

Death: character in literature from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century

DARÍO ÁNGEL¹

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Abstract

With the aim of describing the change in the representations of the character representation of death between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries in the European literature, and from a research of type documentary, two types of texts are analyzed: the originals in which death appear as a character, and second, the literature arising from several international meetings on death in the Middle Ages. This work presents the change of perspective on death with several events that shape it: the rise of Renaissance humanism, with the antecedent of the work of Petrarca; the black plague that decimated a third of the European population, together with the last crusades; the Protestant Reformation and the Council of Trent which seeks to respond to doctrinal proposals and criticisms. The death and the moral sense of the character representation of death.

Keywords: Death character; Middle Ages; Renaissance; Sacramental Acts.

1. Prelude

The problem with addressing death is that it is not a phenomenon. That is, it is not something that can manifest itself to be interpreted or understood beyond the act of dying. It is not an epiphany of something. There is no something in death that is offered to anyone's experience.

This pitfall refers, first, to the body of the dead. If he who dies disappears, vanishes, the mythology of death would be different. But the corpse of the one who dies remains in the sight of the living and is similar to the way he was when he was still alive. And it is better to say that it is *similar*, because, depending on how a body is defined, what remains is not a body. It is the spoil of a body. It is a negative body. It is a hole that closes in the body of life. The corpse is not the body of the living being who died. It is only his footprint that erodes little by little.

1 Social communicator. Master in communication. Candidate for a doctor in Social Sciences, Childhood and Youth. Writer of narrative, poetry and essay. Professor and researcher at Universidad de Manizales. Email: darangelus@gmail.com

The second allusion of the discourses of death is the soul. Primitive animism, Greek animism of hilemorphism and Christian animism that copies Greek hilemorphism to deny death, are the same animism: death is an immortal soul to which a body dies. And by virtue of the immortality of the soul, it can reincarnate in any other living being or it can be left without a body to join the eternal life of the being that has no matter and that is the pure good or, according to Agustín de Hipona (Agustín, 2007), to be absolutely separated from that perfect presence, which for him was the denial of Manichaeism who believed that if he did not join the absolute good, he would join the absolute evil, which is a substance equivalent to that of the absolute good.

The hope of not dying with death is the origin of the stories about the beyond that are represented in goblins², geniuses³, diaños⁴, yōkais⁵, elves⁶, fairies⁷, sylphs⁸, ghosts⁹, demons¹⁰,

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- 2 They are supernatural beings that probably come from the gobels, from the German kobold, a kind of goblin, where the word goblin comes from, as diminutive, which refers to this type of goblins.
 - 3 The word comes from the Arabic yinn, and not from the Latin genius. They have their origin in Semitic mythology. They are usually invisible, but can be manifested under human or animal figures. They may have a mental influence, in the form of possession, on human beings, but often do not use it (Ascalone, 2008).
 - 4 It's the same devil. It is of Galician and Asturian origin and is related to the Martinique of Castile. It is a mocking spirit.
 - 5 In Japanese culture, they are spiritual beings between animal and human. They are more powerful than human beings and sometimes procreate with these beings that are half human and half demon (han'yō). Many of these stories begin as love stories, but they usually end with sadness, given the difficulties that humans face with the Yōkai (Pérez & Chida, 2012).
 - 6 Elves originate in the Germanic and Nordic tradition and have angelic characteristics. They are usually warriors, immortal, intelligent and beautiful. According to some authors, the tradition of dwarves and fairies comes from the Indo-European migration that in Germany took root as the mythology of dwarves, and in the world of northern France and Spain and in Wales and Ireland was embodied in the Celtic tradition in the legends of Morgana and Melusina (Harf-Lancner, 1989). In these legends, the elves may have been inserted in the Middle Ages with the Christian tradition of angels (Alarico, 2004).
 - 7 See the previous note.
 - 8 In the Celtic tradition of fairies, the Sylphs are made of air, are intelligent, subtle, do not react to feelings and do not feel. They are the males of fairies, they live in the wind, in thought and in flight (Harf-Lancner, 1989).
 - 9 The word ghost comes from the Greek φάντασμα, which means appearance. It is the way something is reproduced in the mind, it is the nou φάντασμα, which is the reproduction of something absent, in subtle form. In the tradition, especially British, ghosts come to a meaning that, for the purposes of this text, is key in relation to death, because they are usually spirits of someone alive who remain in time in a subtle way, waiting for to be released from some anchor to matter to definitely travel to the spiritual world.
 - 10 Word that comes from the Greek δαίμων. In Greece, the word did not have the meaning of the evil demon of medieval Christianity, which linked the meaning to the devil or Satan, whose tradition comes from the myth of Lucifer, whose meaning comes from Latin (lux, light; and fierce, carry), is That is, it is the angel that carried the light. This light, however, does not refer to the light of day, but to the light of intelligence, that is, it is the angel of science, and that angel is the one who rebels against God for his pride

