Optical Illusions: Directing the Audience's Perspective in Spain's Golden Age Theatre

by

Lisa J. Nowak
B.A., Michigan State University, 1986

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Abstract

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Lisa J. Nowak, Ph.D.
Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 2000
University of Kansas
Dissertation Director: Dr. William R. Blue

As with many changes of government, Philip IV's succession to the Spanish throne in 1621 carried with it an inherent sense of hope. The young monarch and his loyal minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares, assumed control to miraculously turn aside Philip III's reckless course towards destruction and to regain Spain's former glory. At least that was the image that the ambitious, fledgling monarchy wished to portray to an audience who was all too willing to believe. The monarchy's discourse proclaimed stability and prosperity for the Spanish empire, an empire straining against debt, corruption, foreign and domestic wars, continuing religious strife, and rapidly changing demographics. In this cosmetic environment, interpreting signs both on a national and an individual level became increasingly important. Theatre, as an institutionalized art form, was regulated by the government and promoted a common language (*castellano*) and a commonly understood semiotics of theatre in a common place (*los corrales*). The theatre therefore had the opportunity to disseminate a dominant discourse—the Count-Duke of Olivares's rhetoric of renovation—to an extensive viewing public. However, relegating the *comedia* to the status of an ideological tool that maintained order and social norms does not recognize its full potential. Theatre functions to draw attention to and magnify certain aspects of society, and these aspects were not necessarily the same ones championed by the Crown. This study will consider how Golden Age theatre, particularly during the years of Olivares's influence (1621 - 1643), directed the public's perspective by focusing on the openness of signs and their potential manipulation. The optical illusions created by certain characters' performance opened a space where non-conformist discourse and social criticism could be interpreted by those who had learned to see beyond the signs.

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Introduction: Illusions and Disillusionments

As with many changes of government, Philip IV's succession to the Spanish throne in 1621 carried with it an inherent sense of hope. The young monarch and his loyal minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares, assumed control to miraculously turn aside Philip III's reckless course towards destruction and to regain Spain's former glory. At least that was the image that the ambitious, fledgling monarchy wished to portray to an audience who was all too willing to believe.[1] The monarchy's discourse proclaimed stability and prosperity for the Spanish empire, an empire straining against debt, corruption, foreign and domestic wars, continuing religious strife, and rapidly changing demographics. It was quick to appropriate the image of Spain's last "great leader," Philip II, as its model: austere, dedicated, ethical, severe, and arguably the most powerful monarch in the Western world.[2] Since the nostalgic memory of Philip II faced a decidedly hostile reality in 1621, the renovation program planned by Olivares depended on optical

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[1] In *Lengua e imperio en la España de Felipe IV* John Elliott explores the rhetoric—sponsored especially by the Count-Duke of Olivares—that was to renovate Spain's image, not only in her own subjects' eyes but also in those of rival nations.

[2] The new monarchy was equally quick to disregard the numerous afflictions of Philip II's reign: revolts in Naples and the Netherlends; riots in Zaragoza and Barcelona; national bankruptcies in 1557, 1575, and 1596; and an outbreak of

illusions—on the openness of signs and their potential manipulation—in order to project an image of Spanish grandeur and hegemony.

As Brown and Elliott have argued, Olivares intended to propagate such an image as a theatrical enterprise. For a struggling Spanish crown, it was not so much what the monarchy was but what it was perceived to be that mattered. Certain elements of the stagecraft were already in place, such as the elaborate rituals and ceremony imported by the Habsburgs. *Etiquetas de palacio*, carefully revised by Philip IV during his reign, served to "ensure the observance of order and decorum which would enhance the remote grandeur of the monarch as a semi-divine being who was not as other men" (Brown and Elliott 31). Philip IV, groomed for his leading role in "spectacles" ranging from private meetings with foreign envoys to impressive masquerades on horseback, lived in a world where each gesture was choreographed for a particular effect (32). The construction of the Buen Retiro in the early 1630's suggests yet another attempt to stage the splendor of Spain and the memory of Philip II by diverting attention from "political reality to political imagery" (86).

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the plague from 1596 – 1600. See J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469 – 1716* (New York: Penguin, 1963) 249-300.

In this cosmetic environment, interpreting signs both on a national and an individual level became increasingly important. Theatre as an institutionalized art form was regulated by the government and promoted a common language (*castellano*) and a commonly understood semiotics of theatre in a common place (*los corrales*). The theatre therefore had the opportunity to disseminate a dominant discourse—Olivares's rhetoric of renovation—to an extensive viewing public. While many critics, most notably Maravall, have relegated the *comedia* to the status of an ideological tool that maintained order and social norms, this does not recognize its full potential.[3] If the theatre is truly "an instrument of highly selective enlargement" (Roach 135), then it functions to draw attention to and magnify certain aspects of society, and these aspects are not necessarily the same ones championed by the Crown. This study will consider how Golden Age theatre, particularly during the years of Olivares's influence (1621 – 1643), directed the public's perspective by focusing on the reading and misreading of signs. The optical illusions created by certain characters' performance opened a space where non-conformist

[3] See, for example, *The Culture of the Baroque: Analysis of a Historical Structure.* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986).

discourse and social criticism could be interpreted by those who had learned to see beyond the signs.

Theatre criticism from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provides one of the most compelling reasons for investigating theatre's role in transmitting ideology. Between the years of 1587 (shortly after the two standing playhouses opened in Madrid) and 1616, a flurry of protests against secular theatre barraged the monarchy.[4] Critics such as Juan de Mariana and Juan Ferrer attacked plays and commercial playhouses on moral grounds, complaining that the "happily ever after" endings were tacked on solely to appease the censors, and that the plays' development was filled with inappropriate material.

The same year that Juan de Mariana's *De spectaculis* (1609) spoke out against the theatre, Lope de Vega defended the *comedia* in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo.* In this treatise in verse, Lope de Vega continually returns to audience response as a major factor in a play's conception and potential for success. Lope expounds his poetics of a "possible" theatre: one that would avoid censorship while still drawing a large crowd through its entertaining qualities, and would perhaps even communicate or

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[4] Cotarelo y Mori's *Bibliografía de las controversias sobre la licitud del teatro en España* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1904) provides an interesting

teach something worthwhile along the way. This idea was reiterated by Tirso de Molina in *Los cigarrales de Toledo* (1624), where Tirso upholds Lope's ideas of the theatre and the concept of *deleitar aprovechando.*

The long term impact of Golden Age plays has been the subject of debate not only among seventeenth-century critics, but also among twentieth-century ones. A. A. Parker and Bruce Wardropper explain the *comedia* in terms of resolving conflicts and restoring order. José Antonio Maravall and José María Díez Borque both examine baroque society and theatre's effect on it. They affirm the *comedia's* conservative nature and view it as an instrument of state propaganda that interpolated the society and subjected it to a dominant discourse. More recently, however, critics are questioning their conclusions. Like Maravall and Díez Borque, Charlotte Stern uses a sociological approach in her analysis of Lope de Vega, but she opens her interpretation to allow for the contradictions between art and life that spring from the theatre. Other critics, such as William Blue and Margaret Greer, pinpoint these contradictions and expand upon them to reveal dormant, potentially subversive messages encoded within the

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compilation of petitions for and against theatre from the mid-sixteenth century through the eighteenth century.

Golden Age plays. I intend to contribute to this re–evaluation of theatre by suggesting that, while most plays during the seventeenth century outwardly adhered to an idealized concept of social order, they simultaneously offered to the individual a means to surpass the limits of social order by demonstrating the tactical presentation of self.

One of the challenges facing this project was establishing verifiable links between a modern day textual reading and a seventeenth-century audience's actual or potential response to a given play. Beyond the obvious differences between a written text and a staged performance, the bulk of the contemporary accounts regarding spectators' reactions to events transpiring on stage are in the form of the previously mentioned petitions for or against the theatre. In other words, these petitions hardly represent an objective vision of audience response. However, recent investigations into the (early) modern subject have provided a potential framework for analyzing the effects of discourse on an audience or reader.

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) Michel de Certeau posits the "enigma of the consumer-sphinx": he considers the consumption of discourse to be a form of production (albeit a non-uniform, clandestine one), in that the consumer makes use of the

product in some way, potentially in one that even the original producer of the discourse has not foreseen.[5]

> The thousands of people who buy a health magazine, the customers in a supermarket, the practitioners of urban space, the consumers of newspaper stories and legends—what do they make of what they 'absorb,' receive, and pay for? What do they do with it? (de Certeau 31)

The consumers assimilate information, transform it, and make use of it for their own ends, which may or may not be the same ends envisioned by the producer. Theatrical representation, when viewed by "consumers," likewise cannot fail to have some lasting impact on society.

Based in part on de Certeau's observations, Ross Chambers discusses oppositional narrative in *Room for Maneuver* (1991). Chambers construes his idea of "oppositionality" on:

> . . . individual or group survival tactics that do not challenge the power in place, but make use of circumstances set up by that power for purposes the power may ignore or deny. It contrasts, then, with revolution, which is a mode of *resistance* to forms of power it regards as illegitimate, that is, as a force that needs to be opposed by a counterforce. (1)

By placing oppositionality within a power structure, Chambers reconciles literature's function as both an ideological tool for the

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[5] As an example, de Certeau refers to the Spanish colonization in the Americas: "Even when they were subjected, indeed even when they accepted their subjection, the Indians often used the laws, practices, and representations that

dominant class and an instrument of reform. The "Court Poet" and the "Wild Child" become two faces of the same coin; that is, Chambers sees no contradiction in a writer using the dominant ideological system while at the same time suggesting changes or acknowledging problems in that system. It is in large part how the reader/spectator interprets the work's content that will ultimately determine the level of opposition, and although Chambers gears his theory towards narrative, his underlying principles are equally suitable for performance. Whether reading or viewing, "addressees" are essentially spectators of a communicative process, who become interpreting subjects when new ideas change their particular desires. They come to represent agents, then, outside the world of literature or the stage, who may gradually bring about changes in their real-life circumstances.

The idea of subjects who can modify their circumstances has been of particular interest to early modern scholars. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) Stephen Greenblatt proposes that the early modern period in Europe sees "an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process" (2). In a similar vein, Anthony

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were imposed on them by force or by fascination to ends other than those of their conquerors; they made something else out of them" (31-32).

Cascardi discusses subject formulation in seventeenth-century Spain by investigating the "various modes of agency through which individuals achieved a cultural identity as subject-selves" ("The Subject of Control" 236). He looks at Baltasar Gracián's *hombre discreto* as the embodiment of the new subject-self, one that uses prudence and dissimulation to preserve and protect identity (*Ideologies* 143). In Gracián's text, *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia*, prudence and dissimulation are both seen as an "art," part of the skillful and desirable portrayal of self. The notion of prudence also brings us back to Olivares and his rhetoric of renovation, since *prudencia* was to become one of the tag words of his administration (Elliott, *Lengua e imperio* 40).

These investigations into the formation of the early modern subject will support my analysis on various levels. De Certeau and Chambers place primary importance on the addressee's ability to interpret, and they offer a model in which a traditionally conservative genre like the *comedia* can simultaneously offer its audience a non-conformist discourse. The ideas of self-fashioning and self-control posited by Greenblatt and Cascardi point towards the presentation of self and the construction of identity that may be represented on stage. The techniques used in the presentation of diverse characters direct the audience towards an appreciation

of the skill involved in creating and destroying the optical illusions of identity.

The first chapter, "Making and Breaking Social Masks," examines five interludes ranging from Lope de Rueda's "Cornudo y contento" (mid-sixteenth century) to Luis Quiñones de Benavente's "El doctor Juan Rana" (mid-seventeenth century). Including the earlier works with the ones that correspond more closely to Philip IV's reign allows us to perceive a trajectory of form and function that is reflected as well in the *comedias*. The *entremeses* consistently move further away from the mimetic representation of the real world, yet continue to emphasize the instability of signs and their potential manipulation in the relationships between individuals.

As a cousin to many of the characters populating the *entremés*, the *gracioso* becomes the focus of chapter two, "The Guiding Force of Fools." This chapter analyzes the intermediary role of the *graciosos* in four plays: *El caballero de Olmedo*, *No hay vida como la honra*, *No hay burlas con el amor*, and *Lucrecia y Tarquino*. The intermediary position adopted by the "fools" is seen in terms of its relationship with the *locus* and *platea* positions of the medieval stage. The *platea* was a region close to the audience and outside the mimetic representation. Assuming a *platea* or

intermediary role allows the *graciosos* to align the audience's perspective with their own and in this way to mediate the relationship between the stage and the audience.

In chapter three, "Reading between the Signs," I further investigate the possiblities of directing audience perspective by examining noble characters who disguise themselves as peasants. The protagonists in Tirso's *Desde Toledo a Madrid* and Lope's *La moza de cántaro* are divided characters who act oppositionally even while submitting to the existing power structure. They draw the audience into the act of "reading between the signs" in order to reconsider truth or deception in the presentation of self.

The presentation of self becomes the central issue in chapter four, "Using and Misusing Knowledge of Self." This chapter begins with a study of the concept of self that evolved from Castiglione's courtier and Gracián's *hombre discreto*. It then analyzes the protagonists in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas, Los empeños del mentir*, and *Abre el ojo*. These characters are shown to rely on society's evolving perception of the individual to manipulate their circumstances to their advantage. While an obvious "moral of the story" is declared at the end of each play, the protagonists' unscrupulous deeds go unpunished and the plays'

satirization of traditional values reflects poorly on the society at large.

Chapter five, "Revealing Social Tensions through Ridicule," studies the satire of social types in three early *comedias de figurón*: *Cada loco con su tema*, *El Marqués del Cigarral*, and *Entre bobos anda el juego*. The plays mercilessly focus on the lack of art and decorum in the *figurones*. Through the veil of ridicule, the audience sees in these characters the crumbling of ideological values and traditional social boundaries.

The common motif in these chapters is the instability of signs (whether based on language, costume, or performance) and their potential manipulation in the evolving, changeable modern self. Although the *entremeses* represent a broader time frame, the various *comedias* were all produced between 1621, the year of Philip IV's ascension to the throne, and 1643, the year of Olivares's dismissal. The series of illusions and disillusionments present in the plays on the level of the individual may point towards the aspirations and shortcomings of Spain's rhetoric of renovation.

1. Making and Breaking Social Masks

"Suplico a vuesas mercedes / den menos voces. . . ."[1] A plea from an actor or actress for the boisterous *corral's* attention marked the beginning of the spectacle, a spectacle that included much more than the top-billed *comedia*. By the seventeenth century, a theatrical company began their show with a *loa*, inserted some form of *entremés* between each of the three acts, and concluded with a *mojiganga*.[2] The *entremés*, in particular, enjoyed great popularity during the Golden Age. Javier Huerta Calvo remarks: "[q]ue no eran mero relleno y pasatiempo lo prueba el hecho de que los espectadores los aguardasen con verdadera impaciencia, como complemento insustituible de la comedia" (10). As an important part of the whole spectacle, the interludes had the opportunity to transmit messages—intentionally or unintentionally—to a public who was increasingly well-versed in deciphering the signs onstage. One of the predominant motifs found in these comic interludes is the art involved in creating a

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[1] From "Loa con que empezó a representar [la compañía de] Rosa en Sevilla," by Fernando de Zárate. In Javier Huerta Calvo's *Teatro breve de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985).

[2] While describing different types of *entreactos*, Hannah Bergman indicates that the *jácara*, a ballad recited in the language of the underworld, could substitute for or be added to any of the intervals between acts.

desired fiction, either about one's actions or appearance, and the skill necessary to see behind such fictions—in other words, the making and breaking of social masks.

Given the lack of critical attention to the *entremés* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, much of the contemporary scholarly work on the *entremés* has been in the form of compiling anthologies and preparing editions of unknown interludes.[3] Mariano Baquero Goyanos has investigated the connection between the *entremés* and the seventeenth-century picaresque novel, while E. Veres D'Ocon has focused on language usage and word play in the *entremés*. Javier Huerta Calvo and Jean Canavaggio have studied the influence of the interludes, particularly those of Cervantes, in twentieth-century theatre. More recently, critics such as Carroll B. Johnson have looked at the social structures reflected in the *entremeses*. This chapter will examine the techniques used by characters in the interludes to create, maintain, and destroy appearances, and based on these techniques will investigate the *entremés's* potential to direct and alter the public's perception of the world around it.

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[3] See, for example, Emilio Cotarelo y Mori's *Colección de entremeses, bailes, jácaras y mojigangas desde fines del siglo XVI a mediados del XVIII* (Madrid: Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, 1911); Eugenio Asensio's *Itinerario del entremés desde Lope de Rueda a Quiñones de Benavente* (Madrid: Gredos,

A brief look at the history of the *entremés* reveals that the interlude used to be a functioning part of the play (à la Shakespeare) in which characters with an established purpose in the main action engaged in comic subplots (Canet Valles 31). In Spain, these subplots gradually became more and more independent until they found their own place between acts, relying on character types and plots imported from Italy's *commedia dell' arte* (Huerta Calvo 16). Lope de Rueda's *pasos* of the mid-1500's became the *entremeses* of the turn of the century, which then spiraled off into a myriad of different variations, such as *loas entremesadas* or *entremeses bailados*. The objective of these brief theatrical and musical numbers has generally been seen as that of maintaining (or regaining) the audience's attention and providing some sense of time passage between acts. These subsidiary roles do not account, however, for the mass appeal that these short works had during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

One of the reasons for their popularity was the burlesque content of their dialogue, dances, and gestures: ". . . el género se caracterizó por su carácter atrevido, y hasta obsceno, en la presentación de asuntos escabrosos y en la interpretación de

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1965); and Hannah Bergman's *Ramillete de entremeses y bailes* (Madrid: Castalia, 1970).

gestos, movimientos y danzas" (Huerta Calvo 69). Their exuberant expression was paralleled by a relative freedom in form: some were in prose while others were in verse, some included dances and/or singing while others did not. Until the publication of López del Campo's *Entremeses nuevos de diferentes autores* in 1640, the printing of interludes was limited to texts containing a mixture of genres, and this lack of autonomous publishing may have prompted writers to experiment with this short form of theatre.[4] The interludes were thus more flexible in their form than the *comedia*, more daring in their content, and more open to improvisation by the actors and actresses. Their enhanced opportunity for expression also meant that they were more "dangerous" to the perceived moral integrity of the nation.

Concern over the improper and indecent material in the theatre prompted a series of regulations and restrictions during Philip III's reign.[5] These attempts at censorship were only

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[4] Previous to 1640 *entremeses* formed part of conglomerate works, such as Rojas Villandrado's *El viaje entretenido* (1603), Cervantes's *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos* (1615), and Lope de Vega's *Séptima parte de comedias* (1617). For further information on the publication of interludes, see Javier Huerta Calvo's *Teatro breve de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985) 380-406.

[5] In 1598 Philip III issued a royal decree that prohibited public or private theatre. The Council of Madrid appealed, and the *corrales* were reopened in 1599 with numerous restrictions, among them that a committee including at least one theologian would view all *comedias* and *entremeses* before they were performed in public. More regulations followed. However, when ticket sales were flagging in 1615, the managers of the theatres responded by disregarding,

nominally effective, and we see the same arguments against theatre's impropriety—women on stage, women dressed in men's clothing, lewd dances, and so on—repeated years later in further petitions to the king.[6] In 1649 don Luis Crespi de Borja complains of the ineffectual censorship of the theatre and directs his attack specifically against the interludes: "El modo lascivo de representar no suele estar en los libros sino en las personas; de ordinario los bailes lascivos, sátiras y entremeses no se suelen reconocer, ó se añaden después de haberlas aprobado" (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 194). The moralist sees a threat to virtue encapsulated in the interludes that some fifty years of official censorship has been unable to eradicate.

Besides emphasizing the potential offensiveness of performance over text, Crespi de Borja's commentary suggests that theatre companies deliberately inserted the interludes after having received approval for the *comedia* they were performing. The tactic of dodging censorship with these short dramatic pieces provides an interesting commentary on the position of both acting troupes and

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one after another, every restriction that had been placed upon the theatres. For more information on the restrictions during this time period, see Hugo Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the Time of Lope de Vega.* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1909) 209-25.

[6] See Cotarelo y Mori, *Bibliografía de las controversías sobre la licitud del teatro en España.* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional, 1904).

their audiences: censorship effectively created a "them" versus "us" situation, in which the writers, actors, and spectators seemed to conspire together while the morally superior critics tried to stem the tide of wantonness looming on the horizon.

In order to examine possible contributors and detractors to this "tide of wantonness" in the interludes, I will analyze five works that date from mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. While three of these interludes premiered before Philip IV's reign, which is the primary time period under consideration, the background they provide demonstrates the significance of certain techniques that appear or disappear in the later works. The *entremeses* also seem to anticipate trends later adopted by the *comedias*, such as placing nobles in the role of the fool, which may indicate that they adapt more quickly to shifting social conditions.

Looking back to Lope de Rueda's *pasos*, we find the first generally acknowledged, independent interludes. In contrast to the *comedia's* metered dialogues, these interludes were usually written in prose. In part, the switch from verse to prose within the play created a frame that set off the short, burlesque piece from the main action. It also allowed for a more realistic mode of expression by the plebian characters who populated Lope de Rueda's *pasos*.

Such prose lent itself to rustic speech patterns and rapid plot development.

A classic example of these characteristics can be found in the *paso* commonly referred to as "Cornudo y contento" (pub. 1567).[7] This interlude develops in two parts: the first with Dr. Lucio and Martín, the second with Martín, his wife Bárbara and Gerónimo, a student. At the very beginning Dr. Lucio explains to the audience that Martín's wife has been feigning illness, thereby obliging Martín to leave the house in search of medicine. This ruse leaves her free to continue her affair with Gerónimo. Dr. Lucio plays no small part in the charade, offering Martín an endless supply of "remedies" in return for a seemingly endless supply of fowl. During the opening scene, the doctor manages to stay straight-faced as Martín reveals that the student has brilliantly facilitated Bárbara's healing process: since Martín and she are "one body" according to their marriage vows, it does not matter which of them takes the medicine for it to work. With that in mind, Martín has been dutifully choking down the medicine prescribed by the doctor. Assuring him that this is a suitable

[7] Javier Huerta Calvo cites the proverb <<tras cornudo apaleado y ambos satisfechos>> as the inspiration behind this *paso* (25).

arrangement, the doctor promises him another prescription for the next day, and Martín happily ambles towards home.

On the way, he runs into Bárbara, who has veiled her face, and Gerónimo. At first, Martín lets the student convince him that his companion is merely a washerwoman from the student residence, but Martín finally recognizes his wife's dress, and he confronts the pair. Bárbara immediately attacks him as an unobservant, uncaring husband. Taking advantage of his apologetic nature, she then informs him that she is planning to spend the next nine days in deep meditation--for her health, of course. Gleefully adding insult to injury, she further requests that he fast during her *novenas* to improve her devotion. The interlude ends with Martín promising to keep to his fast and asking the student to continue giving such good counsel to his wife.

The two parts of "Cornudo y contento" offer the audience two different levels of dramatic tension. After a few preliminary remarks, the doctor engages the audience in a lengthy aside in which he explains his complicity in the ongoing love affair between Bárbara and Gerónimo. This aside conditions the hermeneutic code to which the audience responds: the doctor discloses the entire ruse from the outset, rather than slowly unveiling the liaison and his part in it. The focus shifts, then, from the story itself

(already known) to the art and artifice surrounding it. Therefore, the first half of the interlude relies on techniques such as dramatic irony to pique the audience's interest. In *Madness, Masks and Laughter*, R.D.V. Glasgow describes dramatic irony as "the irony that arises when, unbeknown to the utterer, an utterance has a double meaning, one for the situation as it appears to himself, another for the situation as it is in reality, as revealed to the all-knowing audience" (52). Such privileged understanding can be seen, for example, when Dr. Lucio inquires after Bárbara's health, and Martín replies: "Señor, algún tanto ha reposado, que como ha dormido en casa aquel su primo el estudiante que tiene la mejor mano de ensalmador del mundo todo, no ha dicho en toda esta noche: 'Aquí me duele'" (133). The spectators, knowing the student's involvement with Bárbara, would automatically visualize the situation through a different optic lens, substituting for Gerónimo's healing talents his talents as a lover. In this, as in other exchanges throughout the first part, Dr. Lucio acts as a straight man, delivering seemingly guileless questions to Martín, whose rambling, ingenuous responses spark the laughter of the audience who is "in the know."

