

DIVERSIFYING THE CLASSICS

To Love Beyond Death

Dramaturgy Packet

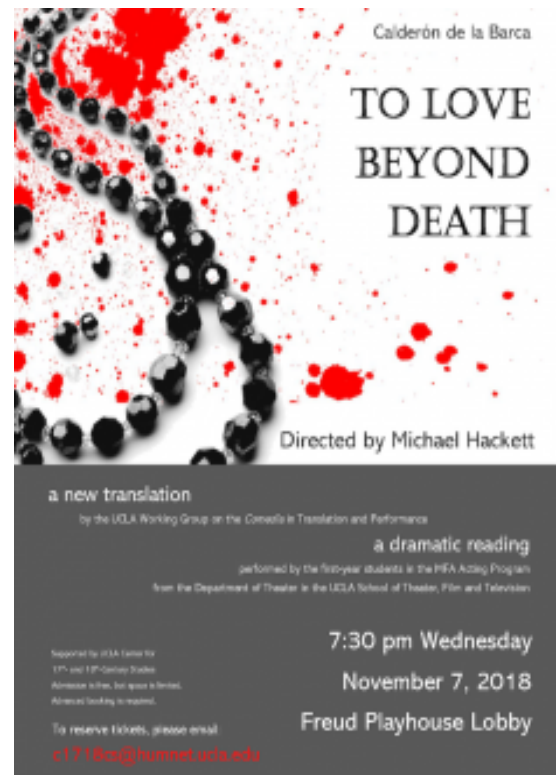
Compiled by Robin Kello

To Love Beyond Death

A play by Pedro Calderón
de la Barca

Set during the 1560s Rebellion of the Alpujarra, when the Crown attempted to eradicate all traces of Andalusí culture from Spain, *To Love Beyond Death* tells the tragic story of the Morisco Tuzaní's search for revenge after the death of his beloved Maleca. At the intersection of personal passion and religious difference, the play is as much about love and devotion as it is about civil war and the violent emergence of a modern nation.

Synopsis The Morisco elder Juan Malec tells his people that he was insulted by Juan de Mendoza, an Old Christian. Tuzaní, in love with Malec's daughter Clara, proposes marriage to her, but she refuses because she does not want to bring the dishonor of the insult into her marriage. Fernando Válor, a Morisco nobleman, and the local Magistrate suggest to Malec that his daughter marry Mendoza to cancel out the need for vengeance. Clara accepts the offer but secretly plans to murder Mendoza. Isabel, Tuzaní's sister and Mendoza's lover, visits Mendoza in jail, but hides when her brother arrives. Tuzaní fights Mendoza until interrupted by Válor and the Magistrate. Mendoza scoffs at the suggestion he should marry Clara because he thinks as an Old Christian he is superior.



Three years later, the Moriscos are rebelling against the Crown, and Mendoza warns Juan of Austria of the dangers of underestimating their Morisco enemy. He relates that Válor, now called Abenhumeya, is the new Morisco king (Isabel, married to Abenhumeya, is now called Lidora, and Clara is now Maleca). The Spanish soldier Garcés captures the Morisco Alcuzcuz, who promises to reveal a secret entrance into the Morisco camp in exchange for his life. Instead, he tricks Garcés and steals his food and wine. Garcés finds a natural mineshaft under the town of Galera, and Juan of Austria decides to attack the town. Maleca and Tuzaní's marriage is interrupted by war. Tuzaní goes to Galera to seek Maleca, who is there because her father is defending the town. Alcuzcuz, tasked

with watching Tuzaní's mare, gets drunk and lets it escape.