zombies¹¹, tulpas¹², lycans¹³ and vampires¹⁴ among many others. The Celts represented them in the fairy tales *Melusina* and *Morgana* (Boia, 1997; cited in Harf-Lancner, 1989). Ghosts are reborn in America as frights. Souls reincarnate in Buddhism a finite number of times, in any living being. In Africa, they revive as protective ancestors. Medieval Christianity imagines a heaven, a purgatory and a hell. And throughout the world hundreds of thousands of hectares of cemeteries are occupied, where peculiar and universal dramas are lived.

In this way, discourses about death have three ways of approaching it. The first is to think of it as the end of individual life, without regard to the prolongation of life in a beyond, although it is created in eternal life and eschatological salvation (Aries, 1977). This is the least frequent and the least mythological and is the heir of humanism whose sources are Greek and Roman literature. The second is to think of it as rest, as an end to the pains and sorrows caused by sin because it follows the glory of a heaven of any nature. This form is what considers friendly death, like San Francisco at the time of death: "Blessed is my sister death" (Miter, 1988), or that of Teresa de Avila: "I live without living in me, / and I hope so high life, / that I die because I don't die" (De Ávila, 1986). The third is to assume it as a character that accompanies us in life and has the task of God or Destiny to take away this life and lead us to another that is beyond the crucial moment of death (Miter, 2002).

This company of death since it was born is, perhaps, the one with a greater mythical background and a more diaphanous moral sign. It is the companion death in life, which monitors and advises and puts all vanity into question. Death disdains power and glory and fortune. Here, the last form is approached, which is manifested in the literature from the Middle Ages to the Spanish Golden Age. This work is restricted to presenting the character death in the literature, in some samples that are not intended to be exhaustive, but that may indicate a temperament of the referenced times.

11 Zombies come from Haitian mythology and refer to the spirits that are revived by a sorcerer to make them slaves (Seabrook, 2005). The meaning of the word can come from Fúmbi = Spirit (Yoruba language, Cuba); mvumbi = invisible part of a man (Kicongo, Congo); ndzumbi = corpse (mitsogho language, Gabon); nsumbi = demon (Kicongo language, Zaire); nvumbi = A body without a soul (Angola); nzambi = The spirit of a dead person (Kongo, Congo); zan bibi or zan bii = the "coconut" (Ewe language, Mina, Ghana, Togo, Benin); zombie = Returned (the one who has returned from death) (Kikongo language, Bonda, Congo, Angola) (Ackerman & Jeanine, 1991). That return of the dead to life comes from the dual nature of who dies and who lives (Martínez-Lucena, 2008; 2010). el "coco" (lengua Ewe, Mina, Ghana, Togo, Benín); zombie = Retornado (el que ha regresado de la muerte) (lengua Kikongo, Bonda, Congo, Angola) (Ackerman & Jeanine, 1991). Ese regreso del muerto a la vida proviene de la naturaleza dual de quien muere y de quien vive (Martínez-Lucena, 2008; 2010).