The second half corresponds more closely to traditional suspense: the audience wonders how Bárbara and Gerónimo will

manage to trick Martín when he comes upon them in the street. Considering the rigid honor code so often highlighted in the Spanish *comedia*, this encounter between the husband and the two lovers sets the stage for a climactic, confrontational ending. Instead, the built-up suspense dissipates as the cuckolded husband goes merrily on his way and the lovers, on theirs.

Given this ending, "Cornudo y contento" does not provide the audience with a neat package of traditional poetic justice. Deception prevails, and one can reasonably assume that the *paso* was not designed to have a moral lesson. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the short, burlesque piece lacks social criticism; however, rather than criticizing the lovers' immorality, the *paso* implicitly denounces the husband's obtuseness. In a world where prudence was acclaimed as one of the four cardinal virtues, Martín's inability to perceive his wife's infidelity verges on a cardinal sin—albeit one worthy of laughter.[8] As clowns or fools go, he typifies not a subject of comedy but rather an object of farce (the audience laughs at him, not with him). Therefore, in spite of being the protagonist, Martín has a remarkably passive role. While he utters many of the lines that provoke the audience's laughter,

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[8] The four cardinal virtues according to the theology of St. Thomas are prudence, justice, bravery, and temperance.

he does not deliberately create the double meanings and irony that underlie his speech. The humor springs from his improper assessment of the situation, which stands in conflict with the audience's superior knowledge. An instance of such flawed vision occurs when Martín meets Bárbara and Gerónimo in the street. Bárbara quickly shifts the focus from her compromised position to Martín's faulty memory:

> Bárbara: ¡A, don traydor! ¡Mirad qué memoria tiene de mí, que topa su muger en la calle y no la conosce!
> Martín: Calla, no llores, que me quiebras el coraçón. Que yo te conosceré, aunque no quieras, de aquí adelante. (137)

The audience knows that Bárbara did not want Martín to recognize her on this outing—hence, the irony—and his naïve promise to be more observant in the future underscores his current blindness.

Bárbara's and Gerónimo's ability to dissimulate marks them as the active characters in the *paso*. In the above quote, Bárbara easily manipulates the situation to her advantage. Following this exchange, she verbally transforms her rendezvous with her lover into prolonged devotions to the Virgin Mary. In 1640, Diego de Saavedra Fajardo would include dissimulation as a sub-class of prudence in his *Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano en cien empresas*. When "Cornudo y contento" premiered in 1567,

however, the art of dissembling would have been reminiscent of Machiavellian machinations, which had been censured in Spain.[9] In other words, dissimulation could hardly have been viewed openly as a virtue. Yet, while the moralists may condemn Bárbara's shiftiness, we imagine more than a few snickers from the rest of the public, who have become accomplices to the dissimulation occurring on stage.

By successfully interpolating the audience into the deception present in the realm of make-believe, "Cornudo y contento" has directed their perspective away from the impropriety of the content and towards the artful creation of appearances. The plot and the resolution of conflict are de-emphasized, replaced in importance by the dramatic irony that pervades the piece. Once engaged in the interpretation of this irony, the audience finds itself allied with the active characters, who are able to properly assess and manipulate their situation. In this sense, the interlude advocates becoming the subject of one's actions rather than merely being acted upon by other agents.

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[9] For more information on the censorship of Machiavelli in Spain, see Virgilio Pinto Crespo, *Inquisición y control ideológico en la España del siglo XVI* (Madrid: Taurus, 1983).

Similar both in form and content to Lope's *paso*, the anonymous "Entremés de un viejo que es casado con una mujer moza" appeared on the *tablas* near the end of the sixteenth century.[10] The majority of *entremeses* performed during this time period followed Lope de Rueda's precedent: written in prose, they made use of a central stratagem and stock characters (such as the Student and the Fool) to create a comic situation that differed more in artifice than in argument (Huerta Calvo 16-17).

The stratagem in this anonymous interlude again involves a wife tricking her husband. Cobeña, a wealthy landowner, leaves his wife under the watchful eye of his servant, Ajarafe (a name that, meaning "flat land," reflects on the servant's mental acuity). Doña Eufemia and the other houseservant, Chuzón (the Wit), take advantage of Cobeña's absence to bring Doctor Albaida to the house. From an upper window, Ajarafe spies the couple embracing and races down to the courtyard to confront them. Warned of his approach, Albaida slips away. Then, amid much laughter, Eufemia and Chuzón inform the bewildered Ajarafe that the window is enchanted so that Chuzón merely appears to be the doctor. After several trials, with the doctor dashing in and out of

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[10] Huerta Calvo traces the basis for the storyline of this *entremés* to the Tenth Day of Boccaccio's *Decameron* (103).

sight, they convince Ajarafe that Albaida is only an illusion. When Cobeña returns, Ajarafe calmly informs his master of the window's amazing properties. Cobeña puts it to the test and, once properly convinced—or deceived, as the case may be—apologizes profusely to his wife and becomes fast friends with the doctor, who has conveniently dropped by the house.

This *entremés* develops its suspense along the lines of a traditional play, complete with introduction, development, climax, and conclusion. When Cobeña explains his fears of his wife's infidelity to Ajarafe, the audience has only his suspicions. The validity of his accusation is not known until his wife comes on stage and begins her tirade against her jealous husband: "¿Que es posible que me cele este viejo del licenciado Albaida, que es la lumbre destos ojos?" (105). Once the conflict between Cobeña (who is trying to discover the truth) and Eufemia (who is concealing it) has been established, the interlude's tension mounts. The audience is not privileged, as it was in "Cornudo y contento," to inside information via lengthy asides. Instead, Eufemia's and Chuzon's merry refrain of "No se lo digas" (107) keeps the public in the dark just as it does Ajarafe. Thus, the spectators initially find themselves in the same position as the

bobo, since they do not know how Eufemia can excuse her obvious indiscretion.

Even when the ploy of the enchanted window is revealed to the audience, there remains the question of whether or not Cobeña will find it credible. It is one thing to outwit the fool, but Cobeña is not (originally) portrayed as a fool; rather, he shows characteristics of the honor-obsessed husbands and father figures abounding in the *comedia*. The interlude's outcome produces a parody of those very honor plays: Cobeña, livid after hearing Ajarafe's report, nevertheless falls for the ruse, and the rosy glow of they-lived-happily-ever-after spreads across the scene as Eufemia and Albaida embrace behind the back (literally and figuratively) of Cobeña. The poetic justice so reminiscent of the honor plays succumbs to parody as well, since in the end "justice," or partiality, is granted to deceit.

The humor used to accentuate the parody relies more on deliberate punning than on the ironic lines unwittingly uttered by Martín. The pun, as described by Glasgow:

> revolves around the perception of difference as well as an instinctual enjoyment of the elements of fantastic illogicality, of suppressed sexuality, or of hidden aggression. Punning words are *wobbly* masks that disclose a hidden disparity normally masked more efficiently by social discourse. (93)

In this piece, puns are likewise employed to pull a flimsy veil over the reality of the situation—perfectly transparent to the audience and to other characters "in the know." We see this deliberate wit wielded most often by Eufemia and Chuzón:

> Mujer: Chuzón, da un remedio como vea yo este rato que nos cabe, a mi dotor, que me siento mala.
> Chuzón: Ahora que siempre está enferma de la cintura para abajo, ¿qué será esto?
> Mujer: Es mal de mujeres el que yo tengo; da un remedio. (105)

Since the audience is already aware of the ongoing love affair between Eufemia and the doctor, they become part of the privileged listeners who understand the code in which the two characters are speaking. "Da un remedio" suggests that Eufemia wants Chuzón to act as the go-between for her and the doctor. Chuzón, although he understands perfectly well the intentions of his mistress, responds in such a way as to seem genuinely concerned about her health. His tongue-in-cheek comment barely contains its sexual innuendo, however, even for an uninformed listener. Despite Chuzón's directness, Eufemia stubbornly maintains the wordplay by insisting on her infirmity, the dreaded "mal de mujeres." By the time this interlude appeared in the late sixteenth century, the expression "mal de mujeres" had already acquired a connotation beyond that of an unspecified female health problem: it was often

used as a euphemism to express a woman's sexual desire.[11] The audience, comprehending these double meanings, would likely find itself identifying with the dissimulating characters through the lure of cognitive superiority.

As in "Cornudo y contento," the way the characters are portrayed plays a large part in directing the perspective of the audience. Of all the characters in the anonymous *entremés*, Eufemia shows herself to be the one most capable of operating skillfully within social conventions. Although wrapped in metaphor, her lines admit her sexual desire and extend an invitation through Chuzón to Albaida. She concocts the ruse to trick Ajarafe and Cobeña. She acts the offended innocent while Cobeña showers her with praises of her purity. And, in the end, Cobeña and Albaida let her decide whether her lover be allowed to stay as a house guest. Therefore, she is portrayed as an active character, one who dissembles to achieve her ends even while staying within her restricted social position.

Concealment and discovery constitute the basic conflict in the interlude, with concealment triumphing in the end. Since honor is largely based on how others perceive an individual, the

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[11] See Javier Huerta Calvo's *Teatro breve de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Madrid: Taurus, 1985) 363-64.

parody of that high social code in this interlude subverts its exalted position. Parody, guile, and the dextrous punning of Eufemia and Chuzón reveal to the audience the skill involved both in fabricating masks and in seeing behind them.

The art of making and breaking social masks becomes more overt in Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's "El examinador Miser Palomo." By the time this work appeared in 1617, the Spanish interlude had undergone some revisions in form and content. In his study of the *entremés*, Eugenio Asensio sees "El examinador Miser Palomo" as the dividing line between two distinct varieties of comic interlude: one in prose with a realistic anecdote, and the other in verse with a more stylized scenario (68). The change from prose to rhymed verse decreases the verisimilitude of the *entremés* and focuses attention instead on the play of language. Huerta Calvo indicates that rhyming in the *entremés*, "practicada desde esta intención no poética, sino lúdica y divertida, aboca en el ripio, que en el universo de nuestros géneros debe tomarse como una recurrencia estética más, en aras de una mayor intensificación grotesca. . . ." (44). While it cannot be said that Hurtado de Mendoza's work was the first to appear in verse (see, for example, Juan de Timoneda's *Turiana*, a collection of interludes and stories, published in 1565), it nonetheless combined its rhymed and

metered dialogue with a series of other elements that made this short piece a model for a new style of *entremés*.

To begin with, the sketchy plotline seen in the former two *entremeses* becomes positively skeletal in "El examinador Miser Palomo."[12] Instead of a "sting" directed at the play's fool, this interlude presents one individual as a sort of master of ceremonies, who provides the audience with a disparaging commentary on a number of social types, or *figuras*. The only link holding the diverse characters together is the M.C. and the idea of the examination; otherwise, they do not interact as characters. The M.C. in this case is a hefty, ridiculously dressed Miser Palomo, who sets up his review of these *figuras* at an inn. His mission, he states is:

> a examinar a todo buscavida
> sabandijas del arca de la corte
> donde se acoge tanto vagamundo
> como en diluvio universal del mundo. (140)

One after another, characters representing different urban occupations from court pretender to braggart come before the examiner and declare their talents and abilities. Miser Palomo sets down a judgement steeped in satire for each. The interlude comes

[12] A similar structure appears in prose fiction around this time period. See, for example, Francisco de Quevedo's *Los sueños* (1622) and Luis Vélez de Guevara's *El diablo cojuelo* (1641).

to a close when two women ask to be examined as dancers. While Miser Palomo expresses mock horror at the thought of sensual dancing, the women begin to sing and move in time to the music, putting an end to the examination and to the *entremés*.

Musical accompaniment was not a new phenomenon to theatrical performances, but it became increasingly important—or at least, increasingly popular—in the *entremeses* of the seventeenth century.[13] The rise in demand for singing and dancing coincided with greater attempts to control performance in the interludes. However, if the *entremeses*, in and of themselves, were difficult for the *protector de comedias* to censor, dancing (like gestures and facial expressions) would have been nearly impossible. In 1615 the *Consejo de Castilla* would submit a recommendation to Philip III, which "prohibits all lascivious or immodest songs, dances, or gestures, and permits only such as may be in conformity with the old dances and *bailes*, and especially forbids all the *bailes de escarramanes, chaconas, zarabandas, carreterías*, and all similar dances,. . . ." (Rennert 221). Given this prohibition, the song and dance number at the

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[13] See Hugo Rennert, *The Spanish Stage in the Time of Lope de Vega* (New York: HSA, 1909) 62-63.

end of Miser Palomo stands out as particularly significant, especially when heralded by these lines:

> volvieron de su destierro
> los malperseguidos bailes
> socarrones de buen gusto
> y pícaros de buen aire. (149)

Evidently, the prohibition against certain dances did not stand for long, or was not enforced, and the characters of Hurtado de Mendoza's interlude celebrate their return. The presence of the closing dance, which would become a trademark of seventeenth-century *entremeses*, indicates the influence popular demand could have on staged performances.

In the case of "El examinador Miser Palomo," the "popular" demand that might have affected its writing and performance fell to a decidedly reduced number of individuals. Hurtado de Mendoza prepared this interlude for a particular setting: a party at the Duke of Lerma's residence (Huerta Calvo 97). Such an exclusive audience suggests that its first showing, at least, would have had little of the social diversity present in the *corrales*. Instead, the implicit audience of "El examinador Miser Palomo" would represent a select group of the Castillian nobility.

This target audience found an original cast of characters populating the stage during the *entremés*. Whereas in the previous

interludes, the characters were commoners who came primarily from a rural background (rich farmers, wily women, idle students), in "El examinador Miser Palomo" we find *hidalgos* and noble-want-to-bes, as well as urbanites from lesser walks of life, all bound within a distinctly metropolitan setting.

Along with the switch from prose to verse and from story to parade of *figuras*, the combination of an aristocratic audience and new social representation on stage conditions the dynamics between the comic action and the spectators. The characters in the interlude no longer draw the audience into their exploits, making them participants to dissimulation. Miser Palomo is the only one who directly addresses the audience, and he does so infrequently. There is no enigma or suspense in the plot based on information disclosed to the audience but hidden from other characters. Instead, the M.C. methodically inspects a cross-section of society, and the spectators are like so many jurors, removed from the characters' situations but standing in judgement of them. The interlude's scenario generates an exclusive "we": an audience who feels confident that Miser Palomo is satirizing the ridiculous, little people who have no place at court.[14] The implicit

[14] According to Ruth Lee Kennedy, Hurtado de Mendoza had a reputation for writing satirical attacks against other literary figures. It is therefore quite

social criticism of the fool from the earlier *entremeses* has become overt criticism of social types in the form of satire.

The satire touches all of the characters in the interlude, including Miser Palomo. While setting up his examination at the inn, he declares "yo he de exceder mi oficio rectamente" (140). The phonetic slippage from *ejercer* (to perform one's duty) to *exceder* (to exceed one's duty, or to go too far) generates laughter while simultaneously pointing to the excesses (i.e. greed, dishonesty) often attributed to scribes. The satire directed towards other characters is embedded in Miser Palomo's recommendations for their "improvement." Reacting to the reluctance shown by a *caballero* to tipping his hat, Miser Palomo demonstrates (to him and to the audience) the proper use of that accessory:

> Gorrear de esta suerte a todo el mundo:
> al hidalgo, a los ojos y a la boca;
> al caballero, al título, a la barba;
> al grande, al pecho; al rey, a la rodilla;
> al Papa, hocicadura, y de este modo
> acabaréis de ser pesado en todo. (143)

In this way, Miser Palomo attempts to point out and fill the holes in the deliberately constructed façade worn by the characters. On the one hand, then, the M.C. is teaching these individuals (and the

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possible that some of these *figuras* represented specific individuals rather than (or in addition to) general types. For further reading on court intrigue in the reigns of Philip III and Philip IV, see Ruth Lee Kennedy, *Studies in Tirso, I: The*

audience) how to create a desired appearance; on the other, however, he tears down those same masks by ridiculing them. The art behind the façade is made manifest to all, destroyed rather than perpetuated in the process.

Francisco de Quevedo's "Entremés de la ropavejera" (c. 1624) follows the interlude style set forth by "El examinador Miser Palomo." It, too, uses verse instead of prose—now the rule, not the exception. Satire is the humoristic mode of choice. Furthermore, Quevedo's interlude also has an M.C. as its connecting force. Rather than an examiner, though, we find a *ropavejera*, literally, a second-hand clothes dealer, but in her case (as she clarifies) a second-hand body parts dealer. The *ropavejera de la vida* has the additional comic relief of Rastrojo, an observer who stays on stage throughout the performance, expressing his shock and incredulity. Quevedo's interlude targets men and women—particularly the latter—who go to extremes in order to modify their appearance. Doña Sancha enters first and requests a few replacement teeth. She ends up taking an entire jaw that the *ropavejera* guarantees to be "like new" (110). Others come and go, each one trying to cosmetically alter him or herself to appear younger or more perfect.

Dramatist and his Competitors, 1620-26 (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Department of Romance Languages, 1974).

The interlude closes with a dance: the *ropavejera* introduces her former clients as different dances (i.e. *la Zarabanda, la Pironda, la Chacona*) that will come together to "mend" their old *baile del Rastro* (114).

As in "El examinador Miser Palomo," no storyline emerges with a clear beginning, middle and end. The first line drops the audience into an ongoing conversation between Rastrojo and the *ropavejera*: "¡Válgame Dios, qué extraordinaria cosa! / ¿Qué oficio dice vuesarced que tiene?" (109). No conflict develops between characters that might rise to a climax; rather, they parade one by one before the audience with their outrageous requests. The patchwork dance that marks the finale loosely connects to the interlude's over-riding concept: the art involved in mending one's appearance.

The transmission of this concept and any message that one might attribute to it becomes complicated by the presence of three separate addressees: the *figuras*, Rastrojo, and the audience proper. The *ropavejera* directs comments to all of them over the course of the interlude, sending different signals to each. This encourages multiple interpretations, according to the relative position of a given addressee.

The *figuras*, bound as they are within their assigned roles, take the suggestions from the *ropavejera* at "face value." They are participating in a world where one can don new body parts as one might clothes, and the exigency lies in constructing an appearance that conforms to the society's ideals for perfection: youth and physical beauty. The optical illusion highlighted here is thus grounded in physical characteristics rather than in dissimulation. The audience literally is shown what lies behind the façade of these *figuras*.[15]

Rastrojo, meanwhile, is horrified by the transformations and transactions he is witnessing. With comical innocence, he balks at the thought of stepping into this world of papier-mâché features. He, like the audience, is watching the grotesque parade. Besides being an observer, he acts as a commentator whose words underline the moral lesson attached to the *entremés*: "Mancebos, creed en bocas falsas/ con dientes de alquiler como las mulas" (111). The careful construction of appearance taking place on the level of the *figuras* is systematically destroyed by Rastrojo, who conveys to the audience the reality behind the masks on stage.

[15] The text does not indicate whether these body parts are actual props or whether they are left to the imagination of the audience.

The spectators' interpretation is conditioned not only by the reactions of the *figuras* and Rastrojo, but also by the way in which the *ropavejera* addresses them. In the sixteenth-century *entremeses* previously discussed, any direct contact between character and audience served to ally the two, but Quevedo's interlude involves the audience differently. Instead of being an insider to the action onstage, spectators find themselves in the same, uncomfortable position as the *figuras*. For instance, after making reference to a certain young woman seated in the *cazuela*, the *ropavejera* adds:

> Desde aquí veo una mujer y un hombre
> (nadie tema que nombre)
> que no ha catorce días que estuvieron
> en mi percha colgados,
> y están por doce partes remendados. (110)

The spectators snicker at the (imaginary) man and woman seated in the audience who have been targeted by the M.C., but are they able to do so without blushing a little nervously? Who among them is free from any cosmetic alterations? With her words, the *ropavejera* marks the entire audience as participants in the world of body parts and artifice.

Unlike the "superior" audience in "El examinador Miser Palomo," this group of theatre-goers finds it no longer sits in the security of an exclusive "we." The satire directed ostensibly at the

figuras is capable of sparking in each individual spectator first a self-conscious examination, and then surreptitious glances at his or her neighbors. "We" becomes inclusive in the sense that: "El espectador no está nunca solo; su mirada abarca el espectáculo y a los espectadores, siendo a su vez, y por ello mismo, blanco de las miradas de los demás" (Ubersfeld 12). In the "Entremés de la ropavejera" the entire *corral* converts into a mass of potential *figuras*, and the satire originally directed at the ridiculous characters extends to the audience and from there, to the society at large.

To what end does the *ropavejera* position her audience (at least, any who may harbor a guilty conscience) as the brunt of her wit? Satire, as a mode of humor, has the dual role of entertaining and criticizing. P. K. Elkin remarks that a satirist "was out to reform his age—not just any age, but the one in which he lived. He wrote the kind of satire which would please people of his own age, for he could not hope to influence and instruct them unless he first won their attention by pleasing them. . . ." (35). An intent to influence and instruct certainly lies behind Quevedo's *entremés*. By satirizing society's attempt to conceal flaws, the interlude mercilessly destroys the masks with which people surround themselves and submit them to the harsh scrutiny of reality.

By the time Luis Quiñones de Benavente's "El doctor Juan Rana" was published in 1645, the satirical vein seen in Hurtado de Mendoza's and Quevedo's works had diminished. In this *entremés cantado*, Juan Rana, the indolent star of many of Benavente's pieces, appears in a doctor's guise.[16] Amid Juan Rana's cheerful slams against the medical profession, Salvador entreats him to make a house call on six people who are supposedly suffering from food poisoning after eating a young rabbit. Instead, the good doctor finds that his patients' illnesses spring from love. Being sick from "eating young rabbit" is the first in a long line of sexual innuendos that constitute the bulk of the interlude. As the patients describe their troubles to the doctor, Juan Rana invents prescriptions in kind, such as purchasing a concealing hoop skirt for a pregnant woman:

Josefa: De comer vestidos justos
es la opilación que traigo.
Juan: Compren luego un guarda-infante,
y úntenla con él el bazo,
y miren bien lo que compran,
que esta invención de los diablos
tal vez por esparto es hierro,
y tal vez por hierro es parto. (193-94)

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[16] Juan Rana, the star of more than forty different *entremeses*, was the pseudonym of actor Cosme Pérez (1600? – 1672). In some interludes, such as the one studied here, his sidekick is Jaime Salvador. After 1649, Bernarda Ramírez becomes his standard counterpart (Bergman 45).

The slim storyline disintegrates as the sung dialogue becomes a song and dance number with a repeated refrain.

Given the subject matter (patients discussing their sexual relationships), how did this interlude stand the test of a firmly entrenched censorship? The trend established by early seventeenth-century interludes, in which storylines were de-emphasized, peaks in this one where the content is overshadowed by the dramatic process. The process serves to veil "morally subversive" content by drawing attention away from the storyline and directing it instead towards form and techniques.

Music and dance definitely assume a more significant role in this interlude than in the ones previously discussed, where they merely supplied a conclusion. The verse form popularized some twenty years earlier allows for fluid transitions between spoken and sung dialogue, thereby enabling the verses to supply meaning by the way in which they are sung. For instance, the singing of those who are ill creates a sense of irony when Juan Rana and Salvador first arrive at the patients' house: hearing the sorrowful and cadenced response to their greeting, the doctor believes he has arrived in time only for mourning. Then, as Juan Rana diagnoses the patients, the meter changes from eight syllables to six, at the same time that the speaker shifts more and more rapidly from one

character to the next. This acceleration occurs in the same place structurally where one might find a climax, and is followed by a lengthening of verses and the repeated refrains that mark the end of the interlude. The singing, rather than serving solely as a mechanism to end the *entremés*, helps organize the interlude and guides its reception.

