitute a genre in its own right, that we can understand as a whole. Previous understanding of *privanza* on stage, which is analysed only as a discrete sub-category with the work of single playwrights, or as part of broader history plays, has failed to capture the poetic, structural and philosophical breadth that the *privanza* theme gave to plays in the Spanish Golden Age. Moreover, it is a genre that has profound parallels with contemporary political thought and events in court. This is an acutely political genre, that cannot help but inform our understanding of *privanza* and its reception in Spain in Philip's reign. The stage, as well as the tract or the archive, can give us insight into how Spaniards viewed their own political situation and the intellectual concerns it raised. These plays represent an important part of the intellectual thoroughfares of Philip III's reign. Attempting to understand them in isolation from either the ideas of political thinkers, or the events in court at the years of their creation, is therefore to deprive them of important context and to rob them of their considerable force, for it is in their ability to participate in these dialogues that their meaning is found. That said, however, it is equally wrong to attempt to shoehorn these plays into a particular stance on the issue of *privanza*: their aim is not necessarily to criticise or praise the office, Philip III or Lerma: instead they explore the moral, philosophical and constitutional boundaries *privanza* sets up. Most importantly, the *comedia de privanza* demonstrates the richness of the practice of the *comedia nueva*; the stage was the *imago mundi* of Golden Age society, and in its portrayal of *privanza* it demonstrated Spain's acute self-awareness as well as its outstanding theatrical tradition.

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