Pedro Calderón's Segismund and Pierre Corneille's Don Rodrigue Revisited through a Hegelian magnifying Glass

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Among the many comparative standpoints from which the main character of Calderón's *Life is a Dream* and that of Corneille's *Le Cid* may be assessed together, most show strong similarities between Segismund and Rodrigue, as if the two were brothers. But we can see a strong contrast when we set both protagonists in a Hegelian framework where the independant conquest of self-identity constitutes the final stage of a long and painful process. Segismund and Rodrigue will be compared on how each relates to authority: that of religion, of the father figure, of the king, of moral rules and of rational thought. According to Hegel's principles, Segismund, though he solves his personal conflict, does not qualify in the quest for rational freedom whereas Rodrigue succeeds in leaping to the status of a Modern. His struggle bring him higher in the ascending hierarchy of Absolute Knowledge. At the end of their respective ordeal, they do not live in the same world.

Such a particular judgment is not to be found literally in Hegel's writings. As R. D. Winfield sums it up, generic features interest him more than individual works. He does not study this or that masterpiece as a contingent assertion of genius but as sign of the progress of reason in history[1]. In fact, the only plays analysed with some continuity are Shakespeare's[2]. He clearly enjoys English baroque plays while he is not seduced by Spanish drama in general (which he could not read in the original) nor by the *rigidity* of the French classical plays[3] (though he read and wrote French). So the discussion

presented here takes its concepts, categories and arguments from Hegel's central works on the construction of the Self and on the logics of the progressive deployment of truth along some highly defined moments in universal history. Therefore, if this claim is shown to be wrong, I shall take the blame.

I. *La Vida es sueño* and *Le Cid*: Two Sister Plays?

In a contextual sense, yes. The authors' life spans overlap widely: Pedro Calderón (1600-1681) by six years Pierre Corneille's senior (1606-1684). In Hegelian terms, they shared the same European *Zeitgeist*. But was there such a thing as a European culture at the time? Both were born outside the ruling class[4] which was the ancient high nobility of their respective countries and had to gain an access to the royal court through the recognition of their talent. And precisely, for each of them, the plays we examine here, coming after twenty some works of youth, did bring them royal esteem, public admiration and social prominence, that is to say: sudden glory. Among the plays by Calderón and Corneille often revived nowadays, these two are standards. They are also the most commonly studied in university programmes, in short, the most clearly identified with their authors who had much in common.

Both were from staunch Catholic families. They were trained in excellent Jesuit colleges, ensuring that they had a thorough knowledge of the ancient classical (Greek and Latin) philosophy, law, poetry and literature; both had studied rhetoric as a defence against the discourses of Reformation. Calderón studied some theology and canon law at the Universities of Alcala and Salamanca; he was ordained priest at the late age of 51, obsessed to the end with religious values and destiny. He had been in the service of the

Duke of Infantado, then of the Duke of Alba. He saw no contradiction in acting also as a soldier (at the siege of Breda and at the battle of Fontarabie) and was ultimately promoted as chaplain to Philip IV[5] who appointed him to the Court in 1663. Though writing mainly amusing and light *comedias* --a genre mixing the serious with the comic, even the vulgar (*La vida es sueño* is a comedia)-- he periodically published works in the field of spirituality, the *autos sacramentales*.

Corneille became a lawyer at 18 and was practicing law in Rouen when he published *Le Cid*. He remained very much of a provincial when he moved to Paris. Also preoccupied with the future of Catholic faith: he published in 1633 a forgotten play on the Immaculate Conception of Mary[6]. His continued interest brought him to publish the four parts of an *Imitation de Jésus-Christ* (1651-1656), not as a theologian but rather as a counter-Reformation pious person, concerned with the weakening of the religious reference .

A meticulous, hands on, editor, he made use of several opportunities to revise and explain his plays in retrospect. In 1660, for the new edition, he wrote for each play a summary of the argument and an extensive scholarly *Examen* in defence of his choices, often referring to Aristotle's *Poetics*. That is how we know what he had in mind when writing *Le Cid*[7] which was labelled "tragi-comédie" in 1636 but changed to a "tragedy" in the 1660 *in octavo* edition: a perfect case of the cunning of Reason, as defined by Hegel.