The emphasis on form makes it difficult for the audience to get lost in the world of make-believe and encourages a more detached viewing. As Glasgow puts it:

> Play, by nature paradoxical and ambiguous, is both real and pretend: whereas illusionistic play hides or suppresses the element of pretence, self-aware play leaves the two aspects in suspension, transforming the illusion into a new kind of ironic or self-conscious illusion. A nonsensical ontological no-man's-land is created, a space in which the characters hover between reality and fiction. (161)

From the beginning "El doctor Juan Rana" demonstrates a self-awareness that focuses the audience's attention on the nature of the theatrical performance:

> Tan ligero soy de cholla,
> señores, que me he pasado
> desde tribunal de alcalde
> al de médico, de un salto.
> Allí, por culpa del hombre,
> le mataba sentenciando;
> pero aquí, por culpa mía,
> sin sentencialle le mato. (187)

Juan Rana refers here to a former role he played in a different *entremés* (one of his more frequent roles being that of mayor). Besides emphasizing the changeable nature of Juan Rana's mask, the references to "there" and "here" emphasize the presence of other interludes and his self-conscious nature.[17] The audience is undoubtedly familiar with these past roles and with the characteristics of Juan Rana.

The two-dimensional aspect of characters on stage is highlighted once more when Juan Rana and Salvador are inside with those stricken ill. The first two "patients" that the doctor sees are the same actress. There is no attempt to change her costume or guise; she simply switches chairs. This makes the concept of playing a role more conspicuous by focusing on the actress as an entity that is separate from the character.

Even Salvador, who is the character most fully engaged in the plot, foregrounds the limits of the fictitious world when he makes the comment: "Sin sentir llegado habemos" (191). Having a character announce "we have arrived" to indicate a leap through time and space was a familiar device in Golden Age theatre used to

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[17] Regarding Juan Rana, Hannah Bergman states: "Esta figura, la única auténtica *máscara* creada por el teatro español, se interpone entre el actor y el papel. Cosme Pérez no hace el alcalde ni el médico, sino que hace *Juan Rana*, y *Juan* Rana a su vez hace el alcalde, etc., con una extraordinaria conciencia de sí mismo" (45).

compensate for the stage's confines. Here, the convention itself is mocked as Salvador draws special attention to those confines with "sin sentir." Seen together, these elements prevent the audience from becoming too absorbed in the mimetic aspect of the interlude.

To further transform the "illusionistic play" into a more objective representation, this interlude plays with the conventions of language usage. Conventions, as discussed by Cohan and Shires, are "cultural agreements about the relation of a sign and its meaning" (3). Their concept of conventions includes, then, both a signifier's ability to shift its relationship with a signified, and the necessity of common public interpretation to determine its meaning. All of the characters in this interlude use language that relies on convention to convey a concept, since the language itself deliberately hides meaning. In the following exchange a literal interpretation produces only nonsense:

> Rosa: Un gatazo me enferma
> de carne y queso.
> Juan: Tome nuez de ballesta
> que es gran remedio. (196)

"Carne" was often used to refer to the penis, while the "nuez" of a crossbow was made from deer horns (Andrés 196). One could therefore deduce that Rosa's current lover is either not satisfying her or is having affairs, and that the doctor suggests she cuckold

him in return. The dialogue relies on the the cultural agreements between signifier and signified in order to successfully transmit the joke to the audience. If the cultural agreement on meaning is not unanimous, however, some spectators will not "get" the joke and will be left trying to disentangle the word play.

Given the material in the rest of the *entremés*, most spectators would at least discern the sexual innuendo of the exchange, and once again, one might question how "El doctor Juan Rana" survived a censorship that found dances immoral. The answer may lie in the fact that the "indiscretions" in this interlude are not enacted by the characters through the plot. Instead, the songs, the characters' self-awareness, and the word play combine to keep the representation from becoming so mimetic as to reflect real world experience.

The transformations evident from Lope de Rueda's "Cornudo y contento" to Luis Quiñones de Benavente's "El doctor Juan Rana" share a common denominator: they consistently move the *entremés* further and further away from the mimetic representation of the real world. The tendency towards prose became a preference for verse and finally an affinity for music and singing. The slim storylines based on a central ruse switched to parades of satire. The social types imported from the *comedia dell' arte* were

supplanted by *hidalgos* and other urbanites who walked the streets of Madrid. Despite these changes, however, the interludes continued to portray the instability of signs and their potential manipulation. By focusing on dissimulation and the construction of appearances, by tearing away such appearances through satire, or by erecting a concealing façade within its very structure, the *entremés* responded to the constraints imposed on it by the institutionalization and censorship of theatre, but continued to demonstrate the art of making and breaking social masks.

2. The Guiding Force of Fools

From the Greek chorus to Bertold Brecht's dialectic narrator, theatre has seen a variety of characters whose role in a play is to stand outside of the play. These characters inhabit an ambiguous zone within the confines of the theatrical space (be that an amphitheater or a warehouse), since they participate in the performance while simultaneously acting as a highly qualified viewing public. Their functions range from providing a synopsis of past or future events associated with the main action, to making humorous commentaries, to exposing illusions that would otherwise threaten to deceive the unwary spectator. All of these functions create distance between the public and the mimetic representation, and this distance allows the audience a more critical point of view, although one which is being guided by these mediators who stand between the audience and the spectacle.

A variation of the intermediary character appeared on the medieval stage in the form of the *platea* figure. The *platea* was a region where actors mingled with their audience in a "nonrepresentational and unlocalized setting" reminiscent of traditional, communal festivities (Weimann 79). The pageant carts, scaffolding or other platform constructions associated with

medieval staging became the sites for the *locus*, where the main argument unfolded. With the construction of permanent playhouses in Early Modern Europe, the vertical distance separating these two spaces diminished until they joined to share a single stage.[1]

In her study of Shakespearean tragedy, Emily Bartels discusses the *locus* and the *platea* of the theatre as two spaces that maintain two distinct acting styles:

> The *locus* housed the dramatic illusion, the central "reality" of the play. Its scenes and characters were embedded believably in a quasi-realistic time, place, and network of relations, probably played out in the interior of the stage and distanced, literally and figuratively, from the audience, from the fact that what we are watching is theatre. The *platea*, in contrast, was an abstract, non-illusionist space, positioned down stage, close to the audience, where the boundaries of fiction were broken. (175)

Viewed in this way, the *platea* represents a space for marginalized characters such as fools, madmen, and villains, all of whom have an uncanny ability to view the action taking place on center stage and to see the "reality" that remains so unfathomable to the characters situated solely within the *locus*. By seeing and relaying what they have seen to an expectant audience, these *platea* figures

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[1] The single stage began appearing in Spain from 1568. Madrid's Corral de la Cruz and Corral del Príncipe, the first permanent playhouses constructed exclusively for the purpose of commercial representations, were constructed in 1579 and 1582, respectively (Díez Borque 4-6).

participate in the artful construction of the play and thereby gain a certain amount of authority.

As noted above, the physical division between *locus* and *platea* gradually dissolves until *platea* figures find themselves occupying the same space and time as the *locus* characters. The distinction between the two acting styles, then, becomes primarily metaphorical, with certain characters assuming a *platea* mode of acting in order to slip temporarily outside of the dramatic illusion. As Bartels points out regarding Elizabethan theatre, by the mid-sixteenth century the *locus* and *platea* had "collapsed into each other, producing a fairly seamless interplay of perspectives and counterperspectives, illusions and lucid disillusionments" (179). The characters that originate from this merging of spaces no longer neatly organize the spectator's point of view, but rather present the audience with multiple perspectives.

In the realm of the Spanish *comedia*, the *platea* figure as a distinct entity may be most visible in early sixteenth-century plays, when the adherence to classical dramatic forms was at its height. While living in Italy, Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (1475?-1520) provided his elite Spanish patrons with an introit speaker who assumed the role of a peasant, both in language and demeanor. In Torres Naharro's *Comedia soldadesca* (c. 1510) this rustic

character introduces the play with a direct address to the spectators, in which he first criticizes their education and intelligence, then ridicules their presumption and finally denounces their way of life:

> Vos, señores,
> vivís en muchos dolores
> y sois ricos de más penas,
> y coméis de los sudores
> de pobres manos ajenas. (53)

After a perfunctory apology for his audacious comments, he goes on to highlight selected elements of the plot (i.e. what will be occurring in the *locus*) before withdrawing. In a relatively short amount of time, he has challenged the ability of his supposed superiors to comprehend the *comedia*—assuring an attempt on their part to prove him wrong—and has conditioned the audience's reaction to the play by outlining his version of the plot. Although his role is but a prologue, this character dabbles in directing the audience's perspective before the main spectacle has even begun.

Nearly one hundred years later, a cousin of Torres Naharro's impertinent peasant finds his footing on center stage as the *gracioso*.[2] This "stock" character, considered a trademark of

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[2] In his prologue to the published version of *La francesilla* (1597), Lope de Vega indicates that he introduced the *gracioso* character (not to be confused with the rustic peasant) in that play, and that his character would become the model for future "figures of wit." (Santomauro 7)

Golden Age theatre, nonetheless has defied an absolute definition. In his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* of 1611, Covarrubias asserts (not very helpfully) that the *gracioso* is "el que dize gracias" (653). Since then, this character has been linked to the slave from Roman theatre (Maria Hesler), to Harlequin from the *commedia dell'arte* (Edwin Place), and to the *simple*, or fool, of Juan de Encina and Lope de Rueda (Manuel Diago). In her introduction to Tirso de Molina's *graciosos*, Maria Santomauro lists thirty characteristics attributable to *graciosos*, with such possible—and antithetical—combinations as a lying, sniveling, cowardly servant or a faithful, witty and wise companion (7-8). Other researchers have abandoned antecedents and categorization to investigate the social implications this character brings to the stage. For José Antonio Maravall, the *gracioso* is a "stabilizing factor," contrived by the playwrights to elicit a favorable response towards the *comedia's* noble protagonists (26-7), while Teresa Scott Soufas contends that, instead of serving state propaganda, the *gracioso* conveys "a conservative morality that undermines absolutism" (316). The focus of this chapter is to analyze the *gracioso* as an intermediary character who participates in the dramatic illusion while retaining conventions reminiscent of the

platea figure.[3] In this position, he or she influences the spectators' point of view and is therefore instrumental in determining how the play might be interpreted by its audience.

The four plays included in this chapter are deliberately eclectic: two comedies and two tragedies (or *tragicomedias*), each from a different playwright. All were written between 1620 and 1640, which means they were prepared for what had already become an institutionalized form of entertainment. Although some might argue that the *gracioso* is not endowed with a distinct personality,[4] the characters who assume that role in these four plays differ significantly in the relationship each one establishes with his or her master on stage and, likewise, the relationship each promotes with the audience.

In *El caballero de Olmedo* (1620-1625), Lope de Vega builds on the standing tradition of a medieval *romance*.[5] Set during the

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[3] This is not to suggest that the *gracioso* is the only type of character in Golden Age plays to make use of *platea* conventions or "step outside" of the dramatic illusion; however, the *gracioso* seems to be the most common manifestation of this technique.

[4] See José Antonio Maravall, "Relaciones de dependencia e integración social: Criados, graciosos y pícaros." *Ideologies and Literature* 1.4 (1977): 3-32.

[5] For information on the literary and social traditions behind *El caballero de Olmedo*, see William C. McCrary's *The Goldfinch and the Hawk* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1966) and Dian Fox, "History, Tragedy and the Ballad Tradition in *El caballero de Olmedo*." *The Golden Age Comedia: Text, Theory and Performance* Ed. Charles Ganelin and Howard Mancing (West Lafayette: Purdue UP, 1994).

reign of King John of Castile (1406-54),[6] the play retells with a celestinesque flair the "star-crossed" love story of don Alonso (el caballero de Olmedo) and doña Inés. Don Alonso goes to Medina to attend a fair and falls in love with doña Inés. Despite the protests of his servant, Tello, don Alonso employs the services of Fabia, an old matchmaker who is not above using a spot of witchcraft to attain her ends. His attentions to doña Inés succeed in alienating don Rodrigo and don Fernando, who, as "worthy" gentlemen from Medina, are courting doña Inés and her sister, doña Leonor.

Concerned by don Alonso's seemingly constant presence in Medina, don Rodrigo presses his suit, but when doña Inés's father relays the offer of marriage, she declines on the basis that she is already "married": she declares that she wants to be a nun and that she will need teachers to make up for her deficiencies in Latin and theology. Enter Tello and Fabia, whose instruction to doña Inés assumes a decidedly secular nature.

A tournament held in King John's honor brings don Alonso once more to Medina. He and Tello make an excellent showing at the tournament, which does nothing to endear them to Medina's

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[6] The *condestable* that appears in this play is don Alvaro de Luna, one of the first noteworthy "favorites" to grace the Castillian court scene. He was instrumental in King John's acquisition of royal power, but was executed without trial in 1453 (MacKay 138-39).

male population. Failing to heed both supernatural warnings and the advice of Tello and Fabia, don Alonso decides to return to Olmedo yet that night and is ambushed by don Rodrigo and don Fernando. Tello, who arrives too late to help his master, returns to Medina to recount the treachery behind the death of the knight of Olmedo. The king puts an end to the play by ordering don Rodrigo and don Fernando's imprisonment and promising that their "villainous necks" will be slit the next day.

In Juan Pérez de Montalbán's *No hay vida como la honra* (c. 1628), don Carlos Osorio and doña Leonor face more daunting impediments to their love, yet manage to bring the story to a happier conclusion. The initial problem arises in that don Carlos lacks the social standing and wealth of the local rival, the Count of Belflor. To further complicate the situation, doña Leonor's father has promised her to don Fernando, a cousin, who comes to Valencia ready to meet his future bride.

Although doña Leonor's father has already arranged her marriage to don Fernando, he wavers when the Count asks for her hand, since such a wedding would substantially increase their family's social standing. Finding no other means of appeasing her father, doña Leonor agrees to marry the Count on the condition that they proceed slowly with the arrangements so that they will

not give the impression of acting solely out of self-interest. In the meantime, she secretly marries don Carlos. Then one night, expecting a visit from her husband, she finds herself instead confronted by the Count, who has pretended to be don Carlos. The Count pays for his affrontry when don Carlos kills him in a duel.

Ten months pass. The Viceroy of Valencia has put a substantial price on don Carlos' head, dead or alive. Now an outlaw in the hills, don Carlos finds out that doña Leonor's father has died and her family's money has disappeared into the hands of creditors. Fearing that doña Leonor may be driven into another's arms by her desperate circumstances, don Carlos returns to Valencia. When he sees that doña Leonor has remained faithful to him despite her plight, he surrenders himself directly to the Viceroy, asking that the reward money be granted to doña Leonor. The Viceroy, moved by don Carlos' noble act, not only pardons him but also gives the couple twice the reward.

A more light-hearted love story greets the audience of Calderón's *No hay burlas con el amor* (1635). At the beginning of the play we find don Alonso about to fire his servant, Moscatel, for the impertinence of falling in love. Moscatel is saved by don Juan, who needs both don Alonso and Moscatel to help him with his love interest, doña Leonor. She is the younger sister of doña Beatriz,

whose overly erudite language and arrogant attitude baffle any who attempt to converse with her. Don Juan wants to marry doña Leonor, but doubts that her father would let the younger daughter marry before the older. Although don Alonso belongs to the "love them and leave them" school of relationships, he agrees to aid his friend.

As luck would have it, Moscatel's sweetheart, Inés, also happens to be the noblewomen's maid, and she becomes the go-between for don Juan and doña Leonor. Doña Leonor dissembles better than her learned sister, and makes their father believe that doña Beatriz is the one secretly receiving notes from a suitor. Don Juan cajoles don Alonso into feigning a profound love for doña Beatriz.

Unbeknownst to doña Beatriz, another nobleman, don Luis, has been making arrangements to ask her father for her hand. When don Alonso leaves precipitously by means of her balcony one night, don Luis assumes the worst and attacks him. Doña Beatriz finds out that don Alonso has been injured, and sends him a favor—one of her ribbons—through Inés. Although he is loath to admit it, don Alonso has likewise developed some sincere feelings towards doña Beatriz. After the events of the previous night, don Luis withdraws his request for marriage and gives the women's

father more cause to wonder about the good name of his household. When don Alonso and Moscatel again visit doña Beatriz, the father discovers them, and don Juan is forced to explain everything in order to prevent a fight. The play ends with promises of marriage all around.

A very different sort of plot is found in Rojas Zorrilla's tragedy, *Lucrecia y Tarquino* (1635-40). Based loosely on the ancient Roman legend of Lucrecia, this play begins after King Tarquino's successful campaign against Rome.[7] Bruto, the sole Roman survivor, feigns madness in order to be spared. The king's son, Sexto Tarquino, pretends that he is rebelling against his father and wins the confidence of his adversaries, the Gabini. Colatino, Lucrecia's husband and an honored leader of the king's men, is given the order to press the attack against the Gabini.

Sexto Tarquino returns to the king's camp to discuss the next stage of the Gabini's downfall. He volunteers to act as a judge in a debate between three of the army generals (Colatino among them) as to whose wife is most virtuous. The first two find their wives engaging in a party while their husbands are away at war; only Lucrecia has stayed home, determined to behave as the

perfect wife. Sexto Tarquino declares her the winner of the contest and promptly becomes obsessed with her.

Sexto Tarquino pays Lucrecia a visit under the pretext of requesting lodging, and when she rejects his advances, he forces himself on her. Colatino arrives too late: Lucrecia appears, dagger in hand, and relays the story of her rape. She then kills herself to avenge her honor.

Although the *gracioso* characters in these four plays do not absorb much plot-time, they are a frequent, if not constant, presence on stage. With the possible exception of Bruto, they participate fully in the events transpiring in the *locus*, integrated in the central action as surely as the protagonists. Neither the main characters nor the plots of these *comedias* would survive the removal of the *graciosos*. Yet, even as they converse and scheme alongside their masters, the *graciosos* occasionally seem to take a step back from the scene of which they themselves are a part to comment, criticize or simply observe from a distance. This "stepping back" effectively places them in a position more closely resembling that of a *platea* figure: nearer the audience, in spirit if not in substance. Weimann remarks that "In the midst of

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[7] Ann L. MacKenzie points out some of Rojas Zorrilla's artistic liberties with the story of Lucrecia in *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla y Agustín Moreto: Análisis*

increasingly illusionary scenery and localized settings, the fool and his descendents continue to break through the "fourth wall" (at a time when it already seems almost impenetrable), and again conjure and renew the old audience contact" (12). Their presence on stage therefore suggests an influencing factor beyond mimetic representation.

Given that the *platea* as a physical entity has receded from its original home in the midst of the audience, characters who shift outside of the play's central reality resort to means other than a change in space to establish their rapport with the crowd. Asides are a common theatrical devise used to have a "private" exchange between two characters or to divulge a character's inner thoughts. The *graciosos* also employ them when they are securing their position as an intermediary figure. When their asides are not directed at their masters or at other servants, they provide the audience with privileged information of which the *locus* characters are unaware. Such is the case with Bruto in *Lucrecia y Tarquino* when he confesses to the audience that his madness is feigned:

> Ésa sí que es razón de un hombre loco.
> Bien me salió la traza;
> no es loco el que de loco se disfraza.
> La vida gano en la opinión que pierdo,

(Glasgow: Liverpool UP, 1994) 38.

fingido loco y cauteloso cuerdo. (45)

The audience thus knows of Bruto's ruse from almost the beginning of the play, yet the characters entrenched in the *locus* stubbornly fail to realize the deception. His words of warning, which are laughed at by Sexto Tarquino and Colatino as the words of a madman, are heard in all seriousness by the spectators, and his words become increasingly pointed. In yet another aside to the audience—or perhaps, more appropriately, in an apostrophe—Bruto rails against tyrants: "¡Oh tiranos—vive el cielo— / que con estudio y desvelo / a la crueldad dan oído!" (68). His outburst, veiled from the other characters but obvious to the audience, criticizes the obsession with power being portrayed in the *locus* and draws the audience's attention to that facet of the play. Bruto, the madman, becomes like Torres Naharro's introit speaker: he is the one instructing the audience on how to interpret the play.[8]

Bruto's position remains marginal throughout the play, closely related to that of a *platea* figure. Although he occasionally interacts with other characters, his intermediary position is easily identifiable. Other *graciosos* take a more subtle approach when using asides to the audience. In *No hay vida como la honra* Tristán

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[8] Teresa Soufas suggests that the *comedia* is a genre "aligned with the *speculum principis*," with the *gracioso* as the figure of truth (316-17).

draws on an aside to fade into the background and assume the same perspective as the audience when his master, don Carlos, first meets don Fernando: "Ya se miran, ya se llegan, / ya se abrazan, ya se ruegan" (477c). His lines are complemented by the performance of the two noblemen, as they go through the motions of becoming fast friends. From Tristán's vantage point, one removed from center stage, he continues his lines to the audience:

> ¿Quién tal pensara?
> Por un ojo de la cara
> no harán una reverencia.
> ¡Qué tales están los dos
> para danzar un torneo! (478a)

His critical commentary may well mirror the audience's thoughts in this case, as they wonder how it is that these two noblemen become so chummy so quickly. Tristán reacts as the crowd might react to this incident taking place in the *locus*, and gives voice to his surprise. The scene (which does, in fact, take place for the primary purpose of adding a twist to the rivalry between two suitors) becomes somewhat less contrived by the very fact that a character on stage, speaking from the position of another observer, recognizes the extraordinary quality of the chance encounter.

Since Tristán's asides are clearly not meant for other characters on stage, they confirm the existence of two levels of addressees: the prefabricated, fixed characters in the *locus*, and

the everchanging audience. Tristán stops short, however, of directly addressing the public. In Calderón's *No hay burlas con el amor*, Inés turns the spectators into her immediate confidants by addressing them as "you." After delivering a message to don Juan and flirting with Moscatel, she stands alone on stage and proceeds to interpolate the audience briefly into her world:

> Aquesta es mi casa; el manto
> me he de quitar a la puerta,
> que para esto solamente
> creo que en las faldas nuestras
> usamos los guardainfantes.
> Ahora, aunque mi ama la necia
> me haya echado un rato menos,
> no sabrá que he estado fuera.
> Nadie de ustedes lo diga,
> que los cargo la conciencia. (261-2)

Through this short monologue, Inés first establishes the change in scene by explaining that she has, without ever leaving the stage, moved from her meeting with don Juan to her mistresses' house. The fact that she is supposedly in the street and that no other characters are around her facilitates her verbal approach to the audience. She seems to joke to no one in particular about how useful hoop skirts are for hiding incriminating evidence such as her cloak, then blithely insults doña Beatriz, "la necia." However, the last two lines are the ones that seriously grab the attention of the spectators: "ustedes" can only be referring to the spectators

themselves. Her use of "you" places Inés (as transmitter of a message) and the spectators (as receivers) on the same level, thereby generating an implicit and inclusive "we."[9] The audience is being charged with a secret by the *graciosa* and is drawn into the role of an accomplice.

Inés, more than any of the other *graciosos* in these four plays, maintains this kind of direct audience contact. The general "ustedes" with which she first addresses the public later becomes more specific and allows her to position herself with a particular segment of the audience. While listening to don Alonso spout love poetry to doña Beatriz in their first encounter, Inés comments:

> Atención, señoras mías:
> entre mentir o querer
> ¿cuál será lo verdadero
> si esto lo fingido es? (296)

Since doña Beatriz is the only other woman on stage—and since Inés is not about to give away the simulation to her—her aside must be directed towards the women in the audience (most likely those seated together in the *cazuela*). For an instant, then, Inés leaves the dramatic illusion of the *locus* where don Alonso and doña Beatriz are engaged in courtly romance to situate herself next

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[9] For further information on the use of "I" and "you" as signifiers of identity, see Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables, FL: U of Miami P, 1971) 199-224.

to the women in the audience and question what is occurring on stage. She draws attention to the (for her) alarming sincerity in don Alonso's voice, and suggests that the audience should likewise doubt that all is proceeding according to plan.

Although Fabia and Tello, the two plausible *graciosos* in *El caballero de Olmedo*, deliver their share of asides, they do not tend to use these lines to shift into an intermediary position (although they do manage to do so in other ways, as will be seen). Instead, Fabia employs asides to express her spellcasting:

> Apresta,
> fiero habitador del centro,
> fuego accidental que abrase
> el pecho de esta doncella. (90)

These words do give the audience extra information, since the *locus* characters do not appear to hear her invocation. However, the aside does nothing to draw the audience into the role of Fabia's accomplice, since her addressee is the "fiero habitador del centro," i.e. the devil. Nor does it direct the audience's perspective to a particular theme in the play, as did Bruto's apostrophe against tyrants. Rather than distancing the audience from the *locus*, this aside continues to build the dramatic illusion of which Fabia is a part by developing her role as a spellcaster.