Old Christian soldiers besiege Galera, killing Malec and fatally wounding Maleca. Tuzaní finds her amid the rubble, and she tells him a Spanish soldier has killed her for her jewels. Tuzaní vows revenge and infiltrates the Old Christian camp with Alcuycuz to seek Maleca's murderer. He comes upon Old Christian soldiers arguing over the jewels that he had given Maleca at their wedding and offers to buy them if the soldiers reveal how they got them. Meanwhile, Garcés, suddenly at the center of a fight, kills a soldier. Tuzaní intervenes to defend the outnumbered Garcés. Tuzaní, Garcés, and Alcuycuz are thrown in jail. Garcés thanks Tuzaní for saving his life, but Tuzaní realizes that Garcés is Maleca's murderer. After eliciting a confession, Tuzaní takes out a concealed knife and stabs Garcés in the chest. Attempting escape, Tuzaní is then chased down by Old Christian soldiers and Juan of Austria. Isabel announces that Abenhumeya, her husband and king of the Moriscos, has been murdered by his own guards. She then surrenders the Alpujarra to Juan of Austria and begs him to pardon Tuzaní. Juan of Austria agrees, praising the undying love of the Morisco for his murdered wife.

Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–1681)

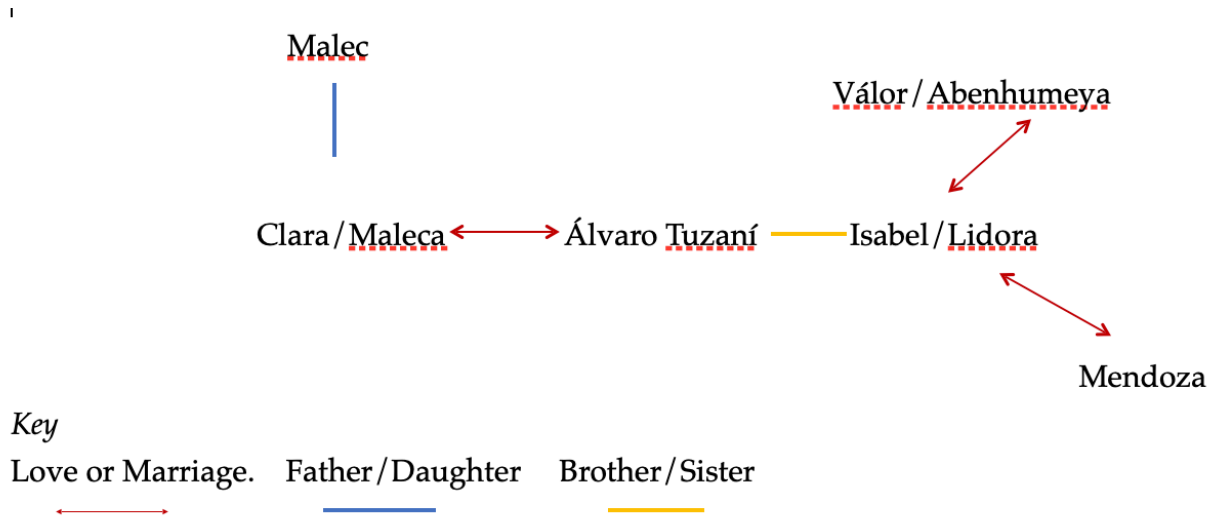
Calderón is regarded as one of Spain's foremost dramatists. Born into a noble family with a longstanding history of service to the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic Church, he served in the Spanish army and was made a knight of the Order of Santiago by King Philip IV before joining the religious order of Saint Francis and being ordained a priest. His expansive body of work marks the second cycle of Spanish Golden Age theater, when the dramatic forms created earlier by Lope de Vega were polished and taken to new heights. Calderón enjoyed the patronage of the Spanish court, and so was able to develop a more sophisticated stage machinery and design than his contemporaries. At the same time, his plays often dramatize Spain's political crises, such as the Morisco/Christian conflict in this play. Calderón's most famous play, *Life is a Dream*, deals with such philosophical topics as the power of human will against destiny, and the deceptive nature of appearances.

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Characters

Relationship Map



TUZANÍ

One of the Morisco leaders, he is in love with Clara/Maleca and takes revenge on Garcés for her death.

JUAN MALEC

An elder in the Morisco community, he is Clara/Maleca's father. The play begins with his recounting of Mendoza's insult.

FERNANDO VÁLOR, also ABENHUMEYA

A Morisco leader, he becomes their king during the rebellion, and marries Tuzaní's sister, Isabel/Lidora.