It is obvious that these two playwrights had similar very successful prolonged careers: invited to court, pensioned, celebrated. In the thirties, Spain and France were looking at absolute monarchy. Thefore it is important that the king's authority, though challenged during the two plays, imposed itself in the end, as the best regime for the

people. In France, the rationalization of the realm as initiated by Cardinal de Richelieu is about to abolish the regime of local disparate customs in favour of new written universal laws. Sacralized royal authority shall apply directly to all French subjects down to their family lives[8], ignoring the intermediate traditional dignitaries and submitting the Church itself to the Throne, in accordance with the Gallican doctrine. Consequently, a strong resistance is exerted by the high and middle orders of the nobility.

No subject of the Crown is allowed to invoke a private i.e. clanic tradition against these royal laws. In 1627, after Richelieu had criminalized duels in order to stop the thinning of the aristocratic order, the count of Montmorency and the count des Chapelles ignored the law and fought in a duel. Louis XIII had them both arrested and executed. It seemed very audacious that just 9 years later, Corneille would structure *Le Cid* around the duty of private revenge through a duel. One year later, in 1637, René Descartes, also a bourgeois, was to publish --anonymously and hiding in Leyden-- his *Discourse on Method*, promoting rational simplified procedures to reach universal truth, regardless of philosophical tradition and of the thinking subject's social circumstances. In theory, the unicity and accessibility of truth seems ascertained, while the status of the "intellectual" becomes less secure.

In parallel, both plays are about fights, uprisings, killings. Worse, *Life is a Dream*, presents us right on the stage with a homicide and a near rape which go unpunished. It does not apply the French drama *Code des bienséances*[9] banishing brutal acts from the stage and replacing them by polished and vivid narratives (as we see in *Le Cid*, in *Horace*, etc.) in imitation of Seneca and of other classical writers, furthermore imposing

the "noble language" to all characters. The stilted effect is probably what brought Hegel to percieve an unnatural remoteness in French tragedies.

Though the centralization of the Iberic peninsula under the kings of Castile and the correlative sacralization of the Monarch had started much earlier, it took a bad turn and, without a bourgeoisie to initiate pre-Modern modes of production, Spain entered economic decline. With the Duke of Olivares (as a kind of Richelieu) at his side, Philip IV could not fill the treasury which he had found empty. Consequently, during the reign of the two last Spanish Habsburgs under whom Calderón lived, they lost Northern territories in the Low Countries, the province of Artois which went back to France, and the Roussillon beyond the Pyrénées, also taken by France, plus the Franche-Comté, on the opposite border. In 1668, Portugal seceded from the Spanish Crown through the Treaty of Lisbon. The ruling order of high nobles became more arrogant than the French[10] and exclusively employed in the army. And to add injury to insult, after Charles II's death in 1700, the same French will install a Bourbon king on the Spanish throne.

Returning to our playwrights, one could say that they lived in a transitional time and that their respective plays mirror the external reorganization. Certainly, the socio-political XVIIth century background in Italy or in Austria, for instance, would have been too much fragmented to provide an interesting comparison. France and Spain are structurally much closer, though there is no Spanish Descartes... In its place, we observe the collapse of the neo-Platonic ideals, of the anthropology promoted by Luis Vives and by Erasmus at the Renaissance: a good ground for the metaphysical disorientation which affects Segismund. Calderón knew Francisco Suarez' *Disputationes metaphysicae* (1597).

Its seasoned scepticism seem to block the philosophical horizon in the same way that the King's authority surreptitiously begins to crumble.

Though Corneille was later to write two plays about problematic identities[11], it is more interesting to compare *Life is a Dream* first published in 1635 with *Le Cid* of 1636. Assuming that the readers are well aware of the argument of Calderón's play, I shall sum up Corneille's *Le Cid.* It is a difficult task because there are too many events packed into one play. In that sense, we deal here with a pre-classical work, still baroque and even picaresque in many ways[12], especially if one takes Jean Racine's static, monothematic plays as the paradigm of French classicism. The first, down to the battle, can be enclosed within the semantic triangle of Honour/Love/Fidelity explored by Hegel in the chapter «Chivalry» of his *Aesthetics*[13]: all possible cobinations of conflict or of support are represented and assessed for their dramatic power.

- In Seville, around 1030, (very young) **Don Rodrigue** is the only son of (very old) **Don Dièguе**, a victorious and meritorious former chief of the armies of the **King Don Fernand of Castile**. Rodrigue is in love with **Chimène**, the only child of (middle-aged) **Don Gomes, count of Gormas**, current military chief. Their fathers agree to favour their marriage.