Tello likewise delivers asides with no apparent addressee on the level of the *locus*, but as with Fabia, does not use them to establish a rapport with the spectators. After don Alonso is shot, Tello, who was left behind in Olmedo to care for the horses and is only now catching up with him, comes on stage voicing his fears aloud:

> Pena me dieron
> estos hombres que a caballo
> van hacia Medina huyendo.
> Si a don Alonso habían visto
> pregunté; no respondieron.
> ¡Mala señal! Voy temblando. (174)

These lines voice his inner thoughts and inform the audience of what happened offstage while their attention was fixed on a dying don Alonso; but, while the lines do allow the audience to share the thought processes of a loyal (though not overly courageous) lackey, they do not serve to shift Tello's position closer to the audience. Such a shift into an intermediary position would allow him to view the events transpiring in the *locus* from a more critical distance. Instead, Tello maintains his role in the central reality of the play.

Without resorting to an aside, Fabia establishes a rapport with the public through her use of double meanings. Like the asides, these lines have the effect of creating two messages (for two addressees) out of a single utterance: the one as understood by

the *locus* characters, and the other as appreciated by the audience. This tactic is particularly evident when Fabia takes on a nun's guise to infiltrate doña Ines's house and to facilitate communication between don Alonso and doña Inés. Fabia enters, rosary beads in hand, and queries:

> ¿Quién es
> la señora doña Inés,
> que con el Señor se casa?
> ¿Quién es aquella que ya
> tiene su Esposo elegida
> y, como a prenda querida,
> estos impulsos le da? (131)

She continues in this vein throughout her conversation with doña Ines's father, don Pedro. He accepts Fabia for what she appears to be, and consequently mistakes her words of "marriage" as religious metaphors. The spectator, however, instantly groups the secular underpinnings of her linguistic encoding and shares the secret with Fabia and other characters "in the know." Tello joins them soon after and uses a new code—Latin—to the same end. Through their use of double meanings, both Fabia and Tello align their perspective with that of the audience and thus momentarily take up a *platea* position.

Fabia and Tello's relationship with the audience is strengthened by their role as "reliable" interpreters of the events occurring in the *locus*. Given their actions in the dramatic illusion,

these two characters hardly seem to fit the qualifier of "reliable": their motives are suspect (as demonstrated by their keen interest in whatever wealth don Alonso is willing to dispense in pursuit of his love) and they are prone to exaggeration and deception (sometimes for don Alonso's sake but other times out of self-interest). Yet, they alone seem able to see the "reality" that consistently eludes the protagonists, and they indirectly transmit their knowledge to the audience.

From the beginning of the play, Tello understands who and what Fabia is. He attempts to dissuade his master from relying on her, comparing her works to those of the devil (82), but don Alonso persists in seeing her as the blessed *madre* who will guarantee his success (96).[10] Once don Alonso and doña Inés have started meeting on a regular basis, Tello brings up the obvious question of why they continue to keep the relationship secret and to use Fabia as an intermediary:

> . . . también me espanta
> ver este amor comenzar
> por tantas hechicerías,
> y que cercos y conjuros
> no son remedios seguros,
> si honestamente porfías. (113)

[10] *Madre* had the double meaning of "madam," or a woman in charge of a brothel.

Here Tello reiterates his concern about witchcraft and wonders why don Alonso delays in approaching doña Inés's father. The young lovers appear to be so wrapped in the dramatic illusion that they fail to realize that, in truth, they have none of the typical obstacles hindering them—at least, not by the beginning of the second act. Tello's comments to his master thus highlight for the audience this "reality" that goes unnoticed or unheeded by don Alonso and doña Inés.

Fabia also perceives the young lovers' "reality" more astutely than the *locus* characters—she is, in fact, portrayed as the guiding force behind much of it. In the third act, however, events seem to move away from her direction, and she becomes an observer of the action. She is present when doña Inés's father finally learns that his daughter wishes to marry don Alonso. Her infamous insight then takes the form of foreshadowing, as she interjects prognostications of doom in the midst of doña Inés's euphoria: "El parabién te doy, / si no es pésame después" (178). Since the audience already knows that don Alonso has been mortally wounded, Fabia's portentous statements give the impression that she shares the audience's superior knowledge and their perspective of the situation.

In a similar manner, Bruto takes advantage of his marginal position as an imitation lunatic to analyze the hidden agendas that escape the protagonists of *Lucrecia y Tarquino*. After the king gives Colatino a position alongside his sons in the upcoming military campaign, Bruto comments:

> Que el interés
> hace al hombre irracional;
> porque es dulce tiranía
> cambiar el favor de un día
> a la sujeción bestial
> de un siglo, siendo, en efeto,
> esclavo del interés;
> pues viene a verse después
> menos hombre y más sujeto. (48-9)

Sexto Tarquino and Colatino interpret this as mad ramblings; however, for the audience it is a thinly veiled warning of the consequences such "favors" bestowed by the king (or others) can generate. His doctrinal statement becomes a generalized social critique against those who allow ambition to chain them to another's rule.

Later, when the military commanders are setting up the ill-fated contest between wives, Bruto launches into a full-fledged debate with Sexto Tarquino, Colatino, and Acronte (70-72). Suddenly, the madman has assumed center stage—or, to be more precise he has drawn the other three characters momentarily outside of the *locus*. The four characters suddenly appear to be

equals, and the polemic Bruto initiates stops all "action" in the *locus* for a substantial period of time in order to examine whether or not men dare compare each other's wives. This draws the audience away from both storylines—the Gabini conquest and Lucrecia's fall—and focuses attention on a tangential argument. As with his previous critical commentary against *el interés*, Bruto disrupts the dramatic illusion to foreground a social critique.

Although somewhat less serious-minded, Tristán practices a similar *platea* tactic in *No hay vida como la honra*. While don Carlos and don Fernando are becoming acquainted, Tristán wanders off to play cards with don Fernando's servant. He comes back onstage with pressing news, but after joining his master in the *locus*, he prompty detours any advance in the central action through a lengthy discussion:

Tristán: Una embajada
Aloque en la diferencia
De color, alegre y triste,
Magra, gorda, mala, buena,
Parte gusto, parte pena,
Ansia, gloria, susto y chiste
Te traigo.
Don Carlos: Pues di primero
la buena.
Tristán: Pues ¿no es mejor
Saber antes la peor
Porque el bocado postrero
Te cure de aquella mala? (479a)

To this, don Carlos responds in detail why he would prefer the good news first. Although this digression does not carry with it the criticism found in the one precipitated by Bruto, it has a similar effect in that it suspends the dramatic action in favor of philosophizing. By sidetracking the plot momentarily, the *gracioso* once again shifts into an intermediary position in order to hold the audience in suspense as to the exact nature of Tristán's *embajada.* The good news that don Carlos can leave the prison seems anticlimactic coming on the heels of the digression and further delays the cataclysmic bad news: the fact that don Carlos's new friend is betrothed to his beloved doña Leonor.

Language itself becomes the diversion in *No hay burlas con el amor.* After being soundly reprimanded by her father for her tendency to use affected speech, doña Beatriz attempts to mend her ways, only to have Inés inform her that she is failing miserably:

> Lúgubres y crepúsculos he oído,
> equívocos, sinónimos neutrales,
> fenestras, parasismos, y otras tales
> de que yo no me acuerdo. (290)

At a loss, doña Beatriz asks that Inés tug on her sleeve each time she indulges in overeducated speech. Immediately thereafter, don Alonso comes onstage to begin his role as the love-stricken gallant. Doña Beatriz's efforts to remove him from her presence are

continually interrupted by Inés, who, with every *cultismo* from doña Beatriz, verbally tugs her sleeve: "Tirarte de la manga" (293). In its totality, the scene comically displays a contemporary, literary debate that originated in poetry but crossed over to the *comedia* regarding the use of "gongoresque" verses:

> The obscurity of *gongorismo* collides with the 'populism' of the *comedia*. Drama is a genre which demands intelligibility and the immediacy of performance, and the difficulty of this type of poetic discourse would seem to contradict the essence of drama and the need to communicate with an unprepared audience. (Quintero 251)

The dramatist plays with this polemic first by exaggerating doña Beatriz's manner of speaking, then by placing the *graciosa* in the role of mediator of her speech. Inés distracts the audience from don Alonso's histrionics and doña Beatriz's protestations to highlight language itself as the most important "event" in the scene.

Even when no controversy is at stake, *graciosos* use language as a means of distancing the audience from what is occurring on stage. Jane Albrecht mentions that "Ironic commentary, especially in the hands of the *gracioso*, is a way of including detached observation and controlling the audience's reaction to the play" (38). She is referring specifically to characters found in Tirso de Molina's plays, but the same can be

said, for instance, of Tello in *El caballero de Olmedo*. By interjecting humorous commentaries at particularly serious or tense moments, Tello not only provides comic relief, but also allows the audience to analyze more objectively the action taking place. In a particularly impassioned dialogue between don Alonso and doña Inés, replete with the usual lamentations of being kept apart, Tello inserts a droll saying:

> Así dijo a un ciego un griego
> que le contó mil disgustos:
> <<Pues tiene la noche gustos,
> ¿para qué te quejas, ciego?>>

In so doing, he ruptures the intensity of their amorous exchange and places it in a melodramatic mode for the audience. While the spectators may never doubt the sincerity of the love between don Alonso and doña Inés, they are guided into seeing the exaggerated nature of the two characters.

Tristán specializes in this sort of "reality check" in *No hay vida como la honra*. When don Fernando first sees doña Leonor, and, stricken with her beauty, suggests that the stars descend from the heavens so they can learn to shine like her, Tristán responds: "No pueden; / Que están de aquí muchas leguas, / Y bajarán despeadas." (481a). The fanciful concept elaborated by

don Fernando instantly becomes distorted from the transcendental to the mundane.

In the second act, when don Carlos believes that doña Leonor is casting him aside in favor of don Fernando, he vows not to tell her the cause of his pique; in turn, doña Leonor swears not to let him leave her house until he does (484c). Tristán, who does not care to brave another chance encounter with her father, suggests that don Carlos pretend that he, Tristán, is doña Leonor, and that way both can keep their vows. In the ensuing stream of accusations against doña Leonor (but with don Carlos facing Tristán), the *gracioso* keeps slipping "out of character" by inserting derisive comments:

> Don Carlos: Pues óyeme tú, cruel,
> Traidora, fácil, mudable,
> Si en efeto te adoré...
> Tristán: Mucho fué, con esta cara.
> Don Carlos: Y si sabes que después...
> Tristán: Esto huele a chamusquina.
> Don Carlos: De tu hermosura gocé.
> Tristán: Sería lampiño entonces. (485a)

In this scene, don Carlos is trying to present his case as the injured lover, but Tristán's interjections prevent him from ever fully divulging his complaints, especially not in the dramatic mode that is in keeping with his wounded heart. Even though Tristán does not specifically aim his lines outside of the *locus* setting, they

break the continuity of the scene and any serious tension it might have otherwise evoked. While the primary characters are taking themselves with great earnestness, the audience does not view their quarrel seriously. Instead, the *gracioso's* comments focus their attention on the ridiculous nature of Tristán's role-playing.

Role-playing itself is used as a distancing factor in *No hay burlas con el amor*. The play opens with an exasperated don Alonso about to fire his love-stricken servant, Moscatel. The *gracioso* protests on the basis that it is not his fault if he is suffering from the noble passion of love:

> Que se ha trocado la suerte
> al paso, pues siempre dio
> el teatro enamorado
> al amo, libre el criado.
> No tengo la culpa yo
> desta mudanza, y así
> deja que hoy el mundo vea
> esta novedad y sea
> yo el galán, tú el libre. (191)

Moscatel makes direct reference first to the theatre, then to its stock characters, and finally to the audience (*el mundo*). He acknowledges that his role is unusual, a "novedad," and therefore draws attention to the difference between this scenario and the customary plot line of the *comedia*. María Cristina Quintero refers to this questioning of stereotypical roles as demystifying convention: "By calling attention to the repetitious quality of the

dramatic situations and characters, Calderón outplays the codes upon which he relied for the creation of his plays, thereby demystifying the *comedia*" (248). Spectators are made to re-evaluate these codes in light of the role-reversal, and this re-evaluation places emphasis on structure (in this case, dramatic conventions) rather than story.

Extratextual references similarly prompt spectators to analyze factors beyond the immediate performance they are witnessing. In *El caballero de Olmedo* Tello highlights its celestinesque theme by making direct references to characters from Fernando de Rojas' already classic work.[11] When he and his master approach doña Inés's balcony, Tello asks the maid, "Está en casa Melibea? Que viene Calisto aquí," to which the maid responds, "Aguarda un poco Sempronio" (115). The "roles" are thus designated based on similarities, yet the differing "realities" of the two sets of literary figures are pronounced: Calisto's passion was based more on lust than on the "honest love" professed by don Alonso; Melibea allowed herself to be drawn into a sexual relationship, while doña Inés shows considerably more discretion;

[11] For more information on the Celestina intertext, see Edward H. Friedman, "Theater Semiotics and Lope de Vega's *El caballero de Olmedo*," *El arte nuevo de estudiar comedias*. Ed. Barbara Simerka. (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1996).

and Sempronio's self-interest overrode all considerations for his master, unlike Tello who (although not altruistic) serves his master loyally. In her study of language games in *El caballero de Olmedo*, Cathy Larson discusses how this kind of connotation "can bring recollections of the *Celestina* to the surface while simultaneously demythologizing them, using instantly recognizable motifs in contexts that only further reinforce the distance between these motifs and the original text" (87). In the space of a couple of lines, Tello gains admittance to these recollections—which for the audience potentially evoke the comic, the risqué, the tragic—and subsequently filters the rest of the scene, if not the rest of the play, through the connections between the two works. Other extratextual references appear in the play (see, for example, the *letrilla* on page 119 or the pseudonym given by Tello on page 134), but this one serves best to illustrate the *gracioso's* use of them to create critical distance for the audience.

Tello abandons this critical distance in favor of full integration in the *locus* at the end of the third act. He has returned from Olmedo with don Alonso's father to ask for justice from the king, and his is the voice that re-tells the story of don Alonso's murder and then accuses the perpetrators. His narrative gains immediacy through a frequent, although not constant, use of

the present tense while describing the event: "Paso adelante, ¡Ay de mí!, / y envuelto en su sangre veo / a don Alonso expirando" (182). Tello thus becomes more than a messenger who divulges background information; he represents the only character with the knowledge to exact justice for the crime committed. Not only do his words and actions place him within the central reality of the play, but his social standing also reflects a change in his position when the Condestable identifies him as an "escudero" rather than as a lackey (180).[12] His new identity, mistaken though it may be, associates him more strongly with the *locus* characters of the theatrical representation than with a marginalized *platea* figure.

Tello stands in contrast to the *graciosos* in the other plays, who all step outside of the *locus* near the conclusion to break the dramatic illusion one final time by way of an epilogue. Although they may not deliver the last lines in the *comedia*, they condition the audience for the finale by directly commenting on the play. The segue they provide then allows the primary characters to likewise abandon the "story." For instance, immediately after don Carlos and doña Leonor have pledged their lives to the Viceroy in *No hay vida como la honra*, Tristán concludes:

[12] Alfredo Hermenegildo discusses Tello's evolution in *Juegos dramáticos de la locura festiva* (Barcelona: Libergraf, S.L., 1995) 155.

> Aquí hay tres bodas:
> Aquesto por abreviar
> Cumplimientos y tramoyas.
> Estos señores se casan,
> Estotros dos se desposan,
> Yo me arrugo con Inés,
> Y aquí tiene fin la historia
> Del marido más honrado. (494c)

Doña Leonor and don Carlos promptly correct him and give the *comedia's* official title to conclude the play. Similarly, towards the end of *No hay burlas con el amor*, Moscatel and Inés engage in a discursive commentary on the internal change effected in don Alonso and doña Beatriz, which then sets up don Alonso's closing remarks (377-8). In *Lucrecia y Tarquino*, Bruto not only ruptures the mimetic representation near the play's end, but he also is placed in charge of uttering the last lines of the play, in which he promises the audience a sequel (108).

These endings differ significantly from that of *El caballero de Olmedo*, which maintains the dramatic illusion of the final scene until the last two lines of the play. In response to Tello's accusations against don Rodrigo and don Fernando, the king orders:

> Prendedlos,
> y en un teatro, mañana,
> cortad sus infames cuellos.
> Fin de la trágica historia
> del caballero de Olmedo. (183)

The ending is abrupt, a verbal "closing of the curtains" that is in no way mediated by Tello or Fabia. The other plays, however, offer a more gradual transition to the play's conclusion by utilizing characters the spectators have already accepted as mediators to shift the rest of the story towards a "reality" closer to that of the audience. The *graciosos*, therefore, are responsible for guiding the rest of the characters into an intermediary position and initiating an onstage unveiling of the characters into the cast, of art into life.

The relationship between art and life is one of Charlotte Stern's considerations in her article entitled "Lope de Vega, Propagandist?" Stern first sifts through a number of Lope's twentieth-century detractors (i.e. Vossler, Maravall, Díez Borque) in an attempt to understand the prolific playwright's sudden devaluation in the eyes of many critics. In her analysis she inquires "whether the *comedias* possess only an unequivocal, surface meaning, or whether they display multiple levels of meaning that embody all the ambiguities and contradictions associated with the kind of knowledge mediated by art" (8-9). One can anticipate the direction her analysis takes: viewing Lope's *comedias* as monarchical propaganda assumes only an 'unequivocal, surface meaning,' while evaluating their artistic form allows insight into some discrepancies between social reality and

its stage projection (Stern 27). If one limits the *graciosos* to the confines of the *locus*, they may indeed have performed a stabilizing function between nobles and their servants, as Maravall suggests (26); however, when these characters step outside of the *locus* and adopt *platea* tactics, they become filters through which the audience views the action on stage. Often, this filter defines, questions or exaggerates some aspect of the carefully constructed world inhabited by the protagonists, inviting the audience to adopt a similar stance of critical observation.

Beyond summary, humorous commentary and clarification, the intermediary aspect of the *graciosos* allows them to align the audience's perspective with their own. From the safety of their marginalized position, they successfully criticize the abuse of power, reveal the hidden agendas and petty intrigues of the noble protagonists, and spoof dramatic conventions (of which they themselves are one). Through their asides, *double entendres* and self-conscious nature, these characters direct audience attention away from the surface story of the *locus* to explore more profound levels of meanings in the *comedias*. In this way, the guiding force of fools helps mediate the relationship between the stage and the audience, between transmitters and receivers, between art and life.

3. Reading between the Signs

A common and crowd-pleasing device often used by Golden Age playwrights involved having a character appear in disguise. Perhaps since theatre itself requires actors to assume a personae and dress "differently," disguise and its accompanying, skillful deception often took center stage as a character's favored "means to an end." Some variations on the theme include the "mujer vestida de hombre"[1] (Tirso de Molina's *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*); the king who, incognito, visits a noteworthy vassal (Rojas Zorrilla's *Del rey abajo, ninguno*); characters who adopt a fantastic form (Calderón's *La dama duende*); or, as will be studied in this chapter, nobles who pass themselves off as peasants. In Tirso de Molina's *Desde Toledo a Madrid* and Lope de Vega's *La moza de cántaro*, the plays' aristocratic protagonists don the guise of a more marginalized social sector in order to escape—and ultimately to re-create—their circumstances.

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[1] Various studies have looked at the particular disguise of the *mujer vestida de hombre*. See, for example, Melveena McKendrick's *Women and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1974); and Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993).

Both of these plays are judged to have been written and performed between 1625 and 1627.[2] The release of these comedies therefore coincides with a concentrated effort by the government to improve its image, specifically through the formation of the *Junta de Reformación*, whose members "habían de procurar, cumpliendo órdenes reales, librar de vicios públicos y privados todo el ámbito de la monarquía" (González Palencia 71). Just how much reform this *junta* was actually able to put into practice during its term is uncertain; however, its appointment and its subsequent scrutiny of seventeenth-century Spanish society reveal an active intent to remodel the cultural codes that formed the existing ideology, e.g. determining what was considered "proper" behavior and what was not.

As one might suspect, the members of the *junta* soon investigated the vices—including improper dress—purportedly abounding in the *corrales de comedias*. While part of their argument against the *comedias* focused on the idleness encouraged by this particular form of entertainment (similar, in many respects,

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[2] According to Ruth Lee Kennedy, the historical reference made to the conquest of Breda in Tirso's play places it in the second half of 1625; Shergold and Varey cite Lope's mention of the English invasion of Cádiz as an indication of its release date.

to the general outcry against watching too much television in the present age), the *junta* does not fail to levy criticism of the "*lascividades*", "*cosas de mal ejemplo*" and "*malos conciertos, pecados, adulterios*" that one sees at the *corrales* (qtd. in González Palencia 80-81).[3]

Given the sumptuary laws that, among other things, attempted to color-code society by dictating what kind and what color of clothes were legal raiment for people of different social positions, one can imagine that any disguise that altered status or sex would fall under the heading of "*cosas de mal ejemplo.*" William Blue writes that:

> Disguise is a double-edged sword that, while neither always supportive of or antithetical to dominant values, allows some viewers to perceive order and hierarchy while others see the permeability of normal, traditional limits, and the openness of apparently closed boundaries. Carnival and theater may teach some, as the moralists feared, to explore regulations, push boundaries, and not return docily to the fold. (231)

[3] In 1625 the *junta* directly attacked Tirso de Molina, asking that he be forbidden to write more plays and be exiled to a remote monastery: "Tratóse del escándalo que causa un fraile mercedario, que se llama el Maestro Téllez, por otro nombre Tirso, con comedias que hace profanas y de malos incentivos y ejemplos" (qtd. in González Palencia 83). While this accusation attacks his theatre, Ruth Lee Kenneday points to Tirso's outspoken politics and his enemies at court as the motivating force behind his exile. See *Studies in Tirso, I: The Dramatist and his Competitors, 1620 – 26* (Chapel Hill: UNC Dept. of Romance Languages, 1974).

Those who abused the sumptuary laws were usually guilty of aspiring to a higher social category.[4] However, the act of deliberately dressing below one's station is likewise an infraction of social mores.

The full effect that these *malos ejemplos* may have had is, of course, hard to measure, especially when considering a social world that was in existence over 350 years ago. The numerous petitions requesting stricter regulations or the prohibition of theatre give the impression that the moralists, at least, feared the *comedias'* long term impact on society.[5] The following quote from Juan de Mariana's *De spectaculis* condemns the art and deception allegedly espoused by the *comedias*:

> ¿Qué otra cosa contiene el teatro y qué otra cosa allí se refiere sino caídas de doncellas, amores de rameras, arte de rufianes y alcahuetas, engaños de criados y criadas, todo declarado con versos numerosos y elegantes . . . ." (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 430)

In Mariana's opinion, then, the *comedia* tempts its fans through

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[4] In "Structures and Social Structures in 'El vizcaíno fingido'" Carroll B. Johnson includes a short summary of the sumptuary laws in effect in 1611, which included restrictions on items such as gem stones, collars, lace, and horse carriages.

[5] See Cotarelo y Mori's *Bibliografía de las controversias sobre la licitud del teatro en España* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1904).

honeyed words while it demonstrates nothing but "sinful" behavior to them.

Although Mariana's words might strike us as being somewhat exaggerated, the terms "*arte*" and "*engaño*" do seem to have widespread application in theatrical works of the time period. The actions based on skill and deception fall into the category of what de Certeau classifies as tactics:

> a tactic is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. No delimitation of an exteriority, then, provides it with the condition necessary for autonomy. The space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. (Certeau 36-37)

Characters in the *comedia* frequently resort to tactics when they find themselves in a space where they can no longer control a situation to their advantage.

The tactics used by the protagonists in these two plays take them from their position in the dominant, noble class to the marginalized world of peasants and laborers. In his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias en este tiempo*, Lope's number one criterion for composing plays is audience response (125), and heading his explanation of how to please the public is the concept of the *tragicomedia*, a work in which tragic elements and noble characters

mesh with comic elements and rustic peasants. *Desde Toledo a Madrid* and *La moza de cántaro* belong to this tradition, but they take it one step further by mixing in a single character the noble and the rustic, the (potentially) tragic and the comic. In the confluence of these two worlds, one observes a divided character appear, empowered to slide between social strata and spaces with no rupture in the unity of the action. Different registers of language and metric combinations become signs for the audience that aid in their interpretation of a character's identity (social position, education, etc.) and the situation at hand.