12 According to Tibetan Buddhism, a tulpa is a spiritual entity that is created with thought.

13 The word comes from the Greek λύκος, lŷkos (wolf) + άνθρωπος, ánthrōpos (man). In The Metamorphosis of Ovid, Lycaon, king of Arcadia, was turned into a wolf by Zeus because this king wanted to serve his son's flesh for dinner, in order to distort the divinity of this god (Douglas, 1992).

14 Voltaire quotes Dom Antoine Agustin Calmet who wrote the book *The World of Ghosts*, in which there is an essay on vampires. In romanticism, the legend of the vampire is revived by John Polidori, the doctor and assistant of Lord Byron, who writes, by the challenge of Byron, *The Vampire*, probably inspired by the tyranny of his friend. Subsequently, Bram Stoker wrote *Dracula*, which is the romantic origin of the vampire and Mary Shelley wrote *Frankenstein*, which is composed of parts of the dead and is animated by scientific techniques, to represent the arrogance of science that seeks to dominate the vital principle.

2. Death in the literature prior to the reform

The character of death before the Protestant reformation has a tragic sign. In the high Middle Ages, at the dawn of the Renaissance, it appears in Germany, which is late joining the Renaissance movement, a story with the title *The Peasant of Bohemia*, written by Johannes von-Tepl (1999), also known as Johannes von Saaz. The story is written in prose, in a cultured German, which attests to the author's trade as director of the city's Latin school. It was written around 1410 and was only published in 1460. The temperament of the writing, motivated by the death of Margarita¹⁵, the wife of the farmer, makes think of the humanist spirit of Petrarca, spirit that travels all over Europe to England, where it affects, for example, the humor and tragedy of Shakespeare, among other authors. "Margarita the cause of my affliction, my chosen wife. Grant her, benevolent Lord, to look, observe and enjoy eternally in the powerful and eternal mirror of divinity, from which all the choirs of angels take their light" (von-Tepl, 1999).

The peasant world of the twelfth century, which Duby (1968) characterizes as a manorial system, is marked by the stratification of the estates that, according to Duby (1978) himself formed three orders. And life for each of these orders developed in very different ways. But the consolation for the third estate or third state was the universality of death that did not forgive the nobles or the clergy. However, the representations of life after death were different in each estate (Duarte-García, 2003). The eternal rest was imagined by some as glory and by others as a free dinner, by some as refuge in the bosom of the father, by others as participation in the kingdom. Anyway, when death is a character, what happens among the living, its sign is an absurd end, an unfair executioner that ends with the most loved.

In von-Tepl's account, a peasant meets death and a dialogue with a painful sign is initiated between them, although the dialogue with death in the work has a stoic tone of humanism that contradicts the medieval Christian notion of an eschatological *parousia* and a glorious death, equally present in the story. The body is, in the text, rot and concupiscence and its despicable mortal condition is reproached, for which death, which is masculine, its cruel design is reproached.

PEASANT Fierce destroyer of all men, infamous persecutor of all beings, terrible murderer of every man, you, Death, be cursed!

PEASANT There is no doubt that death for all men comes, there is no one in this life who can be saved from the cruel persecutor, who does not warn of his arrival but that part of this life leaving us with nothing of the beloved (von-Tepl, 1999).

The death in von-Tepl's story does not distinguish between some men and others, does not consider their origin, their behavior or their merits. It also does not take into account how much love one has for the being who dies. And therein lies the most painful complaint of the drama:

15 The reproach for the death of Margarita has been reason for some to award the reference to Margarita Blanche, the first woman of Carlos IV.

DEATH How the praised woman you cry was going to be lucky that it didn't happen to her the same as the others, and the others the same as her? You yourself will not escape us...

DEATH Oh man! Destined for mortality. You will perish in this life without leaving anything behind, everything you were will succumb to the enemy Death. Be fragile and deadly. All who delight in living late or very early before the fear some enemy present will be.

Everyone, one behind the other! (von-Tepl, 1999).

In this way, above the life after death, the end of this life and the universality and fatality of death weigh in the drama. This destiny, declared by the character of Death, marks the work as tragedy, in which destiny prevails over the hope of a future life.