- The king chooses Don Dièguе against Don Gomes as instructor for his son, the prince. Don Gomes is furious and humiliated. Meeting Don Dièguе on the street, he says that the king was mistaken: this appointment should have gone to himself. "However great his is, a king may be/ as human and as fallible as we"[14]. A blasphemy announcing that Don Gomes will die. A quarrel quickly arises between past virtue and current virtue. Don Gomes slaps old Don Dièguе in the face. Don Dièguе comes to Rodrigue and demands

that he challenges Don Gomes to a duel and kill him to restore the family's honour. This is the place of Rodrigue's famous stanzaic soliloquy where he balances the legitimacy of his love and personal expectations with the duty of bloody revenge:

> Pierced to the very heart
> By such an unforeseen and mortal thrust,
> The poor avenger of a cause that's just
> Compelled by unjust fate to play that part,
> I stand here stunned, and with a head hung low
> Yield to the fatal blow.
> How near it was, my heart's desire!
> Oh God! That pain again!
> I must take revenge for a sire
> Wronged by the father of Chimène![15]

Rodrigue implements the order and kills Chimène's father.

- Now Chimène has to claim Rodrigue's head. She calls for justice at the Court. But the king will not yield to her on the spot. He needs to gain time because Don Gomes was the first offender and because the Moorish enemies are near: he may need all the soldiers soon. Chimène and Rodrigue meet and show the tortuous logics of feudal revenge they have to carry out while their love grows more intense. Chimène admits that Rodrigue had to venge his father. He exercises and justifies revenge but she demands justice from the king: two radically different mind-frames. In this exchange, Rodrigue announces that he will go and fight the Moors hoping to die at war. He is proud of her fight for her honour which calls for his own death. Chimène refuses that he just be killed by her hand, as he proposes. She wants to love a hero who fights for his life and his country with glory. So she calls for his death and at the same time fears it deeply, contemplating suicide if Rodrigue were to die. They both struggle against their passion in the name of their respective glory.

- Without royal permission, Rodrigue quickly gathers a militia and defeats the large army of the Moors at the mouth of the river during the night following the duel. He returns to

Court the next morning and narrates the battle in a piece of bravura called «The battle against the Moors»:

> Sire, under me those warriors now
> Moved forward, stern resolve on every brow.
> We were at first five hundred, but before
> We reached the port we'd gained three thousand more,
> For, seeing us march by, assured and strong,
> The most unnerved took heart and came along[16].

The king and Chimène are happy with this outcoming. But Chimène renews her demands for justice. **Don Sanche** who secretly loves Chimène proposes another duel of private justice: she will have to marry him if he wins. Of course, Rodrigue defeats Don Sanche but without killing him. The king Don Fernand finally asserts his views as orders: 1. Rodrigue will go and fight the ennemies of Spain to the North during one year. 2. The Crown will tolerate no more duels. 3. Chimène's feelings should calm down and she may eventually marry Rodrigue in the future. 4. Matters of State are pressing and transcend personal feud. The case is closed. End of the play

Now when we put the two plays in parallel, at first sight, we see two inexperienced young men show private undisciplined behaviour. A major conflict with their respective fathers will make mature men out of them.

Both authors have situated the action in a foreign country, and for Corneille, in a distant period of history. It is really surprising that a great reader of Corneille like Richard Wilbur should take seriously the official time setting of the play and comment on the characters as feudal knights of an early Spanish warrior culture.[17] Like all the commentators I came across, I hold that the places chosen just amount to a political precaution and the obligation to create a distance and a grandeur, according to the new canon of classical drama. Bernard Sesé writes: "In the kingdom of Poland, the effective principles are exactly those governing the XVIIth century kingdom of Spain.The reigns

of Basil and of Philip IV are similar in this: the social hierarchy is the same, founded on a monarchic order which no one questions; the royal persona is sacred, reflecting the Divine; minds and behaviours are governed by the same authoritarian code of honour as the one ruling the Spaniards of the Golden Age"[18].

Similarly, he characters *of Life is a Dream* behave like the XVIIth century high dignitaries at the Court of Philip IV and conversely, Rodrigue is a French aristocrat of the time of The Musketeers. Corneille had never been to Spain and he knew more about Ancient Rome than about Mediaeval Europe. In XVIIth century Europe.. And certainly, the two historical Polish kings from the Jagellonian branch, Zygmunt the Elder (1506-1548) and his son Zygmunt II Augustus (1548-1572) who held an Italianate court in Crakow, had nothing in common with Basil and Segismund. No author of the XVIIth century cares for historical truth. Calderón and Corneille are no exception.