ALCUZCUZ

The *gracioso* (comic sidekick), he tricks Garcés and gets drunk on his wine, and is with Tuzaní toward the end of the play. Unlike Tuzaní, Alcuzcuz is marked by his poor Spanish and his class and would be unable to pass as an Old Christian.

CADÍ

A judge and religious authority in the Morisco community.

JUAN de MENDOZA

A noble Old Christian and military leader, he is briefly Isabel/Maleca's lover. His insult to Malec begins the play's action.

JUAN OF AUSTRIA	Half-brother to Philip II, the King of Spain, he is the leader of the Old Christian troops.
LOPE DE FIGUEROA	A noble Old Christian soldier who plots with Mendoza and Austria.
ALONSO DE ZÚÑIGA	Magistrate of the city during the first act.
GARCÉS	Old Christian soldier, eager for advancement. He murders Maleca for her jewels and is killed as revenge for her death by Tuzaní at the end of the play.
ISABEL, also LIDORA	Tuzaní's sister, she is briefly Mendoza's lover and marries Válor/ Abenhumeya, King of the Moriscos. At the end of the play, she surrenders to the Old Christians and her brother Tuzaní is spared.
CLARA MALEC, also MALECA	Malec's daughter, in love with Tuzaní, whom she nearly marries.
BEATRIZ, also ZARA	Morisca servant character who jokes with Alcuzcuz.
INÉS	Servant who announces to Isabel and Mendoza Tuzaní's presence.

Contexts

The Comedia Form

The *comedia* developed in Spain in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Though influenced by Italian *commedia dell'arte*, the Spanish *comedia* includes not only comic plays, but also histories, tragedies, and tragicomedies. Roughly three thousand lines, they are usually divided into three *jornadas*, or acts. Plots move quickly across time and space, without much regard for the Aristotelian unities of action, time, and place. The plays are written in verse

and employ different forms for different characters and situations. Hugely popular in their time, over ten thousand plays survive today.

Original Performance Conditions

The *comedia* was performed in rectangular courtyard spaces known as *corrales*. Built between houses of two or three stories,



the *corral* offered seating based on social position. A performance would have included the play as well as songs, dances, and *entremeses*, or short comic interludes, before, after, and between the acts.

Moriscos and Old Christians

Based on a story from Pérez de Hita's historical account *Civil Wars of Granada*, Calderón's play evokes the violent and complex religious history of Spain. Between 711 and 1492, Muslims ruled over much of the Iberian peninsula. Soon after the Catholic Monarchs Isabel and Ferdinand conquered the last Muslim kingdom of Granada in 1492, many Muslims were forced to convert, and became known as Moriscos. They suffered increasingly extreme repression throughout the sixteenth century, and an especially brutal crackdown on Morisco communities led to the uprising in the late 1560s which serves as the backdrop for this play. In the early seventeenth century, the Moriscos were expelled *en masse*, so Calderón is writing about a population which has largely disappeared from Spain.

Themes

The dominant theme of the play is religious and cultural conflict. Calderón's choice to portray an uprising that occurred nearly a century reflects the degree to which supposed Catholic uniformity remained troubled by its Islamic past—even though the Moriscos were Christian converts. Writing from the position of the victors, Calderón dramatizes the complexity of Spain's religious inheritance, and there is no sense here that the Old Christians are always in the right. Indeed, the later acts portray the brutality of the Old Christian soldiers against a Morisco "enemy" who wishes merely to defend their culture and the territory on which they had been living for generations.

Calderón's familiarity with that culture itself illustrates the enduring presence of a history that was being erased by the official ideological line in Renaissance Spain, which sought to erase its Islamic and Morisco past. For example, the character Alcuçcuz speaks in a broken Spanish that bears marks of his native Arabic, which demonstrates Calderón's knowledge of Arabic linguistic patterns. Likewise, Alcuçcuz is given moments of victory due to his cleverness, such as when he outsmarts Garcés and escapes with his provisions (including the wine).