3. The character of death in the 15th Spanish Century

In the fifteenth century, among the stories in which death appears as a character, is the dance of death whose original is in the library of *El Escorial* and dates from the fifteenth century. In addition, there are some macabre dances such as Juan Pedraza, perhaps the best known of all (Duarte-García, 2003). In this work, death treats the powerful and the needy equally.

Apparently, in the fifteenth century, the equitable condition of death for all was in vogue. Jorge Manrique, in the couplets to the death of his father (Manrique, 2002), brings these that are a magnificent expression of that equity of death that does not discriminate (Tenenti, 1952):

Lives are like rivers
what will they give to the sea.
What is dying.
There go the manors
rights to be over
and consume.
There the rivers flow,
there the other medium
and richer.
Alleged are equal
those who live by their hands
e the rich.
14.- Those powerful kings
what we see by writing

already past,
with sad, tearful cases,
were their good fortunes
upset
so, there is no strong thing,
that to Popes and emperors
and pearly,
that's how death treats them
like poor shepherds
of cattle (Manrique, 2002).

The linking of wealth and power while making them delectable and ephemeral is a reason to disregard the seduction of such things and to argue the fairness of death that is universal and, like the Wheel of Fortune, is unstable and variable. In any case, for what concerns us, it is necessary to highlight the way in which Manrique refers to death: "this is how death treats [...] so that death is someone who treats popes and emperors so same as the shepherds." That character of death is similar to other characters that also appear in Jorge Manrique's couplets, as is the case of Fortuna, who appears to confuse those who seek wealth:

10.- The states and wealth,
let us be left behind
who doubts it?
don't ask them for firmness
well, they are from a lady
that moves,
what goods are from fortune
stirring with her wheel
hurried,
which cannot be a
neither be stable nor fit
in one thing (Manrique, 2002).

That lady who moves, called Fortuna, refers to that form of time that does not allow anchoring anything wealth, power and glory, invokes the stability of an immutable eternity, because the uncertainty of time that does not admit rest and that she shuts away all good that can cling, projects an eternal, stable good, in whose bosom one can rest from the uneasy anxiety produced by the inescapable of a world that does not remain still. So, death is a transition from the move of time to the stability of eternity that has no time. The awkward uncertainty of time, which culminates in the necessary death, produces a fatigue that only heals with an eternity of stillness and certainty in which death is absent.

4. The character of death in the fifteenth English Century

In the allegorical drama *Everyman* which also dates from the fifteenth century (Duarte-García, 2003), death is the messenger of God, who fulfills the orders of the creator diligently. At the beginning of the work, the intention is declared as follows: Here begins a treatise on how the high Father of Heaven sends Death to summon all creatures to account for their life in this world, so that this is a moral¹⁶ play.

God commands death to announce to the man that he must undertake a pilgrimage from which he cannot escape. Death will be the companion of the trip, and *Everyman* must be held accountable for all his acts, under the supervision of this macabre companion. *Everyman* is stunned and tries to seduce death so that he travels a bit, but death only gives him the possibility of traveling with a partner. *Everyman* chooses *Fellowship* (fellowship, community), which finally refuses to be the company of someone traveling to death.

If death were the messenger,
 no man would live a day
 That's why I don't accompany you on that path...
 but if you want to eat, drink and rejoice,
 or harass the woman, lustful companion,
 I will not abandon you, as long as the day is clear...
 (Anonymous, 2002)¹⁷.

When death is a character, it acquires a substance that no longer refers to the end of the days of a living being, but rises from that grave and becomes a messenger, traveling companion, dark angel, docile servant of destiny, for that life is also a character like destiny, good and evil. In the allegorical poems of the time, death takes on the deep dimension of nothingness, before which all things lose value, since their time is unpredictable and inexorable.