To sum up, *prima facie*, we see a marked convergence between the two plays. A fictitious time and place framework; two young male protagonists who have not yet tried their energy at construing their social *persona*. They have been trained to respect authority in religion, in the king, in their father (especially when the last two merge in one single character), and in moral law. We don't know their age nor what their physical appearance is; they have no mother, no sister. Both fall in love in a committed personal way with woman they will not marry; this suffering is caused by the father-figure's behaviour. After deliberation, each will choose duty over passion and find some peace. As each renounces violence, they are said to have reached a deeper humanity in surmounting the ordeal. We even find that Rodrigue's stanzaic soliloquy has an equivalent in Segismund's lament of verses 112-182. Finally, to those who point to the

difference of length -- *La Vida* 3 319 lines versus *Le Cid* 1 906[19]-- it can be replied that the French alexandrine (dodecasyllabic) verses have 12 syllables whereas the Spanish verses vary from 7 to 10. The compensation yields 357 lines and adds up to an equivalent 2263 for *Le Cid*... If Jean Camp uses the expression "Calderón, the Spanish Corneille"[20], we may see the two as sister plays.

II. Hegel's Doctrine of Modern Freedom: Segismund fails; Don Rodrigue passes.

The question is: what major difference is there between Segismund's and Rodrique's journeys from a kind of captivity to the degree of freedom each finally reaches?

The novelty and force of Hegel's books, which all state the same central theses seen from various perspectives (genetic, structural, historical, aesthetic) lies in his postulate that the path to absolute Truth or Reality or Knowledge is not a linear addition of intellectual atoms of science until the picture is complete. It is rather a global ACTION: an experience where senses, sensibility and rational judgment are all working their way on the ascending ladder to truth. This ladder has separate and distinct rungs. Final absolute truth cannot be figured out --neither by an individual mind nor by a society-- before it is (nearly) attained because the process of search is a **discontinuous** one: axioms and rules, procedures and values, beliefs and opinions, --all our acquired partial knowledge stratifies into organic worldviews. These types of consciousness are experienced as totalities, each inferior to the next one. There is a **necessary** sequence of totalities which means that none may be skipped, none can stop evolving. The force moving the whole structure, not unlike Aristotle's Prime Mover, is an impersonal and

independant Rational Agency, at work through ideas, of course, but also through emotions, particularly in artforms. Whether consciously or unconsciously, it brings to light contradictions and irrelevances showing that a particular worldview is exhausted and will collapse, like Ancien Régime France after 1750. Is it also the case of 1635 Spain, having exhausted its Golden Age?

Now, on an individual scale, the same syncopated progress of Reason is observed and it involves a **painful** struggle. Consciousness undergoes a crisis; it must break the mold and leap from one set of ideas/beliefs to a higher one, conserving the old fragments of truth in a new structure, according to a sequence of *moments* mimicking the phases of culture. As Charles Taylor comment puts it:

> (...) the fact that rationality is something man achieves rather than starts with means that man has a history. In order to come to clarity, man has to work his way with effort and struggle through the various stages of lesser consciousness. He starts as a primitive being and has to acquire culture painfully and slowly. And this is not an accidental misfortune. For thought and reason can only exist embodied in a living being (...). But the processes of life are unconscious (...) this transformation over time involves more than the ascent up a hierarchy of modes of consciousness. It requires also that man struggle with impulse and give a shape to his life which moulds impulse into culture which can express the demands of rationality and freedom.[21]

Hegel is convinced that ontogenesis (the becoming of individuals) must recapitulate phylogenesis (the becoming of the species). We find the first mainly in his *Phenomenology of Mind* (1807) and the second in *Lectures in the Philosophy of History (posthumous, 1837)*. Exemplifying his own dynamic theory, Hegel then integrates all geneses into the sum of Absolute Knowledge. No new content, then, but an analytic exposé using deductive operations culminate in the higher *Science of Logics* (1812-1816 in its first format) where all is accomplished and the Rational Agency comes to a standstill in its fully disclosed necessity. It is the end of philosophy.