The love of Tuzaní and Clara/Maleca—a force that goes, as the title has it, even beyond death—shows Moriscos the depth of their feelings, and their bravery and nobility throughout the play is undeniable. As a story of love amid religious war, the play dramatizes the commonality of passion across different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Isabel/Lidora's passion in the first act for Mendoza, though short-lived, likewise dramatizes an intercultural romance. The main difference in the play between Old Christians and Moriscos seems to be one of social and political power: the Old Christians are afraid of Spain's own Muslim heritage and see the Moriscos as Other.

The play is also less conservative than it may first appear in its treatment of gender. Clara/Maleca responds to the affront against her father (and by extension, her entire community) by plotting to kill the Old Christian Mendoza. Isabel, as Lidora, Queen of the Moriscos, saves her brother's life by admitting defeat to the Old Christians and surrendering. The Morisca women of the play are much more than wives and daughters in a patriarchal system. They are driven by tradition, honor, and love, and act on behalf of their hearts and their communities.

Challenges & Opportunities

Given its focus on Old Christian/Morisco conflict, this play demands careful attention to questions of representation and religious difference; it likewise offers an opportunity to dramatize questions of immediate political importance. The scenes with Alcuçuz, for example, provide the chance for a production to show a character who, despite his difficulties with the language of his colonizers, is much more than the butt of a joke. At a time when many in Europe and North America misunderstand and misrepresent Arabic Islamic cultures in particular, staging this play can open up dialogues about interfaith and interethnic relations. Even though it had ostensibly been eradicated, traces of an Islamic past were considered by many in early modern Spain to be a threat, and recuperating the voices of Moriscos was a powerful gesture in Calderón's time. By interrogating but not perpetuating stereotypes, modern productions of *To Love* can likewise serve as gestures against xenophobia in our own troubled moment.

Production History

Unproduced through most of the twentieth century, *To Love* returned with a 1993 production by Teatro Corsario of Valladolid. During a time of unprecedented immigration to Spain from North Africa, this production was a direct response to xenophobia in Spanish society. However, Corsario also evoked Spain's longstanding colonial presence in North Africa by setting their production in late nineteenth-century Morocco, when Spain quashed another uprising and confirmed its military control over the cities of Ceuta and Melilla. The relevance of this dramaturgical decision is clear: those cities remain sites of conflict and immigration crises today.

In 2005, Madrid's Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico (CNTC) also pointed to xenophobia as a perennial issue. Theirs was an especially tense moment in Spain, the year following a devastating terrorist attack in Madrid: on March 11, 2004, nearly 200 people died and another 2,000 were injured when Islamic extremists detonated explosives on four commuter trains during the morning rush-hour. The medieval kingdoms of Al-Andalus—as an integral part of Spain's identity on the one hand, and as an inspiration for jihad on the other—featured all too prominently in the national conversation. The CNTC opted to magnify the presence of Muslim characters and Islamic practices onstage, even when absent from Calderón's text, thus presenting an implicit plea not to repeat a discriminatory and reactionary history in the face of a national tragedy.

Pronunciation Guide

Each vowel in Spanish has just one sound. They are pronounced as follows:

a - AH e - EH i - EE o - OH u - OO

The underlined syllable in each word is the accented one.

Álvaro Tuzaní: AHL-VAH-ROH TOO-ZAH-NEE

Juan Malec: HOO-AHN MAH-LEHC

Fernando de Valor: DOHN FEHR-NAHN-DOH DEH
VAH-LOHR

Alcuzcuz: AHL-COOZ-COOZ

Cadí: CAH-DEE

Juan de Mendoza: HOO-AHN DEH MEHN-DOH-
ZAH

Juan de Austria: HOO-AHN DEH OVS-TREE-AH

Lope de Figueroa: LOH-PEH DEH FEE-GUEH-ROH-
AH

Alonso de Zúñiga: AH-LOHN-SOH DEH SOO-NHI-
GAH

Garcés: GAHR-CEHS

Isabel Tuzaní: EE-SAH-BEHL TOO-ZAH-NEE

Clara Malec: CLAH-RAH MAH-LEHC

Beatriz: BEH-A-TREES

Inés: EE-NEHS

Granada: GRAH-NAH-DAH

Galera: GAH-LEH-RAH

Further Reading

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