16 The original reads: "Here begynneth a treatyse how þe hye Fader of Heven sendeth Dethe to somon every creature to come and gve acounte of theyr lyves in this worlde, and is in maner of a morally playe". It has been translated into modern English as: Here begins a treatise how the high Father of Heaven sends Death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world, and is in the manner of a moral play.

17 If Death were the messenger,
 For no man that is living to-day
 I will not go that loath journey...
 yet if thou wilt eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
 Or haunt to women, the lusty companion,
 I would not forsake you, while the day is clear...

5. The character of death in the Spanish Baroque

The allusion to death as a character appears in *Las Cortes de la muerte* by Micael de Carvajal, terminated by Luis Hurtado de Mendoza (Fernández-Checa, 1995), long attributed to Lope de Vega (Duarte-García, 2003). In this *auto* (Sacramental Act), death is presented by the angel's demand:

ANGEL. Looking at him I'm attentive
how the face brings gold
when there is so little money.
But I get it, I eat
always the altarpiece of duels,
although it is golden on top,
It is wood inside.
And who's she?

DEATH. I am death.

MAN. Never get your bones:
Why does it come suddenly?
She will say we owe it to her
to save us from grief,
of complaints, pain, sick,
of doctors and pharmacies.

DEATH. No, but for example
for those who remain alive;
but they are so crazy and foolish,
that what happens in others
they judge impossible on them.

ANGEL. Really, Mrs. Death,
that you are very discreet in that,
and ask Job:
you will see that life is a dream,
and cloth that the owner cuts,
when he wants, in the middle.

(Hurtado de Mendoza, 1557; García-Bermejo, 1996).

In this work, death is destiny. Her reason is the inescapable commission of the creator to reap with her scythe what is alive when the time comes. There is no one who can escape this fate, and the character of death fulfills his mission without exception. Death is obedient

executioner who treats everyone in the same way and regardless of their sex, their age or their social status. Death is like the angel of God's destiny who, like justice, is blindfolded. But men always resist that destiny which they think they can avoid. Death, in the tradition of Agustín de Hiponna; is the result of sin, and this is what the character says:

SIN. Around here I think they are going.

DEATH. How much in the world walks,
sin, he already bows.

TIME. And how many are living
they go through me, and I go through everything.

DEATH. Time, what are you running,
stop, but you can't
find the way to stop.

SIN. Well, restlessness?

TIME. Where did man stay?

DEATH. In the madness it stopped
his youth from the world.

TIME. Death, that you are divided
in the temporal and eternal.
and since childhood
you are stalking life;
while it happens
Man through this valley
of tears, and now talk to her
it gives us the occasion,
to refer you will be fine
the steps in which I founded,
and I give time to the world

and their stories too (Hurtado de Mendoza, 1557).

This work, perhaps, is referenced by Cervantes in the second book of *Don Quixote*, chapter XI. In this passage, Don Quixote and Sancho run into some comedians who probably represent these Cortes by Luis Hurtado. In the story of Don Quixote, a tirade from Sancho to his lord is interrupted like this:

To answer, Don Quixote wanted Sancho Panza; but it hinders a cart that came across the road, loaded with the most diverse and strange characters and figures that could be imagined. The one who guided the mules and served as a carter was an ugly demon. The open cart was coming to the open sky, without

awnings or wattles. The first figure that was offered in the eyes of Don Quixote was that of Death herself, with a human face; next to her came an angel with large and painted wings. On one side was an emperor with a crown, apparently of gold, on the head; at the foot of Death was the god they call Cupid, with no blindfold, but with his bow, carcax and bolts; there was also a knight armed with a white tip, except that he had no morrion, no headpiece, but a hat full of feathers of various colors; with them came other people of different suits and faces (Cervantes, 1962, p. 743).