But before the splendour of the *Science of Logics* was written, Hegel used the inferior narrative/descriptive approaches of phenomenology, which by nature carry a large proportion of contingency. The typology of *moments* in the shaping of individual consciousness is described in details and allows for an inquiry into the respective search of Segismund and of Rodrigue for self-identity. They have to act under pressure and think out the meqaning of conflicts. In a Hegelian framework, the clear recognition of self-identity is the final stage of a long and dramatic process. When the search begins, the posture is one of alienation where tensions, passions and contradictions are projected in the outside world. They are lived like effective events in a fragmented and opaque otherness. In Hegelian terms, such an otherness constitutes a deficit of being and of truth. Figuring and imagining are the main activities before this otherness can be recognized and transformed into some reconciled identity, unified under the rule of reason. The concrete dispersed experiences which will be conserved can finally converge. They are internalised in the knowledge of inner identity specific to the Modern subject: autonomy.

Let's consider the case of Segismund first. How does his relation to authority evolve during the play? Hegel's triadic pattern apply in the following way We discover the prince as captive in the woods, completely deprived of freedom, exiled from society and culture except for language and religion which were taught to him by the single human contact he gets: Clotaldo, his keeper. Through Clotaldo, the will of king Basil, Segismund's father, is implemented. The prince is totally ignorant of his identity, in a position where he is indoctrinated, manipulated, told about his own dangerous nature. His perception is completely pulled toward the outside world.

He embodies an extreme posture of Hegel's first moment on the path to liberation: an **alienation** nailing down consciousness to to the immediate range of sensations. There is no room for reason to manifest itself. Reason cannot introduce its painful but productive internal division, initiating the leap to a higher view, a different set of norms.

For now, Segismund is disposessed of his own judgment, of his own self, the prisoner of his impulses and feelings without the means to define their meaning. Religious faith acts as a escape. Of course, this dramatic situation designed by Calderón is improbable. We are not in the real world, here. The scene is intended to be an affabulation of some important principles, rather than a credible factual datum. We see that Segismund is not and will not become a "bon sauvage" like Rousseau's fabrication of the Enlightenment. The XVIIth and XIXth centuries[22] agree here to declare that the humanity in individuals emerges solely in society. Sigismund who claim to be a "A man of the wild animals, a beast/ among the race of men"[23] is much more polished than the real wild young man Kaspar Hauser, found in Germany, in the XIXth century who never mastered the use of the first person in grammar.

The unique source of authority "in this region banned to all"[24], Clotaldo, is external which defines the state of heteronomy. There is no sign of an exploration of his inner self. But there are emotional reactions, like the "Tyrannic master!"[25] spontaneously addressed to Clotaldo as the latter wants to send away Rosaura an Clarion, or the lament "Unhappy me! Oh! Miserable me!" followed by a cry to the supernatural[26], the only stable reference in his world: morally and metaphysically. Universal reason is inherent to mankind, according to Hegel. But in the case of naïve and immediate consciousness, when restricted to the private realm, it remains a simple disposition not yet activated but

unconsciously at work. We recognize the form of Sigismund's discourses adressed to Rosaura: this and that happened to me in the past and that's how I am here (meaning: that is what I am); I like this, I hate that; I am intensely unhappy and charmed by this strange "man"; I need God's help. Pure egocentric **subjectivity**, saturated with intensity but devoid of meaning. Such is the narrative identity, a lower form of self-knowledge according to Hegel. The mind is massively monochrome and unstable. It does not signify a unity as, according to Hegel, unity is always the result of a rational process. The first transfer to the Court belongs to this stage because it does not involve any knowledge or decision from Segismund. Much agitation, no progress except that he has seen his beloved again. But love alone does not and cannot make him free.

Now, as the character of Sigismund demonstrates very well, even at this low level of distanciation, there is the drive of life under the forces of anger and opposition, what Hegel calls negation, his major contribution to philosophy. It will open the way to the second configuration of the self through an appropriation of culture. The recognition of others as others, i.e. as free sources of judgment who have their own claim to freedom. From a Greek tragedy to discussions on fashion, the diffracted images of the self as mirrored in the symbolic world will collide and divide the mind: they differ in history and they differ with the apparent needs of the particular mind. The ego does internalize these tensions and tries to solve them through reflection: between the private and the social, between the anecdotal and the structural, between the religious and the philosophical, between art and science, between the juridical and the political, etc.