The signs suggested by Lope are mostly linguistic in nature, but as Tadeusz Kowzan notes, "[e]verything is sign in a theatrical presentation" (57). To this, one could add that everything is also sign in the presentation of self. The premediated, artifical signs of which Kowzan speaks function on two levels: on one, actors and their characters direct signs to the audience; on the other, characters direct signs to one another within the boundaries of the play, signs which may or may not be transparent to the audience. The use of disguise by characters on stage and the ways in which other characters read and react to a disguised individual become additional signs, or products, to be consumed by the audience.

Theatrical presentation offers a model—which the audience may accept or reject, embrace or transform—of the tactical presentation of self.

The two plays that will be considered in this chapter, *Desde Toledo a Madrid* and *La moza de cántaro,* both involve divided characters whose circumstances require them to act outside of conventions.[6] The disguises they adopt and the ruses they employ control the ways in which other characters perceive them. As a privileged viewer who is shown the gap between signifier and signified, the audience witnesses the deliberate manipulation of signs from within the reigning ideology and receives a lesson on the tactics for operating oppositionally.

In *Desde Toledo a Madrid* the protagonist's pressing need for disguise becomes apparent immediately: don Baltasar slips down a back stairway into an unoccupied room. Little by little, he divulges to the audience that he is a newcomer to Toledo who has just killed someone in a street fight, fled the town guard, and broken into the house of a complete stranger. In search of refuge,

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[6] These two plays are not the first to have a noble character consciously assume the guise of a peasant. Tirso's *El vergonzoso en palacio* (1611) and *La villana de Vallecas* (1620) both make use of this technique. However, the use of disguise in the earlier plays does not represent the protagonist's primary means to a desired end.

he found his way into this room, which, he now decides, must belong to a rich woman. Amid painful deliberations over how to proceed, he accidentally locks himself in the bedchamber, and ends up coming face to face with its occupant, doña Mayor. He immediately falls in love with her, despite his recent engagement/disengagement with a certain doña Ana from Madrid. Doña Mayor, although attracted to don Baltasar, puts more practical considerations foremost, such as her honor, his true identity, and her impending, arranged marriage to don Luis in Madrid. Finally, she hides don Baltasar until morning, when a maid shows him to the street and suggests that he meet them on the road to Madrid.

In order to accompany them unperceived, don Baltasar disguises himself as a groom. On the road, doña Mayor tells don Luis and her father, don Alonso, that for diversion during the tiresome journey, she is making fun of the simpleton, "Lucas Berrío" (don Baltasar), who seems to think he is worthy of marrying a woman of her social status. This sounds like great fun to the other bored travelers (except to don Luis), who all watch without interfering as "Lucas" courts doña Mayor and then marries

her in what everyone but don Baltasar and doña Mayor takes to be a staged ceremony.

Although at this point don Baltasar has completely put doña Ana out of his mind, she and her cousin, don Diego, have not so quickly forgotten about him. Don Diego, shows up in Illescas and confronts don Baltasar privately. Hoping to salvage his disguise, don Baltasar uses a series of plays on words that makes don Diego believe that he will return to doña Ana. Unfortunately, this conversation is overheard and misinterpreted by doña Mayor, who promptly fingers "Lucas" as the villain who killed one of their house servants back in Toledo. Unprepared for this turn of events, "Lucas" flees, but doña Mayor adamantly refuses to marry until they catch him. Don Baltasar saves them the trouble of looking for "Lucas" by showing up to claim his bride and revealing his former guise.

From the beginning of the play, don Baltasar establishes a special link with the audience. He is onstage alone, thinking out loud. His monologue enables him to relate the past events that have led to his present predicament, and the audience, bereft of any other explanations, must rely on his story: that he was set upon by a stranger, that he stabbed the other in his own defense,

that he feared the town guards would not concern themselves with the particulars of the struggle, and that this combination of events justified his hiding in a stranger's house. As if to further engage the audience in his quandary, he sprinkles his account with rhetorical questions:

> ¡Válgame Dios! ¿Si murió
> el ignorante atrevido
> que ciego y inadvertido
> por otro me acometió? (798a)

These questions allow him to construct himself as the innocent victim, while he constructs the audience as participatory confidants. He does not represent an "objective narrator" who provides spectators with mere plot summary; rather, he designs his narrative to channel their perspective and, in a sense, to gain their trust much in the way of a *platea* figure.

In addition to generating a bond with the audience, don Baltasar's long soliloquy highlights the slippery relationship between signifiers and signifieds. Through his on-going assessment of his situation he first reinforces the stability of signs, then undermines it. For instance, he ceases his restless pacing long enough to enumerate the furnishings and personal belongings in the room, coming to the conclusion that: "Sí, mujer es principal;

/ que tanto adorno y caudal / basta, ausente, a autorizarla" (797a). Whether the actor is inventing a scene for a stage devoid of props, or merely observing and interpreting the decor and accessories along with the audience, his detailed, external appreciation of objects begins to construct an image of the person who would normally inhabit the room, an image guided solely by material possessions: the woman is rich and noble, and will therefore judge him fairly despite his dubious circumstances. At this point, don Baltasar is relying on the constancy of signs to determine his actions.

However, don Baltasar soon vacilates between trusting and questioning the legibility of external signs—especially with regards to his presentation of self. Initially, he calls out, announcing himself, seemingly confident that the owner will listen to his plight. His confidence in his unknown hostess stems, however, from his interpretation of the room's contents, and his expectation that she will make a similarly positive assessment of him quickly wanes. When he realizes that no one is currently in the room (and that he has shut the door behind him), he considers—and subsequently rejects—the possibility of forcing the lock, jumping from an upper story window, or extinguishing the light in the room so he can exit

unobserved when the door finally opens. While trying to anticipate the reaction that his involuntary hostess will have upon seeing him, he reverts to his original assertion that "desmentirá mi presencia / sospechas ocasionales" (798a). Immediately afterwards, however, he shows the audience that he is unconvinced of the value that his "presence" might have, and he opts for a more certain approach:

> diréle cuyo hijo soy. . .
> Si en Córdoba acaso estuvo,
> o noticia alguna tuvo
> de mis padres, libre estoy. (798a)

The indecisiveness expressed aloud by don Baltasar relays to the audience the complexities involved in the presentation of self. While he superficially fabricates doña Mayor through her room's accessories, thereby assuming a direct correlation between signs and their referents, his internal struggle about how he should present himself acknowledges the incongruities inherent in the conventional signs that make up one's identity.

The circumstances in which don Baltasar finds himself exacerbate his newly found bewilderment towards reading signs. After deciding that his name (and the pedigree attached to it) is the

most trustworthy aspect of his identity, he rejects it upon falling in love with doña Mayor:

> Don Baltasar fui primero;
> ya que os amo y desespero,
> esfera de celos soy:
> llamadme *celos* desde hoy,
> que es el nombre que más quiero. (803a)

In a world where a name or title is a foundation for identity, don Baltasar abandons his, since as "don Baltasar" any attempt he might make to court doña Mayor or interfere with her wedding would most likely propel him into a duel or lengthy litigation. By tossing aside the last standard element that depicts him as a nobleman from Córdoba, he steps into an ambiguous zone where signifiers no longer correspond to conventional signifieds, and where characters acquire more agency to re-create their identity: "transformaciones verá / en mí Toledo, no escritas / de Ovidio" (808a).

When the audience next sees don Baltasar, he has transformed himself into a groom for hire (*mozo de mulas*)—indeed, not one of Ovid's poetic creations.[7] The success of don Baltasar's

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[7] In Jane Albrecht's *Irony and Theatricality in Tirso de Molina* (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1994), she discusses the importance that role-play has in the overall interpretation of Tirso's works: "These overt dramatic techniques, by echoing the structure of the theatrical event, produce an ironic effect. For instance, role-

disguise has to do in large part with his understanding of which artificial signs make up one's identity. Don Baltasar's divided character acts upon those signs to construct a new individual who, while still bound by the conventions of "collective decision," has appropriated a means of attaining desired results—in his case, trying to win over doña Mayor.

His outfit plays a critical role in his new identity, since as Tadeusz Kowzan points out, costume has the "semiological power" not only to define who is wearing it, but also to "hide the character's real sex, his true social position, his true profession, etc." (68). The costume's effectiveness depends upon society's habit of judging by appearances, a habit doubtlessly exacerbated by the sumptuary laws, and of responding to certain codes that distinguish among social groups (Cohan and Shires 115). Not only does he appropriate the guise of a groom, he also masterfully employs a discourse that characterizes him as a person from the world of grooms and teamsters, as seen in his first confrontation with don Luis:

> Ya he dicho
> que hable bien y no tengamos
> carambolas; que si esgrimo

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enactment onstage echoes the notion of real-life role-play and allows Tirso to manipulate the audience's perceptions of characters" (40).

> la de Joanés, al primero
> hurgón, perdónele Cristo. (822b)

The way in which he speaks completes his disguise and allows him to blend in with the other teamsters, but his slang-laden language turns immediately to courtly eloquence when he is alone with doña Mayor:

> ¿Qué he de hacer, Mayor hermosa,
> vos casada, y yo sin culpa
> condenado, por quereros,
> a envidiar al que os usurpa
> dos almas, que mi esperanza
> trazaba enlazar en una? (812a)

The spectators, privileged to don Baltasar's conscious shift in register, once more become accomplices to the dissimulation on stage, since they witness the sign systems that he manipulates. Other characters, such as don Luis, respond only to the one associated with the muleteer.

When "Lucas" provides doña Mayor's father with a list of his qualifications to be her suitor, he creates a parody of society's customary evaluation of an individual's worth: "Lucas" owns half the carriage they are riding in and, among other things, a house in the mountains that got washed away; further, his distinguished family includes uncles who are "familiares de la santa Esquisición"

(833b).[8] In *Social and Literary Satire in the Comedies of Tirso de Molina*, P.R.K. Halkhoree argues that "the butt of ridicule is really those members of society who, by following social conventions blindly, introduce moral and social chaos into the lives of men and the workings of society" (30). Thus, although don Baltasar gets the laughs on stage for stringing together Lucas's ridiculous qualifications, the joke refracts from Lucas to the audience itself, an audience who inhabits a society often willing to accept evidence of appearance, language, material wealth and powerful familial relations as a comprehensive definition of self.

Unlike her father and don Luis, doña Mayor is able to see, interpret and react to falsified signs. Although she is attracted to don Baltasar from the beginning and admits that he is "por el talle, bien nacido, / por las palabras, discreto" (801b), she does not judge solely by appearances. When her new suitor tries to construct himself conventionally for her by listing wealth, position, and family, she insists not only on verifying his identity once they

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[8] This depiction of Lucas would instantly bring to the seventeenth-century audience's mind the *escudero* in *Lazarillo de Tormes*, whose assets consisted solely of dilapidated, worthless property that nevertheless enhanced his belief in himself as a rightful member of the landholding gentry. His property was part of his identity, just as his cape, sword and toothpick were. This intertext, replete with the disparity between appearance and reality, would highlight a world in which people are constructing and reconstructing themselves to further their own interests.

have reached Madrid, but also on testing his character and fidelity. To his defense of "Mirad que soy caballero" she retorts, "¡Qué dellos hemos visto / calificar sus engaños / a sombra deste artificio!" (821a). To assure herself that he truly fits the category of "gentleman"—and that he will not simply return to his former love interest—she proposes to have him jailed under suspicion of murder upon reaching Madrid, giving her time to make appropriate inquiries. Although she willingly participates in the deception created by don Baltasar, she does not leave her future up to his guarantee of nobility and good intentions, but rather handles the situation in such a way that, if don Baltasar were deceiving her, she would still have the option of marrying don Luis.

In the meantime, doña Mayor artfully misleads her father and don Luis by telling them the truth. When don Luis hears her with "Lucas" in the wheatfield, she faithfully replays for him the conversation he has just overheard, but leads him to believe that she was just joking:

> Propúsome su linaje
> (que es por lo menos, corito),
> su patrimonio, sus deudos,
> sus gracias, sus ejercicios;
> y yo por entretenerme,
> di ensanchas a su capricho,
> ofreciéndole informarme

> y abogándole testigos,
> mejorar con él mis bodas. (823b)

After introducing the perpetual possibility of play, any sign that has to do with "Lucas's" courtship becomes unstable, if not reversed, in the eyes of the other characters. Doña Mayor steers them into a realm where signifiers are not meant to match their traditional signifieds. She thereby stays within the socially acceptable while she schemes to undermine a system that supports marriages of convenience.

Both main characters are aided in their subtle maneuverings by the journey from Toledo to Madrid. Toledo and Madrid represent places that bind don Baltasar and doña Mayor more closely to the conventions of collective decision. Their identity as nobles with a certain rank, a certain amount of wealth and certain connections is tied to these urban centers, yet both characters associate a sense of imprisonment with the cities and attain greater liberty—and a greater sense of agency—on the open road.

Shortly after arriving in Toledo, don Baltasar finds himself "acosado de la justicia" (800b). Despite his alleged innocence, the upstanding nobleman from Córdoba suddenly becomes marginalized as a criminal. This social ostracism forces him into a

new "space" that changes the way he perceives himself and his surroundings. He flees imprisonment by the city guard only to wind up locked in doña Mayor's room and later shut in an adjoining room until morning. These confinements can be seen in a metaphorical light, since they render him powerless to act, either to flee and maintain anonymity in the first instance or to pursue his love interest in the second. While he escapes being blamed for murder (at least temporarily), he realizes he has no hope of successfully courting doña Mayor by offering himself—don Baltasar—as a suitor: through social convention, she is already taken. Therefore, he must use tactics, the "space of the other," if he desires to alter the situation. Don Baltasar deliberately adopts the presumably weaker position of a teamster in order to gain agency within the system. He is then free to play on and with the terrain selected by don Luis and don Alonso, i.e. the road from Toledo to Madrid.

Doña Mayor likewise takes advantage of this less rigidly controlled area to further her own ends. At the beginning of the play, she sees Madrid metonymically as an extension of her impending wedding, and her wedding as a sort of incarceration: "Madrid mañana me espera / para cautivarme" (802a). Once

under way, her sense of imprisonment transfers to the coach in which she is travelling to Madrid:

> Dejemos la jornada
> o a Toledo volvamos si te agrada:
> pues es mejor dar vuelta,
> que entre polvo y calor morir envuelta
> dentro de un calabozo
> portátil, para ver de mí mal gozo. (809a)

Her first deliberate step towards acting tactically is when she refuses to continue the journey within the confines of the coach and demands to be allowed to ride one of the mules instead. Being outside the coach and conveniently perched on Lucas Berrío's mule allows her proximity to don Baltasar without seeming to step outside the bounds and decorum of one already betrothed.

Her initiative and don Baltasar's disguise set up the offstage, runaway mule scene (which, incidentally, is one of the few scenes in the play when the audience is left as much in the dark as to what is really happening as are the other characters). Through this ruse, they escape to the relative freedom of a wheatfield, where they can express themselves clearly. Don Luis's interruption abruptly re-establishes the terrain organized by a "foreign power" and prompts doña Mayor to find another space for agency. Having little flexibility in terms of physical spaces, she draws don Luis and

don Alonso into the ambiguous zone of play, a mentally constructed space that empowers her within her circumstances.

Their arrival at the outskirts of Madrid coincides with don Baltasar's reconstruction of himself as a nobleman. Now that his objective of winning doña Mayor's hand has been fulfilled, don Baltasar resumes his aristocratic identity and appears at the Saint Isidro hermitage looking the part. Don Luis and don Alonso, still unable to read between the signs, take him for an unknown nobleman until don Baltasar clarifies:

> No se altere
> ninguno: Lucas Berrío
> está aquí, si ya no quieren
> que sea Don Baltasar
> de Córdoba, que pretende
> llevar su esposa a casa. (841a)

When doña Mayor confirms his claim that the wedding was not a hoax, she realigns signifiers with their traditional signifieds by erasing the liminal space of play. Potentially, her declaration marks a perilous moment in the play, for both don Alonso and don Luis could object to the "fake" marriage in Illescas. However, don Baltasar's now familiar list of qualifications appeases don Alonso, and no one seems to take don Luis's threats of legal retribution

very seriously. Instead, all of the couples who participated earlier in the pretend marriage consider themselves wed.

By manipulating signs to deceive other characters while winking, as it were, at the audience, don Baltasar and doña Mayor highlight the process behind the presentation and the preservation of self. The art (or artificiality) thus revealed to the spectators throughout the play might suggest possible modes of operation for those who find themselves hemmed in by convention. In effect, these two characters can be seen to demonstrate how to act tactically and find a space for agency without superseding social norms.

Lope de Vega's *La moza de cántaro*, shows more of a contrast between acting tactically in the "space of the other" and attempting similar actions through direct confrontation with the dominant system. In the play, doña María, the most eligible bachelorette in Ronda, opens the first act. Her father returns home, interrupting her scornful declarations against men and marriage, and laments his recent loss of honor suffered through an argument with don Diego, one of the aspiring gallants. Since her father is too old to avenge himself, doña María takes it upon herself to regain the family's honor. Under the pretense of wanting to resolve the

conflict, she visits don Diego in jail and declares that she will marry him. However, when don Diego steps forward to embrace his new wife, she kills him with a dagger.

The second act opens three weeks later, focusing first on three other characters: the Count, his cousin don Juan, and a young widow named doña Ana. The Count sets about wooing doña Ana, but the widow, confident and content with her new status, shows more interest in don Juan. It is not until don Juan recites a sonnet dedicated to an extraordinarily beautiful water girl (*moza de cántaro*) that the audience glimpses what has transpired with doña María. While fetching water from a well, doña María (now "Isabel") had caught the eye and heart of don Juan.

As luck (and dramatic need) would have it, "Isabel" becomes fast friends with Leonor, who serves as part of doña Ana's household. Doña Ana later takes in "Isabel" after learning that she will be the maid of honor in Leonor's upcoming wedding. In the middle of the wedding preparations, "Isabel" learns that doña María has been pardoned by the king, and asks don Juan to sell a diamond brooch for her so that she can return home. Suspecting that the diamond brooch is more indicative of her true station than the clay water jug, don Juan asks her to marry him just as

Leonor's wedding is ready to begin. The Count, scandalized by the possibility of this "unnatural" union, accuses "Isabel" of being a sorceress and wants her killed. Finally, doña María reveals her true identity and accepts don Juan's offer of marriage.

Unlike don Baltasar in *Desde Toledo a Madrid,* doña María has no pressing need at the play's onset to construct herself—for other characters or for the audience. Her precise disposition and social standing are nonetheless reinforced by the dialogue between her and her maid, in which she states her familial relationship with a grandee, "el duque de Medina" (127). Only after she flees Ronda as a criminal does she resort to monologues to guide the audience's perception of herself. Beyond simply summarizing action and time that have transpired offstage, such monologues represent "the *process* of thinking and perceiving by which means the character gains knowledge and, because of his increased awareness, acts and changes in the context of the world of play" (Weimann 205). In her first soliloquy doña María admits her fear of discovery, the uncertainty of royal favor towards her father and her need to justify the murder she has committed (153-55). In the second she confesses she has fallen in love with don Juan, and

laments her loss of station that precludes any real relationship between them:

> Maravilla ser solía,
> pero ya lástima doy;
> que de extremo a extremo voy
> y desde ser a no ser,
> pues sol me llamaba ayer
> *y hoy sombra mía aun no soy.* (171)[9]

Her use of monologue privately conveys to the spectators her increased awareness of self, thereby involving them more closely with her predicament.

In addition to her soliloquies to the spectators, "Isabel" also narrates within the confines of the play, such as when she tells the story of the vengeful "doña María" to Leonor:

> Leonor: ¿Y que esa mujer mató
> al que a su padre afrentó?
> ¡Bravo corazón!
> María: Valiente.
> (. . .)
> Yo estoy contenta de ver
> (que, en efeto, soy mujer)
> que la hubiese tan honrada. (182)

"Isabel" paints a positive image of doña María, both for Leonor and the audience, by emphasizing the honor and courage behind her actions. Her propensity for narration helps her direct perspective,

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[9] In her edition of this play, Rosa Navarro Durán points out that Lope makes use here of Góngora's *letrilla*, "Aprended, flores, en mí" (1621).

whether it be on the level of the audience or of other characters, by selecting what information they "need" to know and when they might become aware of it.

Her make-over from noblewoman to water girl is part of the selected information reserved for the spectators' eyes alone. In the opening scenes, they receive the straightforward vision of a beautiful, rich, arrogant woman belonging to the high nobility. When she goes to the jail to see don Diego, the Alcaide makes a similar interpretation of her: he assumes her visit has to do with love, decides that she is a "cosa segura," and allows her to pass (101). At this point, doña María has already begun to play with the signs that make up one's identity, working the system to her advantage. Her embrace of matrimony becomes an embrace of death, and her parting comment intensifies the lack of cohesion between a sign and its referent: "Pues estas hazañas hacen / las mujeres varoniles" (104). Her self-designation as a "manly woman" calls into question the value of classification and the stability of identity.

As a fugitive, she transforms herself into a peasant and initially finds employment with an *indiano*. However, while her costume changes to clogs and an apron, those who describe her

resort to terms not so unlike those applied to doña María: spirited, graceful, and majestic. But poor. The primary change in the signs that she uses to construct her identity is economic in nature. Whereas don Baltasar embraces his role as a *mozo de mulas* and uses refined speech only with those who are aware of his disguise, doña María's façade automatically shifts depending on the social category of her interlocutor. When she is dealing with other servants, she adopts (to some degree, at least) their manner and language:

> Llegue el barbado, y daréle
> dos mohadas a la usanza
> de mi tierra, por la panza,
> y hará el puñal lo que suele. (192)

However, towards nobles, she shows a wit and wisdom difficult to associate with an unlearned peasant girl:

> ¿Espejo y despejo? Bueno.
> Ya con cuidado me habláis,
> porque, en efeto, os parezco
> mujer que os puedo entender;
> pues yo os prometo que puedo. (173)

While "Lucas Berrío" only shows his true status to doña Mayor, "Isabel's" illusion is somewhat more transparent. The resulting juxtaposition of her external condition as a peasant and her

internal self as a proud noblewoman becomes the focal point of don Juan's internal conflict.

Don Juan is the only character who attempts to see beyond the external signs with which "Isabel" has constructed herself. While other characters casually mention how stunning "Isabel" would be dressed as a lady and then dismiss her as a simple peasant, don Juan struggles to reconcile the clothes with the woman, her current occupation with her beauty and dignified manner. When she asks him to sell her diamond brooch, she markedly narrows the scope of possible interpretations for him: "¿Quién sois, hermosa Isabel? / Porque cántaro y diamantes / son dos cosas muy distantes" (275). The incongruity of this particular external sign—the diamond brooch—finally grants him the confidence to question the legibility of other signifiers.

The Count acts as a counterpoint to the noble vision of love that leads don Juan to pursue "Isabel." For example, when don Juan suggests to the Count that he should write poetry for doña Ana, the Count replies that he plans to "[r]emitirme al oro, / que es excelente poeta" (141). Upon being introduced to the young widow, the Count fabricates a story of gambling debts still owed him by her late husband, to be forgotten if she will but favor him

(147). Finally, towards the end of the third act, he suspects what everyone else—characters and audience alike—have known from act one: namely, that doña Ana has more interest in don Juan than in him. Not surprisingly, he is incapable of reading "Isabel" as anything other than what she appears to be at face value, and he goes so far as to accuse her of sorcery in order to explain his cousin's unaccountable love for her.[10] On the one hand, then, his character represents a member of the high nobility, the dominant class who would control and maintain social order; on the other, however, his actions show him to be obtuse, unable to read or function beyond the most materialistic level. The audience, drawn towards a re-evaluation of the Count's value system and codes of behavior, might find themselves extending the critique beyond his character to the ideology he represents.