Of course, Don Quixote stops the cart in search of adventure and asks the coachman for his identity. Then, this reveals its origin and its appearance:

Lord, we are reciters of the company of Angulo el Malo; we have settled in a place that is behind that hill, this morning, which is the eighth of the Corpus, the auto sacramental of Las Cortes de la Muerte¹⁸, and let us be it this afternoon in that place that from here it seems; and for being so close and excusing the work of undressing and dressing again, we are dressed in the same dresses we represent. That young man wears a dress of Death; the other one, of Angel; that woman, who is that of the author, like a queen; the other like a soldier; that one, of Emperor, and I, of a Demon, and I am one of the main figures of the company, because I play the first roles in this company. If something else mercy you want to hear from us, ask me; that I will know how to respond with all punctuality; that since I am a Demon, everything comes to me (Cervantes, 1962, p. 744).

The character of death, as observed in Don Quixote, is a young man, and obeys the genre of death in Mendoza's work, when the angel asks: and who is he? And death responds: "I am Death". In the Middle Ages, in general, death was considered male, if the Pauline tradition was followed. On some occasions, the tradition of Timothy who considered her feminine was followed, which was decided if the first sin was awarded to Adam or Eve, respectively (Duarte-García, 2003).

In the Baroque, the sacramental takes shape and reproduces the tradition of the time when Pablo de Tarso is born, what marks a beginning in the present, which purpose is eschatological (Sojka, 2009) and, therefore, supports the idea of the transit between the ephemeral deceptive and the stable and reliable, that is, between the uncertainty of time and the security of eternal and timeless, God. This linear idea of the time between a delectable present and an eschatological end of fulfillment is extended in Augustine of Hippo (2007) in the idea that the *City of God* is the future of humanity that begins in a present of sin and misery in the city of man. That is to say, historical time is a transit between the contingency of the mutable and perishable present and the indefinite future of the *City of God*, which no longer has time and in which everything that changes is submerged, the uncertainty of the men who roam in a time without concert. In this way, human life is contingent and fleeting in time, and travels to the eschatological eternity of God that is immutable and timeless.

18 The italics are ours.

In *The Pilgrim in his homeland* (1604) by Lope de Vega, the Tridentine tradition is manifested in a dramatic form of reflections on salvation based on good works, by the grace of God, and the hope in eternal life found in the future of human history. However, Death is not a Lope character. On the other hand, Calderón de la Barca makes Death appear in four of his sixty autos sacramentales (*Sacramental acts*) that are: *Lo que va del hombre a Dios* (*What goes from man to God*), *Tu prójimo como a ti mismo* (*Your neighbor as you*, first version), *El veneno y la triaca* (*The poison and the Theriac*), and *El pleito matrimonial* (*The matrimonial lawsuit*) (Calderón de La Barca, 2005a).

In *What goes from man to God*, Death is opposed to the other characters, Pleasure, Guilt, Weigh, because they are all perishable and only *he* (death) is definitive and universal. Everyone knows him and everyone is sad:

PLEASURE:	Who are you than to Pleasure have your action attentive?
DEATH:	In regret humans I am the one who has so much empire, that with only my memory to the happiest I grieve.

(Calderón de la Barca, 2005a).

Death usually refers to pleasure when he speaks because he is the one who most opposes, and the reason is offered by the same character:

PLEASURE:	Being Pleasure, who am I in doubt?
DEATH:	Don't be scared, Pleasure, of that, that in Death there is no pleasure if there is no regret (Calderón de la Barca, 2005a).

Here, the character of Death refers to death as the human future, so that it is not only an executioner angel, but a sense that announces heaven, whose pleasure is not, of course, the pleasure of the flesh that will die. And that is why death is a premonitory of another constant pleasure beyond death, and to obtain it, repentance is needed. The sense of the character here has changed the meaning it had in the fifteenth century. Death already sees beyond life. Death is no longer a mere obedient executioner, but there is another moral burden on which life is neglected. This is the meaning of the Counter-Reformation defined in Trent and is also the response to the plague disaster that killed a third of Europe in a span of ten years (Vovelle, 1983).