This amounts to the phase of **objectivity,** where experiences are of a radically different quality. It illustrates what the dialectic leap is about. In the course of the search,

suddenly, the terms of the problem change. The mind is not pursuing the same goal. Culture provides the subject with new tools. An authentic but partial self-repossesion composes a new environment. But freedom is not yet achieved because the axioms and criteria are borrowed from culture: obedience to religious rules, submission to the dominant social and ethical codes, to fashinable taste in art, etc.

At this stage we have a thinking subject who is "belonging" by choice but not yet "independant". The signs of heteronomy are very clear. I propose to understand Segismund's second transfer to the Court as corresponding to this configuration of objective consciousness. The prince is still governed by his father's and Clotaldo's morality which he masters much better. But he does not reach the point where he could rationally question this code and depart from it. In the end, he has shaped himself into an ethical king within the sphere of accepted norms. He continues to invoke God's help, exactly as in the first scene. And the play ends without him showing the freedom modernity was to propose.

And why is this? First because the wild long deprivation of freedom and self-confidence he suffered in his youth created a deficit in meaning and rationality which cannot ever be filled. The general argument of this play is the conflict between astrological determinism and personal self-determination which Basil denies in his son. Second, because his world's consistency, oscillating between dream and reality without a foreseeable reconciliation does not display a clear discourse to surmount this radical doubt. It is therefore too weak to support a decision to enter a painful and solitary ascent to Absolute Truth. Consequently, Segismund transfered his confidence to Absolute Reality promised by religion for the afterworld: he goes through a religious conversion,

not an intellectual journey, avoiding the examination of faith and religious authority. Finally, among the differences between his world and Don Rodrigue's, I am struck by the fact that two distict types of authority are combining in the figure of Basil: he is the father and he is the King at the same time. The son is overwhelmed; he cannot play one against the other. As son and subject, he must internalize this complex (and too close) node of authorities. He will be content to buy the stoic ideal of the primacy of duty over passion. He will most probably continue his father's enterprises with zeal and virtue. But his quest for freedom --which is not a failure but an interrupted process-- stops there.

In the Hegelian pattern, the third and last configuration of the dynamic self is the accomplishment of rationality in **Absolute Spirit/Truth/Freedom**. This requires a third leap. In the process, it also introduces a new and different separation within the Self: between impulse and ethical judgment, between ethical and political choices, etc. calling for a self-defining of the subject, including the elaboration of a new unified world view calling for new rules. Modernity resides in the will to rationalize society.

If we now turn to Le Cid to see how he fares in this narrow cognitive inquiry, we see that his world is more secularized. Therefore, when trying to define where his loyalty lie within a strict set of conflicting obligations, he looks exclusively into this life, or at suicide as an exit into nothingness. Don Diègue calls him to venge the honour of their blood as if they were in a symbiotic clanic milieu. He does not fully identify with that view. Already in the stanzaic soliloquy of Act I, Rodrigue is able to sort out his interests, his affections, his obligations each coupled with the binding force he recognizes to them. He can even anticipate pain. To clarify the situation (where he is called to kill a man), Rodrigue enters a reflective mode ("How I am torn apart!"[27]) and is already in the second

phase of the march toward rational freedom. It will be his first duel, his first social assignment. It should also be his first prowess to gain glory in the eyes of his beloved Chimène but because the man he has to fight is Chimène's father, it should cause the opposite effect. A most complex set of facts and of rules. In fact, we find here an analytic auto-biography which does not need the narrative.

So, early in the play, Rodrigue has succeeded in deconstructing some authorities: father, feudal order, king. Just as Segismund, he chooses to identify with his duty. But, later in the play[28], when he has vanquished all obstacles, a leap upwards occurs, triggered by the king who has had enough of these private family feuds. and wishes to implement absolute monarchy. Don Fernand opens a new worldview where the supreme norm is a modern novelty invented by Machiavelli: the Reason of State. Both Rodrigue and Chimène stop their deadly game and enter the new logics. As Rodrigue takes his office at the head of the royal army, he is pulling himself out of the chivalry rules. We can project the image of a transformed self-shaped person: a free and mature man.

From this Hegelian standpoint, *La vida es sueño* could be the final development of the type of baroque *comedia* initiated by Lope de Vega and must be understood as part of this *moment* in history. *Le Cid* is in a different position, as the first approximate expression of a new configuration: the classical tragedy. Sigismund is closer to Hamlet and only a distant cousin of Don Rodrigue.