Cultural codes and their possible effect on individuals' actions are emphasized in the play from its beginning, when doña María's father comes onstage with the Order of Santiago cross firmly emblazened across his chest. His lamentations about his

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[10] In "Esencia del amor y valoración de la persona: 'La moza de cántaro' de Lope de Vega," Jaime Fernández studies Lope's fundamental ideas on love. He stresses that the theme of social equality in love is less important to this play than that of true love instead of passion.

loss of honor exemplify the individual subjected to the ideological relations that govern society:

> Herrado traigo, María
> el rostro con cinco letras.
> Esclavo soy de la infamia,
> cautivo soy de la afrenta. (91)

His language—branded, slave, captive—indicates his hapless position: too old to avenge himself, too honorable not to be avenged. It is his absolute adherence to a given code that drives doña María outside of convention. She has already portrayed herself as being quite capable of ignoring society's pressure to marry: "Nací con esta arrogancia; / no me puede sujetar, / si es sujetar el casar" (86). After the scene with her father, she finds that she, too, is "subjected" by familial and cultural ideological systems, but that if she adopts tactics in order to find a space for agency within those systems, she can reconstruct her situation.

Upon killing don Diego, she (like don Baltasar) becomes a fugitive, marginalized from society, and her nature as a divided subject becomes more obvious. She heads for Madrid, transforming herself en route with the hopes of escaping detection in the metropolis. Her marginalization takes on a new connotation in Madrid, where she is excluded from her normal spheres among

the nobility: the local well where she draws water stands in sharp contrast to doña Ana's sitting room where the nobles gather for poetry readings. The space of the well imposes limits on "Isabel" (she has to work for a living; she dare not allow a nobleman to court her), but it simultaneously enables her to manipulate signs to her advantage without being suspected by other characters in the play, with don Juan being the possible exception.

Don Juan begins the play seemingly oblivious to the subtle possibilities of tactical maneuvering. The sonnet he dedicates to the *moza de cántaro*, complete with expressions such as "reina de brío" and "manos de marfil" (166), effectively conditions how the audience will perceive this commoner with whom he has fallen in love. Unfortunately, he does not limit the reading of the sonnet to the play's audience; instead, he directs it to doña Ana and the Count, a much less forgiving crowd, who do not care to dabble in transgressions of decorum befitting a nobleman. Adding insult to injury (as far as doña Ana is concerned), don Juan tries to justify his love for "Isabel":

> Ninguna cosa he fingido,
> ni tengo la culpa yo;
> porque no lejos de aquí
> vive la hermosa Isabel
> por quien el amor crüel

hace estos lances en mí. (157)

The problem is precisely that he does not know how to "fingir," to pretend. Rather than following doña María's lead and finding a space for agency within the codes that govern society, don Juan challenges those codes by persisting openly in his love for "Isabel." According to Ross Chambers, "[e]ven the most conscious of oppositional practices do not qualify as resistance, then, so long as, failing to challenge the power structure, they retain their 'disguise' as submission to the prevailing state of affairs" (10). Despite her occasional fits of jealousy, "Isabel" realizes that she must not challenge the power structure again (as she did when she killed don Diego) if she hopes to maintain her disguise. Don Juan, however, "revolts" against the system by proposing marriage to "Isabel" in front of doña Ana and the Count. Had they known what he suspected—that "Isabel was really a noblewoman in disguise—his move would not have fallen under the category of "resistance." However, the other nobles are working under other assumptions, and his declaration elicits a foreseeable response from the Count:

> ¡Vive Dios, que si es de veras,
> que ante os quite la vida
> que permitir tal bajeza!
> ¡Hola, criados! ¡Echad

esta mujer hechicera
por un corredor! ¡Matadla! (215)

The ideological system in place cannot or will not support such an infraction. Luckily for don Juan, doña María has recently received word of the king's pardon and is now in a position to reveal her true identity. The audience, of course, knows all along that they are not viewing a case of "unnatural" love between a noble and a peasant. The oppositional reading available to the audience lies with doña María's successful attempt to re-create her circumstances and, ultimately, to improve her position.

If doña María was right at the beginning of the play when she said "es sujetar el casar," then both couples—don Baltasar and doña Mayor from *Desde Toledo a Madrid*, and doña María and don Juan from *La moza de cántaro*—have subjected themselves, binding themselves more firmly into the ideological systems that would control their behavior. Yet, don Baltasar and doña María in particular have shown themselves to be divided characters, submitting to ideological codes while maintaining an ability to act oppositionally. When they make themselves over into peasants, they draw the audience into the act of reading between the signs in order to perceive truth or deception. Through soliloquies, they

impose themselves on the audience as a higher authority, controlling the public's knowledge and point of view. If the seventeenth-century spectators "consumed" these modes of operation as they were represented on stage, they might well have assimilated how to exploit artificial signs in the presentation of oneself, without disrupting or challenging the existing power structure. Disguise, and its ability to transgress social boundaries, becomes an integral part of the tactical presentation of self.

4. Using and Misusing Knowledge of Self

Take a look at yourself in the mirror. The phrase succinctly conveys censure and a suggestion for reform, but avoids direct criticism. The implication is that the speaker disapproves of our recent behavior and believes that some introspection would show us the error of our ways, as if our two-dimensional image on a glass plane would somehow reflect and recall our errant soul. In his *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647), Baltasar Gracián does not give mirrors—or two-dimensional images—that much credit: "No puedo uno ser señor de sí, si primero no se comprehende. Hay espejos del rostro; no los hay del ánimo: séalo la discreta reflexión sobre sí" (393). Even though Gracián does not choose to extend metonymical properties to silvered glass, his words carry much the same philosophy as their modern-day counterpart: self-control and correction come from knowing, or "seeing" oneself, which in turn requires a healthy dose of self-examination.

Of course, the perceived need for self-correction is hardly a revolutionary concept in Spanish literature. Don Juan Manuel's *El conde Lucanor* from the early fourteenth century was similarly concerned with instructing nobles on the best way to advance their

reputation, wealth, and social position while achieving the ultimate goal of salvation (45).[1] In Gracián, however, we see a significant change in the model employed. First of all, the *Oráculo* focuses on reputation, not salvation. And secondly, there is no Patronio to guide the steps of the seventeenth-century *hombre discreto*; rather, it is up to the individual to comprehend his position in society and act in such a way as to always be perceived favorably by others. This social awareness involves not only knowing oneself—one's natural talents, limitations, desires and opinions—but also understanding what constitutes the self.

As discussed previously in chapter three, theatrical representation offers a model for the presentation of self, as characters manipulate the ways in which they are perceived. In this chapter, I will further investigate the concept of the self, particularly as determined by the "crisis of subjectivity" in seventeenth-century Spain (Cascardi 237). The selected plays feature protagonists who rely on society's changing perception of the individual to mold circumstances to their advantage. They are guided not by true love, honor, or justice, but rather by mercenary

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[1] The "mirror of princes" as didactic literature became increasingly popular in the centuries to follow, as seen by such works as Francisco Ximénez's *Régimen de príncipes* (1484), Juan de Mariana's *De rege* (1598), Francisco de Quevedo's *Política de Dios, Gobierno de Cristo* (1626), and Diego de Saavedra Fajardo's *Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano* (1640). (Dowling 81-83)

self-interest in the form of money and/or power. These plays, with their rather unscrupulous characters, consequently suggest a shift not only in the portrayal of subjectivity, but also in the poetics of the *comedia* itself.

In his article, "The Subject of Control," Anthony Cascardi investigates the process of subject formation in Counter-Reformation Spain.[2] Cascardi views the crisis of subjectivity during that time period as the "product of a conflict between two distinct value systems, each with its own psychology and each with modes of recognition proper to it" (237). The first value system had its roots in the "hierarchical society." This system involved a rigid, sociopolitical structure in which "social functions and roles were sedimented into near-static patterns" (237). The rationalism that had hallmarked the Renaissance (and that would not simply dissipate, despite the resolutions drawn at the Council of Trent) sparked the second value system, that of the "self-controlled society," which came to rely on an internalization of authority in the relationship between the subject and the absolutist state:

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[2] The Counter-Reformation begins in Spain after the Council of Trent (1556-1563). J. H. Elliot marks the Council of Trent as the historical moment when "Rennaissance Spain, wide open to European humanist influences, was effectively transformed into the semi-closed Spain of the Counter-Reformation" (*Imperial Spain* 224). Elliott also discusses the religious and intellectual climate during and immediately following the Council of Trent. See *Imperial Spain: 1469 – 1716.* (London: Penguin, 1990) 224-44.

"... for given the weakening of 'naturalistic' premises about the social world, the authority of the State could only depend on its ability to establish a willingness for subjection among those who were submitted to its rule" (Cascardi 238).[3] Cascardi articulates the conflict between the hierarchical society and the self-controlled society by analyzing Calderón's *La vida es sueño* and Tirso's *El burlador de Sevilla.* In summary, he theorizes that:

> . . . it was perhaps to be expected that a vision of the subject as an entity shaped by the desires or 'passions,' and a vision of desires as requiring political direction and control, would emerge as central elements in the formation of the subject-self. (245)

He then concludes his argument with a discussion of Gracián's *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia*, which he sees as a "matchless example of the authority of self-control" (247).

Before investigating the connection between the *Oráculo*, the self-controlled society, and seventeenth-century Spanish drama, I would like to examine briefly Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (pub. 1528), since one cannot read the *Oráculo* without recalling Castiglione's classic text.[4] Both works are concerned with

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[3] Within this conception of a "self-controlled society," one can perceive the Althusserian divided subject, since a "willingness for subjection" implies both agency and dependency on the part of the subject-selves.

[4] Peter Burke argues that, although published in the early sixteenth century, the *Courtier* remained a popular and influential work at least until the mid-

the "fashioning" of the individual (the courtier or *hombre discreto*, respectively), both question the stability of the relationship between signifier and signified, and both express a conflict between the values of the hierarchical society and the emerging self-controlled society. In Castiglione's reproduction of the friendly debates that took place in the Court of Urbino, the courtier is no longer defined by what he is (naturalistic world order) but by what he is perceived to be (rationalized world order). This distinction is acknowledged by Richard Regosin in his study of the *Courtier*:

> Although the issue [of nobility] is not pursued for obvious reasons, . . . Pallavicino's remarks do undermine the integrity of the 'natural order' as a mark of distinction. No sign demonstrates its value unequivocally, not even that by which the courtiers set most store. Without the guarantee of birth, nature or the accepted order of things, the stage is set for perfect courtiership to become a matter of performance. (36-37)

Noble blood, then, is not postulated as a prerequisite for the perfect courtier. Instead, he is made or unmade by his performance at court. This performance relies heavily on dissimulation, which is referred to in the *Courtier* with the less negatively charged term of *sprezzatura* or nonchalance: the perfect courtier should "practice in all things a certain *sprezzatura*, so as

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seventeenth century. See *The Fortunes of the Courtier: The European Reception of Castiglione's* Cortegiano. (Univ Park, PA: Penn State UP, 1995) 117-18.

to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought about it" (43). The underlying condition for the effectiveness of this dissimulation is that it requires an audience. Without someone to read (and judge) the performance, the courtier as defined by Castiglione virtually ceases to exist.

The seventeenth-century *hombre discreto* trying to follow the precepts of the *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* is similarly bound by those scrutinizing his performance. In axiom 219, Gracián counsels: "No ser tenido por hombre de artificio, aunque no se puede ya vivir sin él. . ." (422). Besides echoing the notion of *sprezzatura*, the sentence implies an observer: do not be thought of as a man of device—*by whom*? The same, critical audience that validated or rejected Castiglione's courtier reappears to judge Gracián's prudent man. To exist as a noble in seventeenth-century Spain, one had to appear as such to others: "Las cosas no pasan por lo que son, sino por lo que parecen: son raros los que miran por dentro, y muchos los que se pagan de lo aparente" (Gracián 395). This pervasive sentiment in Gracián's axioms draws José Antonio Maravall to comment that:

> [Gracián] articulated modes of conduct for individuals considered as 'artifices,' according to the way they were seen from the baroque perspective of the

> technique of prudence. . . . The virtue of doing something good was of less interest than the art of doing something well. (63)

Despite Gracián's apparent emphasis on virtue in the final axiom of the *Oráculo*, Maravall's statement holds true for the bulk of the previous 299 axioms, which repeatedly propose the need to change one's actions and reactions to correspond to different social environments.

Maravall's switch in terminology from the *art* of prudence to the *technique* of prudence in the above citation implies a methodical, almost scientific fabrication of self on the part of individuals he classifies as "baroque." Cascardi, in his analysis of the *Oráculo*, focuses on the sociopolitical forces that produced this concept of self as a fabricated and divided entity. In a society pulled between a naturalistic vision of the world and a rationalized one, social subjects had difficulty defining themselves and knowing how they would be recognized by others. Therefore, in the *Oráculo* Gracián "is faced with the task of finding a new standard of conduct for the self where two once-viable models have been rendered unavailable" (Cascardi 249). These two models are the common man, characterized as incapable of self-control, and the nobleman, whose "desire for social recognition (in the form of honor) has been rendered 'inessential' or transformed into

aristocratic vice" (249-50). The subject-self envisioned as the ideal reader of the *Oráculo* must utilize introspection and self-control to balance social or political imperatives with individualistic impulses.

Within the pages of the *Oráculo*, one sees Gracián's concept of the individual emerge: prudent, shrewd and willing to dissemble if the situation calls for it. Gracián himself referred to his handbook as an "epítome de aciertos de vivir" (374). Today it might be referred to as a self-help book or a survival guide. In any case, the *Oráculo* gives today's readers a glimpse into the process of self-fashioning in seventeenth-century Spain. It also provides a springboard from which to analyze characters and conflicts in *comedias* that are difficult to explain using traditional methodology.

Many attempts to understand the *comedia*—in particular the final scene's abrupt marriages—have focused on poetic justice and the restoration of order as the motivating forces behind the plot.[5] A.A. Parker comments that "[i]t is an essential convention of the Spanish drama that marriage symbolizes the stability of the social order under the sanction of divine law" (14). By marrying, the

theory goes, the protagonists complete one of society's rites of passage. They have moved from a liminal and potentially disruptive phase to a more stable one, and, in so doing, have accepted a new position in society. This view is consistent with that expressed by the president of the Consejo de Castilla in 1648 while persuading Phillip IV to lift the mandate against theatre: the *comedias* stay within the bounds of propriety and end "en los decentes fines del matrimonio, sin que la variedad y disposición de las trazas pueda ser enseñanza de desórdenes, pues la malicia y fragilidad humana no se halla hoy en estado que necesite de ella para que la adiestre" (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 167a).[6] Wardropper likewise suggests that a protagonist's pre-marital state is characterized by his or her imperfect knowledge of self: "El héroe cómico se libera de una esclavitud moral y de un conocimiento imperfecto de sí mismo a través de la acción de la obra" (185). Marriage, it would seem, completes the self; marriage completes society; and marriage (generally) completes the *comedia*.

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[5] See, for example, A.A. Parker, *The Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, (1957); Arnold G. Reichenberger, "The Uniqueness of the *Comedia*," (1959); and Bruce Wardropper, "La comedia española del siglo de oro," (1978).

[6] In his defense of theatre, the president includes a surprisingly cynical evaluation of mid-seventeenth century *madrileña* society by postulating that the plays, despite their plotlines involving dissimulation and deception, can teach nothing new to a society already well-versed in these "*trazas*."

How, then, should the audience or reader interpret a play in which the anticipated marriage or pairing-off of protagonists does not occur? The three plays to be analyzed in this chapter—*Hombre pobre todo es trazas* by Calderón (1628), *Los empeños del mentir* by Hurtado de Mendoza (c. 1634), and *Abre el ojo* by Rojas Zorrilla (pub. 1645)—all seem to defy comic convention by unraveling the plot in such a way as to leave the protagonists decidedly single. These *comedias* share another characteristic in that their protagonists are somewhat financially challenged. Don Diego from *Hombre pobre todo es trazas* is of noble blood, but poor; Teodoro and Marcelo in *Los empeños del mentir* are without titles or stated profession, and are correspondingly poor; and don Clemente and doña Clara from *Abre el ojo* seem to represent the ambiguous, emerging middle class: the validity of the "don" is dubious, and their financial situation is precarious. While in some *comedias*, the financial or social disadvantage of the protagonist is overcome by his or her redeeming qualities (or a convenient discovery of hidden nobility or wealth),[7] the characters from these three plays rely on trickery and deception to overcome their disadvantages. They have varying degrees of success.

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[7] See, for example, Lope de Vega's *El perro del hortelano* or Tirso's *El vergonzoso en palacio*.

When looking at the short list of canonical Golden Age plays, one finds a precursor to the aforementioned *comedias* in Juan Ruiz de Alarcón's *La verdad sospechosa* (pub. 1620). Although don García has both nobility and wealth (since he has recently come in line to inherit the family estate), he also has a penchant for lying. His father wants to marry him off quickly before this vice is discovered, but don García has become infatuated with a young lady he sees shortly after he arrives in Madrid. His father's choice and his own happen to be the same lady (doña Jacinta), but through a confusion of identity, don García believes that the woman he loves is named doña Lucrecia. He demonstrates dazzling glibness not only in his attempt to bring about his desires, but also in lies from which he gains little. In the end, he is forced to marry the real doña Lucrecia despite his protests that he had been in love with doña Jacinta from the start.

This play has warranted a great deal of discussion over the years, since the principles of poetic justice as set down by A.A. Parker, et al., waver unsteadily in the final scene. Parker himself relies on the mixed genre of the *tragicomedia* in order to apply poetic justice to *La verdad sospechosa* (8). Critics such as Edward Urbina have attempted to justify the marriage through the "restoration of social order" argument. Mary Malcolm Gaylord

(looking at language) and Barbara Simerka (investigating genre) both support Alarcón's use of satire as a means to explain the play's controversial finale. And, William Blue suggests that interpretation of *La verdad sospechosa* depends on whether an audience is evaluating the verbal artistry demonstrated throughout the play or the morality imposed on it in the final scene (*Art and History* 63-64). The common denominator in these analyses is an attempt to reconcile a plotline that places the play within the bounds of a typical *comedia de enredo* with the non-comic ending of living "unhappily ever after."

If *La verdad sospechosa* extends the *comedia's* parameters, the following three plays stretch them even further. According to the principles of dramatic art established by Lope de Vega in his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609), two of popular theatre's saving graces are its recurring themes of honor and virtue:

> Los casos de la honra son mejores,
> porque mueven con fuerza a toda gente;
> con ellos las acciones virtüosas:
> que la virtud es dondequiera amada. . . (132)

However, the characters, plots, and endings of these plays bring a decidedly picaresque flavor to the stage. Although the motifs of honor and virtue may still be found, they are not the central themes and are often the subject of irony.

Such is the case with the dashing, young "hero" of Calderón's *Hombre pobre todo es trazas*. After wounding a man in a duel, don Diego has left his native Granada for Madrid. Once there, he begins to court the wealthy doña Clara under his real name and the beautiful doña Beatriz under the alias of don Dionís. Both ladies have previous suitors who are cast aside when don Diego enters the picture: don Leonelo and don Félix, respectively. When don Diego's servant, Rodrigo, arrives with a letter from his father, he anticipates that it will contain a sizeable allowance. However, the amount in the letter is woefully shy of don Diego's needs. In order to appear liberal, he leads his new friend, don Juan, to believe that he has a chain worth one hundred *escudos* that he wants to give doña Beatriz when they visit her again. Only to Rodrigo does don Diego reveal that the chain is a cheap copy. Disguised as an acquaintance of don Juan's, Rodrigo loses the chain to "don Dionís" while gambling at her house, thus enabling "don Dionís" to make a seemingly generous gift of the chain to doña Beatriz.

As luck would have it, doña Clara and doña Beatriz are old friends, and just as doña Beatriz finishes describing her passion for "don Dionís," don Diego comes to visit doña Clara. Daunted, but not defeated, he pretends not to know doña Beatriz and

maintains complete ignorance in the face of her barrage of questions. Don Diego later enlists don Juan's help in creating another fiction: that there is someone else in Madrid by the name of don Diego who looks just like don Dionís. Doña Beatriz is not so easily duped, however, and insists that she will have to see the two of them side by side to be convinced.

Doña Beatriz devises a plan to bring both don Diego and "don Dionís" to her house at the same time, which forces don Diego to concoct yet another scam with don Juan and Rodrigo. "Don Dionís" has learned that the chain was not worth the amount for which it was gambled. When he sees Rodrigo, "don Dionís" challenges him to a (mock) duel and is taken into custody by a guard who is actually don Juan's friend. After a quick change of costume, don Diego makes his designated appointment with doña Beatriz, who is finally convinced. Later, don Leonelo and don Félix catch up with don Diego, unsure which lady he is courting, but positive that one of them has just cause for challenging him. At the prospect of a duel, don Diego drops his pretenses and admits to courting both women for different reasons, not realizing that the women are eavesdropping on the conversation. While don Leonelo and don Félix squabble over who gets to duel with don Diego first,

the ladies step forward and leave with their original suitors, leaving don Diego scorned and single.

Teodoro and Marcelo, in Hurtado de Mendoza's *Los empeños del mentir*, also construct new identities for themselves, but for the sole purpose of avoiding honest work. Upon arriving in Madrid, they find an easy mark in don Diego, who is being threatened by three thugs. A sword fight breaks out, and Marcelo and Teodoro jump to don Diego's defense. Grateful for their intercession, don Diego relates the history of his family, and his lamentations continue until he reveals that, while in Italy, the older brother had requested a small portrait of their sister, doña Elvira, since he wished to betroth her to a certain don Luis de Vivero. Marcelo takes advantage of the news and impersonates don Luis, turning Teodoro into his servant. In order to "prove" his identity, he orders Teodoro to show don Diego doña Elvira's portrait. After a moment's confusion, Teodoro plunges headlong into the swindle, claiming the portrait, along with all of their jewels, was stolen from him on the road. Unperturbed, don Diego invites them to stay at his home. Doña Elvira's dismay at seeing her newly arrived "spouse" is extreme, since neither his manners nor his physical presence correspond to what she considers a gentleman.

After two days, Teodoro is irritated with Marcelo for subjecting him to the unglamorous life of a servant and convinces Marcelo that his days as "don Luis" are over. Among don Diego's staff, Teodoro has dropped hints that he is really don Luis de Vivero, who has come in disguise to see doña Elvira before making commitments of marriage. When the maid suggests this duplicity to doña Elvira, she finds it credible since, in her mind, Teodoro "tiene más arte de caballero" than Marcelo (444b). Still skeptical, doña Elvira spies on "don Luis" and his servant, and their conversation reveals that they are impostors. When she confronts them, Marcelo concocts an excuse for the charade: his master is actually Count Fabio, who saw her portrait back in Italy, fell madly in love with her, and now defies his family by attempting to marry her instead of a lady from the upper nobility.

Still not convinced, doña Elvira consults her brother who, as might be expected, believes every word and is thrilled at the prospect of his sister marrying a count. In the meantime, Marcelo returns to the household with news that the real don Luis de Vivero, sparkling with jewels, just arrived in Madrid with an impressive retinue. Marcelo is ready to bolt, counting himself lucky to have been wined and dined for a couple of days, but Teodoro insists in maintaining their guise. When don Luis shows

up at the house disguised as a servant (in order to see his betrothed without being known), Teodoro and Marcelo accuse him of being the bandit who robbed them. Eventually, don Luis's servants come looking for him, and they are able to clear up any doubt regarding his identity. Teodoro, rather than fleeing with the jewels, returns them and admits readily to everything. Chagrined by their naïvete, the household graciously accepts having been duped and sends the two con-artists off with one of the jewels as compensation.

In Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's *Abre el ojo*, the plot twists turn from disguises to focus instead on the tarnished and dinted remains of courtly love in Madrid. Don Clemente has relations with three women: doña Hipólita, a widow whom the young noble has been seeing for the past six years and with whom he has grown somewhat bored; doña Beatriz, a young woman who wanted to marry him and who ended up pressing a lawsuit against him; and doña Clara, a lovely young courtesan who is his latest mistress. Doña Clara currently has four men who provide for her welfare—not counting the discouraged attentions of don Julián. In the midst of a lovers' quarrel between doña Clara and don Clemente, Juan (an alderman from Almagro and one of doña

Clara's admirers) visits her, which only increases don Clemente's jealousy.

Don Clemente later returns to doña Clara's to reconcile with her, but she purposefully mistakes him for don Julián. When the real don Julián appears on her doorstep, doña Clara feigns interest in him, which provokes don Clemente to pretend that he has renewed relations with doña Beatriz. Don Clemente has another heated exchange with doña Clara as he is preparing to leave; however, his departure is futher delayed by the arrival of doña Hipólita, who is determined that he should choose between them once and for all. To add to the confusion, doña Beatriz comes to investigate what all the fuss is about, only to find her former lover in a dispute with two other women.