The peak of the plague occurs around 1350, but the seed of death is sown in the hearts of Europeans, so that hope against death that threatened all humanity began to be reclaimed. It takes Europe more than two centuries to recover from the scourge of the plague (Valdeón, 1980). And it is not surprising that this monster that rose before the astonished eyes of those who were powerless in the face of fatality, was counteracted by the promise

of a life that death could not reap (Patch, 1983). That hope against all hope makes a messenger character of something that escapes his scythe. And it is that moral message that is announced in Calderón's *autos*. *Your neighbor as you* (first version)

Death comes out and
see how many do not treat him
with reverence and decorum,
which is also in his substance
death is bread to those who eat it,
inmate of such high bliss
death keeps giving
sacrament be made,
in his last article,
for the renovation of souls (Calderón de la Barca, 2005b).

In *El veneno y la triaca*, the star (Lucero) announces the surprise character of death that hides in anything to strike: Lucero says:

LUCERO	Of the most poisonous spell against you I intend to use that makes you, by force of mine, excellent food, that these drinks serve you; the crystals that these sources give you up, always loud; the beautiful happy flowers, that pay these pictures in beautiful corsages I have to call, calling to what temple preparations the poison of the spell, to Death. Death as magical is, that pretending knows a thousand apparent ghosts. Oh you, horror of mortals!, precise in his laws, exception of none and judge of all living, never cheated contrast of the slight superiors, well in my empire
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you have made an alliance today,
and eternally they must be
Friends Sin and Death,
Listen to my sad voices.
DEATH What is it, prince, what do you want?
LUCERO Where are you?
DEATH In this trunk
my horror is lodged because this
first grave of mine
It is the shelter of Death.
LUCERO I come to you to be worth.
DEATH To your obedience you have me.
LUCERO Well you're such gardens
sneaky snake,
tell me: in what fruit, in what flower,
on what floor or at what source
I can put a spell
with what my magic pretends
attract a beauty
to my rebel will?
Go down to the table.
DEATH I will tell you, well now
the times all offer
together, because here they are all
Spring only
entity,
that winter, autumn and summer,
although its fruits offer,
as she is alone the lady,
They let her look polite.
Well, they come (I say again)
together, happy and cheerful
to serve the food
with excellent gifts,
with them introduced
let's see the most convenient
to put the poison

(Calderón de la Barca, 2005c).

That treacherous death that lurks in anything to deal with his final blow continues with slight intention, after asking the four seasons for his offering and, on the Lucero's recommendation, leaving his venom somewhere:

DEATH How beautiful they are! (Apart: I already left
 the asp there and I managed
 the betrayal that I dare).
 Joyful times, well now
 you see the *Infanta* present,
 that mirrored a fountain,
 looking at her is
 her beauty and gentleness,
 her greatness refer;
 fall in love, and say

requirements to her beauty (Calderón de la Barca, 2005c).

So far, death is betrayal, surprise crouched in anything. But the allusion to the seasons that are death and life, that make life reborn with ever-new fruits and each with different offerings, suggest that death is always defeated within the vital rhythm. In this auto, death does not assume any other sign, since it is the other characters who rescue the constant rebirth of life mowed by treacherous death. And from there comes the reference to the *Theriac*¹⁹ as an antidote to death. That is, the rhythm of life that dies and is reborn what unfolds the poison and theriac antithesis.

ALL who are of the same lineage
 the poison and the triaca.

However, the life and death cycle are projected to perennial life, to life without death, to constant life. And it is there that natural death transcends as a boat whose north is outside this life.

SIN World climax to whose horror the factory expires universal!
DEATH Animosity from heaven, whose mistake He made man know of
 good and evil!
SIN Common anger, for it lies in your rage, sensitive and rational!
DEATH Common wrath, for it lies at your power
 What was born first to be born!
SIN Basilisk of time, so cruel. ¿What do you look at how long you live?
DEATH Spike of the century, so traitorous and unfaithful that you bite
 among flowers of a garden!
SIN Introduced Abel scandal!

19 NT: Theriac or theriaca was a medical concoction originally formulated by the Greeks in the 1st century AD and widely adopted in the ancient world as far away as China and India via the trading links of the Silk Route.