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Index of Concepts:
Hegelian dialectics, Totality, Rationality, Discontinuity, Necessity, Leap, Subjectivity, Objectivity, Consciousness, Rational Agency, Freedom

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[1] Winfield, 1

[2] "It is a pity that Hegel did not apply his genius to a prolonged study of a tragedy by Calderón" in his long and prolix *Aesthetics* (Sullivan, 232). The same can be said of his treatment of Corneille' tragedies. He does mention *La devoción de la Cruz* and Le *Cid*'s title is quoted once (p. 570). Though he illustrates several of his arguments by calling in "the Spaniards" (p.560) and "the French" (in five cases) with some specific remarks (p.414, *pass*.).

[3] "Even in French drama it is often an arid honour, wholly abstract in itself, which is supposed to count as the essential interest." (Hegel, 560)

[4] Calderòn's family was of lower nobility. His father was secretary of the Council of Finance. He died in 1615, leaving a will which ordered Pedro to enter the ecclesiastical career (Pedro complied 36 years later). In 1621, Pedro and his brothers Diego and Jose were accused of murder and took refuge at the German Chancery to escape arrest. They were pardoned upon paying a compensation to the victim's family for which they had to sell their late father's public office. Corneille came from a milieu rising from bourgeoisie to lower nobility through public offices as lawyers: those who became a subclass as «noblesse de robe». His father had bought such an office from the Crown and had been elevated to the rank of «chevalier» in 1630. But the office was sold by his sons Pierre and Thomas as payment for a heavy fine. Pierre owed it to the royal favor for his literary talent that the new title was not withdrawn from the family.
bought an office from the Crown: it was to be sold by his heirs to pay for a fine.

[5] Of the Spanish Habsburg line, who was succeeded by the last of the dynasty, Charles II (1665-1700), also fond of Calderón's works.

[6] Absent from the so-called *Théâtre complet* we use here

[7] For instance, the fact that he had read in Juan de Mariana, *Historia general de España* (1592-1605) V.9, the relation of El Cid's duel which he quotes, plus Guillen de Castro's play of1618, *Las mocedades del Cid*, which he comments at length. Corneille also answers all those who had attacked *Le Cid* and opened the fierce "Querelle du Cid" (1637-1639) about having broken the new classical rules of the three unities: time/place/action. He quietly recognises that allowing 24 hours for the many actions involved is not enough:"Je ne puis dénier que la règ;le des 24 heures presse trop les

incidents de cette pièce" (I cannot deny the the time rule of the 24 hours sqeezes too much the events of this play). Corneille, vol.I, 703.

[8] The trend is to concentrate all authority within the family in the hands of the father: a regression to Roman law. Claire Carlin has examined the development between The Council of Trent and 1656. Rome has gained the support of Henry II of France in exchange for a concession concerning marriage: from 1563 and on, the consent of the parents becomes a formal condition for the validity of a marriage in France. (Carlin, 331)

[9] Calderón..., int.Souiller, p.XVII

[10] The French aristocrats were land owners and supervised agriculture which made the country self-sufficient.

[11] *Héraclius* (1646) and *Don Sanche d'Aragon* (1649)

[12] Corneille soon amended himself as demonstrated in the 1640 trilogy of *Horace*, *Cinna* and *Polyeucte*

[13] Hegel, 452-472

[14] Act I Scene III (transl. --in rhyming verses!-- Wilbur, used everywhere)

[15] Act I Scene VI: the first of the six paragraphs

[16] Act IV Scene III*;* this represents one tenth of Don Rodrigue's epic monologue.

[17] Pierre Corneille..., transl. Wilbur, 5

[18] Pedro Calderón de la Barca, int. Bernard Sesé (1996, p.38). He adds that this quiproquo is general practice, the basic convention defining the comedia at the time. Same view in Jean Camp: all the characters in *Life is a Dream* are "Spanish knights of the Court of Philip IV", *Dictionnaire,* 245

[19] That is 55,43%

[20] *Dictionnaire,* 244-247

[21] Taylor, 21

[22] For Hegel, in his doctrine of *Siilichkeit*. Cf. Taylor, 84

[23] Bentley, 225

[24] *Ibidem*, 227

[25] *Ibidem*

[26] *Ibidem,* 223

[27] *Ibidem*, 28

[28] Act V, Scene VI and VII