That night, don Clemente goes to plead his case with doña Hipólita, but finds her with Juan. The next day, the alderman challenges him to a duel. Don Clemente asks don Julián to be his second, but when they get to the appointed place, they discover that Juan's second is out-of-town. Rather than have the fight dissolve, don Julián then offers to switch sides and become Juan's second, leaving Cartilla, the servant, to assist don Clemente. The fight begins, but Juan finds don Clemente's swordplay far too daunting, and Cartilla is overmatched with don Julián. So, they

switch opponents. The fight is postponed when a soldier warns them that the local authorities have learned of the duel and believe doña Clara to be the cause. All six characters end up at doña Hipólita's house, but instead of the usual abrupt pairing off of couples, each group decides to go its separate way, warning the audience to "watch out" for the opposite sex.

In all three plays the slippage between the values of a hierarchical society on the one hand and those of a self-controlled society on the other begins to reveal itself in the environment inhabited by the protagonists. The setting for these plays is seventeenth-century Madrid. This time period saw rapid expansion of urban areas all over Europe, an expansion which "often outstripped the cities' ability to incorporate the waves of newcomers within traditional organizational structures" (Villari 5). These plays convey the resulting bedlam by repeatedly associating Madrid with Babylon: don Diego in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas* refers to it as a "nueva Babilonia" (204b) and Teodoro in *Los empeños del mentir* exalts Madrid above the famed Assyrian city (437c). The reference to Babylon, however, evokes warring images in an audience's mind: opulence and decadence, hegemony and confusion. Such a portrayal of Madrid provides an ideal backdrop

for the machinations of individuals motivated primarily by self-interest.

As newcomers, either to the city itself or to a given neighborhood, the characters are able to appropriate new personae or at least leave behind inconvenient acquaintances: don Diego creates a dual identity, Teodoro and Marcelo take on aliases, and doña Clara moves twice to different neighborhoods trying to escape unwanted attention. The characters count on Madrid's formidable size and lack of organized infrastructure to conceal them. As Wardropper notes when referring to Madrid, "Las dimensiones de la ciudad, cuyos nuevos habitantes saben poco acerca de los antecedentes familiares de cada cual, confieren un cierto anonimato a aquellos que buscan su protección y sus oportunidades de medro" (216). This thought is sustained by Rodrigo, the servant in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas*, when he complains of having spent hours trying to find his master after reaching the city:

> En Madrid, ¿no es cosa llana,
> señor, que de hoy a mañana
> suele perderse una calle?
> Porque, según cada día
> se hacen nuevas, imagino
> que desconoce un vecino
> hoy adonde ayer vivía. (203b)

The idea that someone would be uncertain of where their residence was located from one day to the next gives the city a fantastic quality—like a labyrinth with shifting walls and hidden passages. Neighbors no longer know everyone in the neighborhood, thus identities can be donned or discarded.

Within this nebulous realm is the other Madrid, the center of Court life, which continues to reflect the precepts of a vertically organized society.[8] The construction of the lavish Buen Retiro in the 1630s, the sumptuary laws dictating who could wear what, the importance placed on untainted Christian blood, the continued division between grandees, *caballeros*, *hidalgos* and commoners all point to a hierarchical society. Yet, when one looks behind the pomp and circumstance, even the aristocracy—the cornerstone of the hierarchical society—was not as well defined as it undoubtedly wished to be: "From the 1520s privileges of *hidalguía* were being put up for sale as a means of bringing relief to a hardpressed royal treasury. These privileges were apparently available to anyone with sufficient cash to spare. . . ." (Elliott 116). Being of the

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[8] In his introduction to *Spanish Comedies and Historical Contexts in the 1620's* (Univ. Park: Penn State UP, 1996), Blue details a seventeenth-century royal procession as a spectacle that reinforced this type of hierarchical ideology (1-4).

nobility no longer signified what it once had, and the way was opened (ironically, by the Crown itself) for the Almighty Ducat.[9]

The possession or lack of money could alter significantly the presentation of self, since in the emerging, rationalized world order wealth equaled status. One's housing, clothing, retainers, and leisure activities constituted signs of identity that were dependent on wealth. It is not surprising, therefore, that money is an absorbing topic for the characters in these three plays. In *Hombre pobre todo es trazas*, don Diego juggles finances in an attempt to maintain his lifestyle. When Rodrigo despairs of being able to cover their rent, don Diego offers his theory on moneylending:

> ¡Qué poco sabes! No hay banco
> que esté más seguro y cierto
> que aquel que una vez prestó;
> pues por no perder aquello
> prestado, va dando más
> sobre su mismo dinero. (224b)

The "bank" in this case is don Juan, who lends his friend four hundred *reales* on the promise that don Diego will, in turn, lend him a needed eight hundred *reales* later in the week (225a). Contrary to what don Juan believes, don Diego has no means with which to repay arrears. Old debts, counterfeit chains and back

[9] Francisco de Quevedo satirizes the power of money in his *letrilla* "Poderoso caballero es don Dinero." See *Renaissance and Baroque Poetry of Spain*. Ed. Elias L. Rivers (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland P, 1966) 292-94.

rent are all part of don Diego's working environment as he attempts to compensate for his poverty with the appearance of wealth.

Given his entrepreneurial spirit, it comes as no surprise that don Diego also allows wealth to influence his choice of women. When he caps off his adulation of doña Clara with: "lo que me parece a mí / mejor, es tener de renta / largamente doce mil / ducados" (205a), all of the previous, complimentary images come crashing down, since it is obvious that it hardly matters what she looks or acts like. While he cannot imagine losing the alluring doña Beatriz, he does not let platonic love or even sexual desire overrule the compelling need for money.

The characters in *Abre el ojo* take economic interests as a matter of course. Living expenses are referred to casually but frequently: don Julián remarks how much he has spent on doña Clara's furniture (125c); doña Clara is short on her deposit for the apartment (129c); Juan complains of his money being thrown away on floor matting (129c); and don Clemente steals his father's silver saltcellar and some tapestries in order to get spending money (130c, 139a). Most of these details do little to advance the plotline; instead, they are reminders of the financial anxiety that permeates

the characters' social environment, an environment that incorporates material wealth into the process of self-fashioning.

These individuals are a cynical group who harbor few illusions about how the world works. At one point, doña Clara explains to her maid that, when it comes to men:

> Mejor es un miserable
> Que tenga [dinero] y no quiera darnos,
> Que no, aunque nos quiera
> Quien no tiene, aunque sea franco. (127c)

Romantic fancies do not cloud her judgement of practical considerations, namely, that one cannot live on good intentions. Of course, she diversifies her interests, anyway, so that she has both the love-struck *hidalgo* and the wealthy alderman (among others) in her pocket.

Don Clemente is not so love-struck, however, as to become naïve about the economic system in which he lives. When his servant, Cartilla, suggests that he reconcile with doña Clara by giving her the proceeds from the saltcellar in *vellón*, don Clemente replies:

> Mira, las damas de hoy,
> El real de a ocho del pobre
> Le tienen por real de a dos;
> Y el real de a ocho del rico,
> Les parece que es doblón. (131a) [10]

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[10] *Vellón* coinage of pure copper (rather than a copper and silver alloy) was first authorized in 1599. In 1626 the premium on silver in terms of *vellón* had

Don Clemente's words reveal first that he belongs to the less fortunate category of individuals. Secondly, they indicate that the *vellón* coin has no intrinsic value, that it "functions in the monetary system as does the signifier in the linguistic system, the zero in the numerical system and the subject in both language and ideology; it is a stand-in marking the place of lack" (Blue, *Spanish Comedies* 156).[11] *Vellón* coins, like the new privileges of *hidalguía*, were issued by the Crown as short-term relief for Spain's financial difficulties. Neither was based on inherent worth or meaning. Don Clemente does not want the ambiguity of the coinage's "real" worth to debase his gift to doña Clara and potentially reflect back on him.

Although material wealth is certainly of interest to Teodoro and Marcelo in *Los empeños del mentir*, they become con artists more to avoid hard work than to get rich quickly (438a). They refrain from schemes designed to extract money from their generous (and ingenuous) host, getting caught up instead in the pursuit of doña Elvira. While Teodoro admits in the second act that "[ella] es rica, y tengo codicia" (443c), he finds himself

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reached 50%. Despite deflationary measures, by 1641 the premium on silver was 200% (Elliott, *Imperial Spain*, 304, 333, 349).

[11] For a more detailed discussion of Spain's financial straits in the seventeenth-century and the significance of *vellón* coinage, see Blue, *Spanish Comedies and Historical Context in the 1620s*. (Univ Park, PA: Penn State UP, 1996) 144-57.

focusing more and more on doña Elvira herself as the ultimate goal:

Teodoro:	Ella, entre dulce y terrible, Es rebelión apacible. (. . .)
Marcelo:	Con la hermosura de Elvira, ¿Qué pillamos? ¿Qué Vivero, Qué don Luis y qué soldado Es este que hemos tomado?
Teodoro:	No lo sé; de amores muero. (448a)

Teodoro seems to forget for awhile that he is an impostor looking for personal gain. The importance of material wealth in the presentation of self diminishes relative to the other two plays, perhaps because don Diego and his sister still perceive themselves and others through the lens of the hierarchical society.

Don Diego becomes an easy mark for Teodoro and Marcelo, since he is still firmly rooted in a traditional value system. When they first meet don Diego, the latter stresses his lineage as a way of introduction:

> Yo soy un antiguo hidalgo;
> Que con mi sangre, a lo menos
> Ninguno se perdonara,
> si no es yo, lo caballero. (438c)

Later, when Marcelo's letter to the invented Count of Bitoldo indicates that doña Elvira is only an "honrada hidalga," don Diego stiffly interjects that "En el fuero castellano / No hay más blasón que hidalguía" (450b). Don Diego sees his nobility as an intrinsic

quality that has real value, rather than a performance that relies on the perception of others. Unlike many of the other characters in these plays, he assigns a one-to-one correspondence between a signifier and a signified. For example, after Teodoro assumes the guise of a count, don Diego responds that "[s]u presencia corresponde / A dignidad tan lucida" (449c). He blithely accepts word as truth and appearance as reality.

This blindness is seen as foolishness and ineptitude by his sister, but although doña Elvira may be more discerning than her brother, she likewise holds to traditional values. When Teodoro "confesses" to being Count Fabio, she warns him: "No dudes que en esta parte / Solo no he de perdonarte / Ser hombre de bien y noble" (449a). Teodoro does not exactly fit either of those requirements. However, in a world where a title of lesser nobility can be bought, how is one to understand "being noble?" Doña Elvira attributes an intrinsic worth to that status that, towards the mid-seventeenth century, was becoming an anachronism.

Although the real don Luis appears only in the second half of the third act, he quickly steals the show as the archetypal *galán.* One look at him, even when he has just been accused of being a bandit, makes the skeptical doña Ana remark to doña Elvira: "Yo te doy tu conde Fabio, / Y me tomo el bandolero" (453a). Don

Luis's demeanor matches his appearance, and when doña Elvira tests him to see if, after being arrested, he will try to escape, he responds: "Que antes dejaré la vida / A un cuchillo, que dudada / Mi verdad" (453c). Given the preceding events in the play, the words themselves are almost laughable: truth, and "my" truth at that? However, his actions are what doña Elvira has come to judge, and in both word and deed he embodies the ideal nobleman.

The don Diego from *Hombre pobre todo es trazas*, however, subverts this idealized version of nobility. As in the case of don Luis, don Diego's mere presence outshines other suitors: "His charms, his verbal skills and the figures he cuts succeed because of the trust that others have in the implicit but unspoken connection they believe in between face value and intrinsic value, between Diego's word appearance and reality" (Blue, *Spanish Comedies* 149). In effect, he misuses beliefs derived from the hierarchical society for personal gain. When doña Beatriz's maid informs "don Dionís" that the chain he won gambling is worth very little (a fact of which he is all too aware), he replies indignantly "ΥQué fácil / es de engañar (caso es cierto) / un hombre de bien!" (224b). The tone of his voice would likely imply that he is this *hombre de bien* who has been tricked; but the statement can also

be taken as don Diego's creed, as he deftly deceives even the notoriously perceptive talents of a maid.

Yet, even don Diego is susceptible to certain principles reminiscent of a hierarchical society. The tradition of dueling to settle points of honor or justice can be traced to the medieval world, where truth belonged to whoever triumphed on the battlefield. One need only think of the final showdown between El Cid and the Infantes de Carrión, in which justice ultimately came through valor and strength of arms (246-68). By the seventeenth century, dueling was officially outlawed, and affronts to one's reputation often became the grounds for lawsuits in both the lesser and apellate courts (Kagan 240). To recur to a duel, therefore, was to return to the beliefs of the hierarchical system of justice.

Don Diego's first duel is designed solely to trick doña Beatriz into believing that don Dionís truly exists. However, when he is formally challenged by don Leonelo and don Félix, he suddenly reverts to a man of honor (albeit, a chauvinistic one): he accepts their challenge without hesitation and divulges his true identity "porque un hombre principal / puede mentir con las damas / . . . pero con los hombres no" (232). His valor and honesty when faced with the duel is in keeping with the personae he has created (the courteous don Diego and the valient don Dionís); but, these

attributes are juxtaposed to his otherwise ignoble behavior of lying and cheating.

A similar slippage between two value systems occurs in *Abre el ojo*, when don Clemente accepts Juan's challenge. Don Clemente has hardly been a model *caballero*: he is rude to doña Hipólita ("Si tú no fueras cansada / Te quisiera mucho más" [123a]); he pilfers items of value from his father; and, in a petty fit of jealousy, he threatens to slash all of doña Clara's pillows and cushions (135c). Yet, driven by some lingering sense of honor, he accepts Juan's challenge. If the audience anticipates that the play's action may turn ugly, they are soon disillusioned. The duel becomes a farce, as don Julián amiably switches sides, and Juan ends up fighting the servant instead of don Clemente. The nonchalance with which the entire scene unfolds satirizes dueling and all that it is supposed to represent.

Dueling is not the only element characteristic of both the *comedia* and the hierarchical society to find itself questioned or ridiculed. Figures of authority, such as political leaders, adamant fathers, or watchful brothers, are conspicuously absent or ineffective in these plays. The three women in *Abre el ojo* answer only to themselves and seem to be in control of both their money and their destiny. The only authority figure mentioned is don

Clemente's father, whose "apretada inquisición" for his missing saltcellar is met with indifference from his son (130c) and probably a chuckle from the audience. He appears to have no control over don Clemente, either in terms of his spending or of his premarital activities. Chaos reigns throughout the play, and is not abated in the final scene when the three men and three women come to the same conclusion:

> Clara: Oídme todos
> Ya veis que todos hombres
> son falsos y mentirosos.
> Clemente: Ya veis que toda mujer
> Es más falsa que nosotros;
> Pues escarmiento, y dejarlas. (144c)

No one marries, no one integrates into the society, and no one imposes order.

The father figure in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas* has no more luck controlling his wayward progeny. His letter to don Diego is curt and to the point:

> <<Hijo, yo no tengo hacienda para sustentar vuestras travesuras y bellaquerías. Ahí va una letra de cuatrocientos reales; mirad cómo gastáis, que quizá no podré enviaros otra. En la corte estáis; dad alguna traza de vivir honradamente, y ved que el pobre todo es trazas.>> (206a).

True to form, don Diego loosely interprets the words of his father, twisting their meaning so that "trazas" include his fraudulent schemes. Don Diego does run into two blocking figures in don

Leonelo and don Félix, but their bumblings throughout most of the play do not make them seem a serious threat to his designs. In the end, they do "get the girl," however it is not through their own actions but rather through the intercession of the women themselves.

Doña Beatriz and doña Clara, while apparently virtuous young ladies, freely participate in activities that would immediately draw fire from any honorable father or brother. While confessing her new love interest to doña Clara, doña Beatriz relates that:

> En mi casa permití
> visitas, conversación,
> juego y música, que son
> lazos de amor cada día,
> por sólo ver si podía
> verle con esta ocasión. (215b)

Men visit her house constantly, it seems; scandalous behaviour when one considers what most *galanes* have to go through simply to get a letter to their beloved. Doña Clara also manages to receive visits from don Diego unchaperoned, and invites him (not very subtly) to come to her balcony at night or find her in her carriage cruising around the Prado during the day (208a).

Not only do these young ladies enjoy unprecedented freedom, they also act to control their own fate. Doña Beatriz proves to be more clairvoyant in seeing through don Diego's schemes than the

male characters in the play, and when don Juan joins don Diego in trying to convince her that don Dionís has a virtual twin perambulating about the city, she retorts:

> Bien ensayados los dos
> venís. ¿Cuánto estudio os cuesta,
> Don Juan, la tal relación?
> ¿Por tan necia me tenéis,
> que imaginasteis que yo
> creyera tal? (220b)

Don Diego gains a shortlived victory by convincing her through the mock duel that don Dionís is not lying. When she witnesses the exchange between him and don Félix, however, she is the one who finally imposes order on the situation:

> Aparta, Félix; aparta,
> Leonelo; porque también
> viene a ser mía esta causa.
> Yo, Don Félix, he de ser
> quien antes se satisfaga,
> pues me trajo mi ventura
> a donde, desengañada,
> premio tu amor con mi mano
> y castigo su ignorancia, . . . (232b)

Doña Clara follows suit by snubbing don Diego and walking off hand in hand with don Leonelo. Since they both "offer their hand" to the *galanes*, marriage is at least implied. The two women, then, punish the miscreant and place themselves in the socially approved role of married women—or soon to be married women.

They therefore subvert the gender roles expected of the hierarchical society, where men are the traditional figures of authority.

Don Diego in *Los empeños del mentir* has the makings of an authority figure: his older brother has died, and he now has the responsiblity for arranging his sister's marriage. Other *comedia* brothers (like don Juan and don Luis in *La dama duende* or don Félix in *Casa con dos puertas, mala es de guardar*, both by Calderón) jealously guard their sisters from the men who might corrupt them. However, don Diego seems determined to marry his sister off as quickly as possible: "Estos días he entendido / Que pasar quiere a un marido / Todo el cuidado de hermano" (440b), complains doña Elvira. Don Diego cheerfully invites Teodoro and Marcelo into his house, and then presses for the marriage to occur as soon as possible. The same evening that he introduces his sister to "don Luis" he comments: "Quisiera que el casamiento / esta noche se efectuase; / Pero no es tarde mañana" (441b). He is not interested in verifying credentials, and it does not seem to matter to him that Marcelo lacks the qualities of a gentleman.

Doña Elvira and her cousin, doña Ana, demonstrate more aptitude in picking up on dissimulation. From the beginning doña Elvira suspects that something is not right, and after hearing the extravagant list of things "don Luis" has brought her from Italy,

she laments to herself, "¡Que mi hermano tanto engaño / Ignore!" (442c). After the maid informs her that Teodoro is the real don Luis, she remarks "Que todo embuste a ser viene, / No lo dudo, . . . " (444b). Granted, her lack of enthusiasm for marriage may give her more cause to find fault, but even when her resistance starts to weaken at the thought of being a countess, she continues to question appearances and the lies attached to those involved.

Doña Ana shares her cousin's skepticism, and takes it upon herself to upbraid don Diego for his simplicity:

> ¿Dónde está tu entendimiento?
> ¿No sabes, mozo ignorante,
> Que en Madrid a cada instante
> Se pisa en un escarmiento? (447c)

These are sharp words coming from the supposed sweetheart of don Diego, but they do nothing to enlighten him. Doña Ana remains suspicious, however, even in the face of the written evidence concocted by Teodoro and Marcelo, since "Muchos un engaño avisa" (447b). She only gloats a little when the impostors are revealed in the end.

If anyone can be said to "impose order" in this play, it is Teodoro, the very one who suggested they become con artists in

the first place. After confessing their caper, he magnanimously brings doña Elvira and the real don Luis together:

> El señor don Luis, en buen hora
> Con dulces fecundas paces
> Goce en la gloriosa Elvira
> En una tantas beldades. (454c)

After his pretty speech, no one seems inclined to pursue the matter of their impersonation. Although Teodoro does hint at joining the army in Flanders—an idea not at all supported by Marcelo—neither visibly reintegrates into society. The play proffers no figurehead of a hierarchical society, no real "justice" directed at the miscreants, and no marriage for Teodoro or Marcelo.

If, as was stated before, marriage completes the self, what kind of self is posited by the eligible bachelors and bachelorettes remaining at the end of these plays? These characters—specifically, don Diego from *Hombre pobre todo es trazas*, Teodoro from *Los empeños del mentir*, and don Clemente and doña Clara from *Abre el ojo*—are portrayed as being shaped more by individualistic impulses than by the principles of a natural world order characteristic of a hierarchical society. Don Diego wants two women equally, without caring that polygamy is socially unacceptable. With no compunction, Teodoro nearly marries into *hidalguía* under false pretenses. And, don Clemente and doña

Clara base their selection of sweethearts on selfish comfort. They do not temper their desires with static social imperatives.

For them, the self is a matter of performance. Don Diego, for example, gears his actions and words to impress others. Although Calderón's play predates the *Oráculo*, its protagonist corresponds to Gracián's *hombre discreto* in many aspects. However, like his interpretation of his father's letter, don Diego selects only those aspects that advance his own interests. Gracián counsels the prudent man to "Cobrar fama de cortés, que basta a hacerle plausible" (399). When don Diego gives doña Beatriz the fake chain, he does so in order to appear gallant. It works remarkably well. After receiving the chain, doña Beatriz muses aloud:

> ¡Cuánto
> se estima, agradece y precia
> la cortesía! Más es
> el modo, que la cadena. (213b)

She is wholly duped by his display of generosity, and the fact that she later discovers that the chain is almost worthless does little to diminish the gesture.

Like the chain, don Diego's friendships have been purchased with an ulterior motive in mind. When bringing Rodrigo up to date on his recent activities in Madrid, don Diego comments:

> . . . y así a cualquiera
> conversación acudí,

> donde liberal, cortés
> y afable, gané y perdí;
> perdí el dinero, y gané
> amigos, caudal, en fin
> el mejor. (205a)

His rationale for buying friends correlates to another of Gracián's aphorisms regarding survival in the Court environment: "Saber usar de los amigos. . . . la amistad multiplica los bienes y reparte los males" (408). Don Diego views friendship in terms of how useful a given friend may be, both monetarily and otherwise. In characteristic fashion, he uses don Juan to contrive his good fortune and share in his misfortune.

The control over language and performance that are his making prove also to be his downfall. Still a witty and dashing young nobleman, his credibility and reputation are forfeit when his lies catch up to him. As Gracián notes, "Piérdese con sola una mentira todo el crédito de la entereza" (414). Such is the moral of the story, as don Diego admits in the closing lines of the play. Despite the lies and the stated moral, however, his modes of operation throughout the dramatic action highlight the power of esteem and the value of exterior appearances in establishing oneself at Court and in fabricating one's self.

Teodoro and Marcelo are able to construct their swindle on similar grounds. Upon reaching the city gates, the two

adventurers pause a moment to put on their spurs (438a). The detail of adding spurs to their garb, mentioned only in passing by Marcelo (and in the stage directions), indicates that they have walked to Madrid, but wish to appear as if they had ridden. The spurs are a subtle sign, and yet one that they know will be automatically though perhaps subconsciously understood by those they meet.

The way in which they fashion themselves when they get to Madrid is calculated to make a certain impression, but their reputation receives a tremendous and immediate boost when they come to don Diego's aid against the three thugs. From this point on, don Diego seems determined to glamorize them into gentlemen. Despite Marcelo's "mala traza de hombre" (doña Elvira's words, 440c), despite their lack of real credentials, despite their everchanging identities, don Diego can only see them as valiant heroes to whom he owes a debt of gratitude. They quickly take advantage of his ingenuousness and reconstruct themselves according to the way in which don Diego perceives them.