DEATH Inherited Cain's malice!
 SIN Minister of the great God of Sabaoth!
 DEATH Caudillo of the sides of Astaroth!
 SIN Pale death! Because only in this way
 I will be able to pronounce all your signs.
 DEATH Prince of the Abyss! news of other luck give I do not know.
 SIN I didn't introduce you to the world?
 DEATH Yes, death was the origin sin.

The Augustinian tradition of considering death as a consequence of sin gives it in the text of the auto a dependency that makes it possible since sin can be forgiven and, in that forgiveness, depends death or life beyond death. The principle by which death can be overcome is that its origin is beyond itself.

SIN If the being I gave you was to be atrocious,
 descend to the spells of my voice;
 descend from that black mountain,
 this is foul homeland of the vile night;
 the breast stops its trunks,
 because the valley invites us with its April.
 Vipers we are, alien our feet
 its flowers one hundred to one hundred
 and one thousand to one thousand,
 while it does not tarnish when we see our outburst
 this face the moon and his countenance the sun.

DEATH Already from that trunk that my crib was, whose branch is born
 I am root, I tore the breast, and tore it I left Pomegranate your pomp,
 you must have your hue.
 Agora tell me, why do you love me?

SIN That in my greater penalty, more unhappy, Help me avenge a passion.

DEATH Are they envies of man?

SIN Jealousy are, they are envious again and again.

DEATH Does jealousy have anyone who never had love?

SIN Yes, because there is jealousy of such vile pregnancy
 which are abortions of children of resentment.

DEATH Well, what do you want? that to the sky the blue complexion will
 blow off a breath, and its splendor of clouds will wear black hood
 in dire funerals of light.

So far, the dialogue between sin and death conceives of it as an instrument of the one, who wants to end all the noble and care of the one to whom sin wants to take away from

what life can grant him. And death offers to quench the splendor of that luminous life. Then, the soul in dialogue with the body, whose divorce occurs with death.

SOUL Beautiful country in which I was born,
 forced to earth I go, but anywhere I am the one that I was in my
 beginning;
 there is no moving in me that although God made me nothing,
 made me eternal, and banished heavenly
 desta sphereto the husband who is waiting for me
 I protest that I am forced.
 I protest that in prison of the Body in which I must attend
 will always want to leave.
 For returning to my region
 Appearances are lower.

BODY When of this confusion,
 will my blind sense come out?

SOUL When, beloved homeland nest,
 Will I return to your coat? (Calderón de la Barca, 2005b).

In this way, the death that for a moment was death and life, death and rebirth, is projected in an expanded way in creation and return to the creator in whom there is no longer death. Similarly, the intuition of a cyclical life that dies and is reborn in a dynamic of a circular time, is denied by a promise of a life without time and without movement, which is the eternal shelter of a soul for whom the country is eternity motionless and has been led to live in a mortal and sinful body of which he denies.

6. Postlude

The models of death mentioned by Miter (2003), such as that of the heroic death of martyrdom and that suffered in the crusades, invoke a denial of death in the beyond that was the only hope for an agonizing Europe.

This passage from the tragic death of humanism to the tame death of the counter-reform (Mitre, 1988), may be the result of a church wounded by the three most radical events of the end of the Middle Ages: humanism from Petrarch to the Renaissance, the Black plague that decimates Europe (Fuentes-Fennel, 1992) and the Protestant reform that puts in many spirits a critical thorn against the power of Rome (Mitre, 2003a).

Anyway, when death becomes a character in the literature, which is not highlighted by Miter, his moral sense takes on a dimension of company that is noticed throughout the three centuries analyzed, and that disregards the promise, since His destiny is to reap life. The character of death produces the lament for those who leave. But the recognition of his/her universality relativizes the value of wealth and power, which places the moral sense

of this character in relation to the social condition in a story that is stressed by the claims of power and wealth.

The appearance in the *autos* of Calderón de la Barca of a cyclical life that alternates with death in a nature that dies and is reborn, does not exceed an image of the linear time that culminates in the eschatological pause, according to the Pauline and Augustinian representation.

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