They again use accouterments as signs when Teodoro takes over the role of don Luis (444b). They stage a scene in which doña Elvira can see them, but they pretend not to see her. Teodoro has his hat on while Marcelo holds his. When they obviously take note

of her presence, Teodoro hastily removes his hat and Marcelo slaps his back on his head. They are counting on doña Elvira's acknowledgement of social mores—the removal of one's hat as a sign of deference—to convince her that the switch in identities is genuine. The fact that Teodoro follows this scene with a declaration to doña Elvira that "[n]o hay embozos, no hay disfraces / Hasta el alma está en tus manos" (445a) intensifies the dramatic irony of the scene, since not only is he currently impersonating don Luis, but he also will soon transform into Count Fabio.

Teodoro takes irony to a new height when he confronts the real don Luis, who comes to the house disguised as a servant. "Count Fabio" assumes self-righteous indignation and declaims:

> Criado y don Luis
> Juntamente; ya verán
> Si él que una vez ha mentido
> Puede nunca ser creído. (452c)

He adheres well to his role of a count by evoking this sentiment, one befitting an *hombre discreto.* However, since "Count Fabio" has previously pretended to be both a servant and don Luis, the statement should come off as equivocal to the other characters on stage, and laughable to the audience. The fact that the other characters, at least, do not note this discrepancy in the count's performance suggests that Teodoro has successfully relegated his

lies to the level of a nobleman's artful dissimulation. Even in the end, it is not his performance that unveils the plot, but rather the intercession of don Luis's servants. No one has seen through his skillful portrayal of a nobleman.

Rather than pursue the precepts of an ideal noble, the characters in *Abre el ojo* spoof genteel conduct. The women make repeated references to their honor, yet this seems almost a reflex action for these characters, whose questionable relationships and tarnished reputations have already been divulged. Doña Hipólita rebukes don Clemente with "[y] aunque en amar y querer / Desdichada venga a ser, / he de parecer honrada, . . ." (123a-b); doña Beatriz remarks haughtily to doña Clara that "[m]i opinión estimo más / Que cuanto darme podéis" (128c); and doña Clara exclaims to don Julián: "Ved que arriesgo / Mi honor y fama por vos" (134a). They still wish to be perceived favorably by others, but they only pay lip service to the code of conduct that would grant them such regard.

The men also suffer by comparison with Castiglione's ideal courtier or Gracián's *hombre discreto*. Whereas characters in other plays work to garner esteem, these "gentlemen" lack the gracious behavior that is the *galán's* trademark. Don Clemente's rude behavior has already been noted; don Julián comes across as

boring and nosy; and Juan's most outstanding characteristic is that he is stingy.

Don Julián befriends both don Clemente and Juan, to the exasperation of the former and the confusion of the latter, but the surface value of this friendship is displayed in the duel. In the first place, don Clemente asks don Julián to be his second—a position usually reserved for one's most trusted companion—not because he values don Julián as an ally, but rather because he will thereby be avenged of one of his two rivals no matter the outcome of the dispute. As expressed by Cartilla, "[d]é o tome, tomas venganza / Del Regidor, si le zurran, / Del Julián, se le badanan" (140b). In the second place, don Julián's insistence on fighting even when Juan would have backed down indicates how lightly he takes his friendships:

> . . . mas yo he salido
> A reñir a la campaña,
> Y a un hidalgo de mi porte
> De mi obligación y fama,
> Le toca en saliendo al campo
> Reñir. (141b)

His solution for the duel to continue is to switch sides and become Juan's second. For all of his posturing as someone worthy of respect, he dismisses his "obligation" to don Clemente and ends up squaring off against him.

Abre el ojo satirizes friendship, honor, and virtue, values which are at least questioned in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas* and *Los empeños del mentir.* Although the protagonists do not torment themselves internally over the ethics of their action, they share with the audience the "moral of the story" at the conclusion of the plays. When Rodrigo in *Hombre pobre todo es trazas* wonders what his master has achieved through his *trazas*, don Diego replies that a great deal has been accomplished:

> Si en ellas halla
> desengaños el que es cuerdo,
> mirando en mí castigadas
> estas costumbres, porque
> escarmentando en mis faltas
> perdonen las del autor, . . . (233b)

In *Los empeños del mentir* Marcelo warns that "quien se entregare / a creer [los empeños del mentir] y a seguirlos / escarmentará más tarde" (455c). And, the women of *Abre el ojo* exhort: "Abrir el ojo, señoras," advice which is echoed by the men: "Señores, abrid el ojo" (145c). The counsel offered at the end is audience directed in that the public is being warned to open its eyes and see that absolute trust in appearance—in the old correspondence between sign and meaning—is a way to be quickly deceived. The characters have "learned" and want to be sure the audience understands the lesson.

While these plays do not carry the didactic weight of Gracián's *Oráculo*, they ultimately address similar issues, namely the art involved in the presentation of self, the unstable relationship between signifier and signified, and the gap between the values of the traditional, hierarchical society and the emerging self-controlled society. The weakening of naturalistic premises about the social world allows the characters to consider the self a matter of performance rather than an intrinsic quality. Throughout much of the plays' action, the protagonists use and misuse the knowledge of the self to influence other characters' perceptions of them. In the end, their schemes fail, and the morals they then offer to the public mark the internalization of authority in a self-controlled society, since no traditional authority figure metes out punishment for their transgressions. These plays thus hold up a figurative mirror to the audience, prompting introspection and, from that, knowledge about what constitutes the self.

5. Revealing Social Tensions through Ridicule

From Menander's *The Arbitration* to Ariosto's *Necromancer* to Groening's *The Simpsons*, satire has enjoyed a long and glorious tradition of social criticism in the entertainment industry. P.K. Elkin suggests that there is a historical relativity to satire wherein different ages require different sorts and degrees of satire (35). During Philip IV's reign, theatregoers had leisure and a taste for wit, playwrights and actors enjoyed an extensive system of patronage, and plays saw wide distribution through state licensed theatre companies and standing playhouses.[1] If one adds to the above conditions a perceived need for reform—an idea repeatedly expressed by the Olivares' administration and the *Junta de Reformación*—and a division of social, political and economic interests, it comes as no surprise that satirical plays became increasingly prevalent in the decades that followed Philip IV's ascension to the throne.

One of the forms satire took was the *comedia de figurón*, which ridiculed an individual (or series of individuals) of at least *hidalgo* status by turning the character into a social type. Critics

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[1] These are among the conditions for the appreciation and escalation of satire as noted by Dustin Griffin, *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1994) 159.

agree that the production of these satirical plays increases as the seventeenth century progresses. Jean-Raymond Lanot indicates that plays with ridiculous nobles gained popularity after 1619 (134); Alan Soons states that they elicited strong audience appeal after 1630 (26); and Ignacio Arellano notes that "el proceso de asunción cómica por parte de los señores avanza mucho en la segunda mitad del XVII" (106).[2] Arellano's assessment seems to agree with Vicente García de la Huerta's selection of *comedias de figurón* for his *Theatro hespañol* of 1785. The anthology showcases such playwrights as Joseph de Cañizares, Antonio de Solís, Agustín Moreto and Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla. With the exception of Rojas Zorrilla, who died in 1648, these writers' plays were performed and published for the most part after the *corrales* reopened in 1649. Moreto's *El lindo don Diego*, often considered the quintessential *comedia de figurón*, was not published until 1653 (Lanot and Vitse 189).[3] However, precursors to these more

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[2] Arellano goes on to suggest that the increase in ridiculous nobles could be related to the "desprestigio ideológico de ciertos valores que se empiezan a considerar arcaicos" (106). This observation will receive further consideration in the following analysis.

[3] *El lindo don Diego's* status as a *comedia de figurón* has been disputed, however, by Edwin Place in "Notes on the Grotesque: the *Comedia de Figurón* at Home and Abroad" (1939) and by Frank P. Casa in *The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Moreto* (1966).

standardized *comedias de figurón* can be found much earlier in the seventeeth century.

One has only to recall the *hidalgos* and noble-want-to-bes populating the Golden Age *entremés* to find a prototype for the *figurón* (for example, in Hurtado de Mendoza's "El examinador Miser Palomo" of 1617 or Quevedo's "La ropavejera" of c. 1624). In terms of a full-length play, both Alan Soons (26) and Edwin Place (415) make reference to don Blas from Lope's *Los hidalgos de aldea* (c. 1610) as a fledgling *figurón.* In "Chronology of the *Comedias* of Guillén de Castro," Courtney Bruerton places *El Narciso en su opinión*—Moreto's model for *El lindo don Diego*—as having been written between 1612-15. Lanot and Vitse list Lope's *La dama boba* (c. 1613) as the first *comedia de figurón* (189); while Edwin Place designates *El Marqués del Cigarral* (published in 1634) as the "first thoroughgoing example of the *comedia de figurón*" (413). The three plays to be analyzed here—Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza's *Cada loco con su tema* (1630), Alonso de Castillo Solórzano's *El Marqués del Cigarral* (1634), and Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla's *Entre bobos anda el juego* (1638)—represent a selection in which the *figurón* characters figure prominently in the plot, but are still something of a novelty to the *comedia.* By analyzing the satire levied against these characters, we see that the seemingly frivolous

plays focus audience attention on serious social issues, although in typical, satirical fashion, they stop short of directly suggesting reform.

Like the term *gracioso, figurón* has been defined in many ways, and, like the term *gracioso*, the result has led to discrepancies among critics as to what constitutes a "genuine" *figurón.* Whatever other characteristics may be attributed to these plays, the exaggeration of a social type or types seems to be key to their categorization. Given the element of exaggeration, many critics include the idea of the grotesque with their explanation of what constitutes the *comedia de figurón.*[4] While an in-depth study of the grotesque does not fall within the scope of this analysis, a brief overview of this artistic form suggests a correlation between its presence and the rise of social tensions in a particular society.

According to John R. Clark, the term grotesque originates from the fifteenth-century discovery of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, built in the first century A.D. Underneath the infamous emperor's "Golden House" was a grotto decorated with bizarre wall paintings

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[4] See Ignacio Arellano, "La generalización del agente cómico en la comedia de capa y espada" (1994); María Grazia Profeti, prologue to *Entre bobos anda el juego* (1998); Edwin B. Place, "Notes on the Grotesque: the *Comedia de Figurón* at Home and Abroad" (1939); Harriet B. Powers, "The Grotesque Vision of Rojas Zorrilla" (1971); and José M. Regueiro, "Textual Discontinuities and the Problems of Closure in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age" (1995).

that "unconscionably mingled and interfused human, animal, vegetable and mineral in eerie and nightmarish fashion" (Clark 18). In the *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* of 1611, Covarrubias uses *grotesca* to refer to the fantastic religious paintings of the Dutch artist, Hieronymus Bosch (1450? – 1516). Over the centuries, the word grotesque has taken on the connotation of that art which shows a "dissolution of our rational, controlled world" (Powers 1).[5] If that is indeed the case, then its use when referring to the *figurón* would imply not just an exaggerated character type, but also a harbinger of a world gone out of control.[6]

In terms of how the grotesque appears in the *comedia de figurón*, Edwin Place remarks that "the artistry of the grotesque in the *figurón* play consists precisely in the contrast between the incongruous behavior of the *figurones* and the retention, partly at

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[5] For futher studies on the grotesque in literature, consult Wolfgang Kayser, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963) and Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (1984).

[6] In his study of the grotesque, Bernard McElroy posits the following questions:

> Is grotesque art itself decadent? Is it the product of a decadent society? Does the grotesque flourish in those civilizations that have become jaded, have lost their bearings and their convictions, can no longer take life tragically or even seriously, but have abandoned everything for self-indulgence and are, in fact, grimacing and clowning in the imminence of their own demise? (129)

What he resolves is that, while no absolute correlation exists between declining societies and grotesque art, "the grotesque can be enormously effective in the *depiction* of decadence." (130). It would seem more than happenstance, then, that some *comedia* critics refer to the *comedias de figurón* as being grotesque, while others, such as Jean-Raymond Lanot, have associated the *comedias de figurón* with the decadence of Golden Age theatre.

least, of the decorum inherent in the other rôles" (417). The decorum he mentions relates closely to what Anthony Cascardi refers to as "taste."[7] Cascardi evaluates previous studies by Kant, Freud and Gadamer to assess the role of taste—of having or lacking aesthetic judgement—in the development of the modern subject (133).[8] The importance of taste to the subject, as posited by Kant, comes from its individualistic nature:

> If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, . . . we refer the representation to the Subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgement of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgement, and so not logical, but is aesthetic—which means that it is one whose determining ground *cannot be other than subjective*. (qtd in *Ideologies* 134-5)

In order to relate the "authority of taste" to seventeenth-century Spanish society, Cascardi draws heavily on a theory of aesthetic judgement extracted from Baltasar Gracián's *El héroe* (1637) and *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia* (1647). Part of this theory is shaped by axiom 87 of the *Oráculo manual*, in which Gracián writes: "Cultura y aliño. Nace bárbaro el hombre; redímese de bestia cultivándose" (qtd in *Ideologies* 139). Without culture and

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[7] See "Gracián and the Authority of Taste" in Cascardi's *Ideologies of History in the Spanish Golden Age* (1997) 134-59.

[8] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*; Sigmund Freud, "Negation" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*; and Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

embellishment, man (or woman, one might suppose) remains relegated to the animal world. Cascardi explains that "[t]aste is instinct transformed. . . . The overcoming of instinct by aesthetic judgement is said to provide evidence that there is cultivation (*cultura*) not only of the faculties of the mind (*ingenio*), but of *gusto* itself" (139). As will be shown in the following analysis, the exaggerated nature of the *figurones* comes from the fact that they lack taste: they are unaware of what is aesthetically pleasing to the community in which they are circulating, and are therefore unable to integrate fully.

As Cascardi points out in his analysis, however, a community's critical eye creates a paradox with the notion of "individual" taste. Although exercising taste is part of one's performance and ultimately serves to hone one's identity, Cascardi indicates that:

> the individual's individualism, especially as it is achieved through the exercise of taste, would have no standing were it not for the validation offered by society. 'Taste' is the mark of the individual, but it also marks the incorporation of the individual into the social body. (147)

The argument between which comes first, the exercising of taste or a society's standard of taste, could easily degenerate into a chicken-or-egg debate. The end result, however, is that the early

modern subject once again finds itself divided, simultaneously initiating a strategic aesthetic evaluation as part of its *modus operandi*, yet subjecting itself to a perceived social norm.

What was considered normal in seventeenth-century society can also be questioned, since the *comedias de figurón* reflect the same slippage between the traditional, hierarchical society and the evolving, self-controlled society that was discussed in chapter four. "As the social basis of the hereditary aristocracy weakened, it became increasingly difficult to sustain the idea that 'good taste' was aligned in any fundamental way with nobility of birth or purity of blood" (Cascardi 144). If the early modern noble was made or unmade by his performance at court, then the ridiculed nobles in these plays are clearly unmade. In axiom 219 of the *Oráculo manual*, Gracián counsels, "No ser tenido por hombre de artificio, aunque no se puede ya vivir sin él. . ." (422). The characters that typically fall into the *figurón* category suffer precisely from either making their "art" obvious, or having no "art" whatsoever.

We see two distinct caricatures in Hurtado de Mendoza's *Cada loco con su tema* in the form of el Montañés and don Julián. When the play begins, we discover that don Hernán, an *indiano* who has recently returned to Spain, has arranged a marriage between one of his two daughters and his nephew, a poor but

"honorable" *montañés* from León. However, the two young women already have their sights set on young nobles from Madrid: doña Isabel values wit and gallantry, and believes she has found these qualities in don Juan while doña Leonor, the elder of the two, prefers don Julián, a man whom her sister describes as foolish and boring (458c), but who has considerable wealth. In the meantime, don Luis, who had courted doña Isabel in the Indies and followed her all the way to Madrid, encounters the Montañés just outside the family's home, and the Montañés challenges don Luis to a duel.

Their fight is broken up by don Hernán, who welcomes the Montañés and leaves don Luis standing in the street. Don Juan makes friends with don Luis, not realizing initially that he presents yet another rival for doña Isabel. Meanwhile, after very brief introductions, don Hernán wants the Montañés to select which of his daughters he prefers to marry. The Montañés is in the process of choosing doña Isabel when don Juan barges in, saying that don Luis is on his deathbed from the wounds he received in the duel and that the city guard is looking for the Montañés. Bernardo (don Juan's companion who assumes the role of the play's *gracioso*) later waylays don Luis and tells him the same story that don Juan had concocted to get rid of the Montañés: that don Luis wounded

his opponent in the duel and that the city guard is looking for him. Later that night, don Julián, having spuriously changed his inclination from doña Leonor to doña Isabel, brings musicians to serenade her, but don Hernán's squire comes to the window instead and dumps water on the pretentious nobleman.

In the meantime, don Hernán tries to convince his nephew to say a few nice words to doña Isabel in order to win her over. The Montañes, however, shows himself incapable of gallantry, and when doña Isabel continues to scorn him, he decides that doña Leonor might be a better choice. Don Luis returns to the house and sees the Montañes alive and well. The two realize they have been duped and decide to collaborate, but doña Isabel overhears their conversation and becomes more determined than ever to marry don Juan. She tells her father that don Juan de Guevara promised to marry her, seduced her, and now scorns her and their family's honor. Don Hernán drags both the Montañés and don Luis off in search of don Juan to "force" him to marry doña Isabel. El Montañés accepts doña Leonor as his wife, and she seems content as long as he is made wealthy enough to ride instead of walk.

No single character stands out in this play as the *figurón*; however, both the Montañés and don Julián demonstrate a certain

ineptitude in their exercise of taste that sets them up as objects of social ridicule. The setting is Madrid; the community in question, that of the court. Doña Isabel's family has just returned from Peru and is busily reintegrating itself in the *madrileña* society. Don Hernán clearly expresses this goal when he states: "No quiero de indiano el nombre" (457b). He does not want to be an outsider, tainted by the soldier-of-fortune or stingy nouveau riche aura surrounding wealthy people returning from the West. His solution is to marry one of his daughters to a cousin from a traditional (read "honorable") Leonese family.

The cousin whose old blood is to marry with new money never even receives a name in the play. He is referred to simply as "el Montañés." The term *montañés* is an instant signifer for the audience since it designates a particular social type complete with cultural attachments. Doña Isabel voices the stereotype of a *montañés* when she describes her cousin as:

> Muy puesto en que su montaña
> Vale más que mil tesoros,
> Y pensando que es de moros
> Todo lo demás de España. (458b)

She speaks of someone who is permanently grounded in the Middle Ages, when León stood as the last line of defense against the advancing Moors (MacKay 36). Doña Isabel's perception of

montañeses coincides with those views studied by Herrero García, who cites authors ranging from Cervantes to Calderón and concludes:

> Éste era el carácter típico de los montañeses. Allá no había llegado la mezcla de sangre judía o mora; allí se conservaba, juntamente con la fe antigua, la sangre antigua y la vida imperturbada de los antiguos godos. (228)

While this statement seems complimentary, the number of tongue-in-cheek statements that Herrero García includes in his study makes it apparent that the inhabitants of the Cantabrian Mountains were viewed generally as anachronistic vestiges of a simpler time.

Doña Isabel's fears are realized when she sees her cousin for the first time. His physical appearance corresponds to the roughcut, medieval warrior she has envisioned: "¡Jesús! ¿qué hombrón / Es este? ¡Ay triste! ¡qué miedo / Me ha dado!" (462c). Before even knowing for certain who the man is, she perceives him as a sort of monster. Don Luis and don Juan, no less impressed by the size and brute strength of the Montañés, both share an aside to the audience in which they compare him to a tree trunk (464a). This analogy implies not only the physical dimensions of their rival, but also his gnarled and uncultivated appearance.

Even don Hernán, so delighted that his nephew has arrived and so eager to have the wedding take place, recognizes the lack of polish in the Montañés. Twice he tries to convince his nephew to change clothes, since his garb is so dark and severe (465c and 470b). Both times the Montañés refuses, insisting that what he wears has nothing to do with his intrinsic quality. While this is a nice sentiment, its naïveté confirms his disregard for the social norms of the milieu that he has entered. One's appearance at court does matter.

His inappropriate clothing is mirrored by his awkwardness at courtiership, both in terms of his etiquette at court and his relationship with women. His tendency to get into duels takes on comic overtones, not because he is an unskilled or cowardly fighter, but rather because he challenges people with little cause and without accomplishing anything. The Montañés challenges don Luis because doña Isabel flees upon seeing the two of them in the courtyard; he draws a sword on don Julián because the latter has musicians playing beneath doña Isabel's window; and he tries to get into a fight with Bernardo when he finds him at the family's house. Gareth Davies suggests that "[the Montañés's] very attachment to principle becomes a source of comedy, yet he soon awakens the respect of others by his straightforwardness, bravery

and nobility of character" (56). I would argue, however, that none of these so-called duels are truly worthwhile endeavors and are therefore as much a source of comedy as are other aspects of the Montañés: he admits to don Luis that challenging him to a duel was uncalled for (463c); he ends up fighting the musicians instead of don Julián and is chased off by don Juan and Bernardo pretending to be the city guard (470a); and his dispute with Bernardo is so unjustified that Bernardo remarks incredulously, "Hombre, que pareces guarda / De la puente de Mantible / ¿Qué has visto?" (474b).[9] He is a bull in a china shop. His actions do not garner him respect in the court environment; rather, they expose his inability to cope diplomatically with the situations in which he finds himself.

If his diplomacy falters with men, he is woefully unprepared for paying court to a lady. At the beginning of the play, doña Isabel makes a list of a perfect courtier's attributes, attributes which her father did not use when describing her cousin:

> ¡Qué persona tan bizarra,
> Que aun no le pintó discreto,
> Que aun no dijo tierno, amable,
> Cortés, gallardo, amoroso,
> Gentil, despejado, airoso,

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[9] Angel Valbuena Briones traces the reference of the Puente de Mantible to the "Historia de Maynete" found in Alfonso el Sabio's *Crónica general*. The bridge was guarded by a giant named Galafre. See *Obras completas de Calderón de la Barca*. (Madrid: Aguilar, 1956) 1849-51.

Apacible ni agradable! (458a)

Her sister, doña Leonor would have added "a caballo" to that list, indicating a desired level of affluence, but doña Isabel is concerned primarily with the individual's performance. This spells disaster for the Montañés in his one attempt to woo her. His actions lead don Hernán to comment that his nephew "[s]ólo sabe ser hidalgo. / El no acierta a enamorarla; / Pienso que la desafía" (471b). If his wooing is indeed a sort of challenge, doña Isabel responds by picking up the figurative glove and verbally humiliating him. At that point, the Montañés decides to settle for doña Leonor since, as he specifies to don Hernán, he came to Madrid to marry a cousin, not to woo her (470b).

Although in some ways don Julián would appear to be a more capable suitor, he too falls short of the decorum necessary for a legitimate *galán.*[10] From a distance, he appears to be the ideal nobleman. Upon seeing him in the street, doña Leonor raves about him to her sister: "¿No es gallardo? ¿no es airoso? / ¡Qué gravedad le acompaña! / Tan gentil mozo no he visto" (461c). The squire who is with them claims that don Julián is "de la gente más lucida" of Madrid (461c). His place at court as one of the "beautiful

[10] Don Julián's name might give the audience pause for thought, since in the legend of la Cava, it is Count Julián who betrays Spain to the Moors. For more

people" comes, however, from his ostentatious display of wealth and his air of superiority; his actual performance as a *caballero* is decidedly lackluster. Doña Isabel has already identified this and labeled him for the audience before don Julián makes an appearance on stage:

> Y ese tu galán cansado,
> O cochista o rocinista,
> Majadero a letra vista,
> Del pueblo mal acetado,
> ¿No es cofrade de los lodos? (458c)

She has seen through the expensive clothing and equestrian affinity to find only a cad with a bad reputation. Doña Leonor is unable to see this until her so-called *galán* refuses to stoop to pick up the glove she drops. His courtly extravagance is not matched by the most basic courteous behavior.

If the spectators find the Montañés comical because of his exaggerated sense of honor, don Julián represents the other end of the spectrum. He studiously avoids getting involved with any conflict that might result in physical harm or even mental anguish. He leaves precipitously whenever swords are drawn in his vicinity (463c, 470a), and repeatedly declines Bernardo's attempts to goad

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information on la Cava, see the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada*, vol. 12 (Barcelona: Espasa-Calpe, 1931) 72 vols.

him into gallant behavior (462b, 468b, 474a). His catch-all response for these encounters is that they are not worth his time:

> Es muy pequeño este encuentro
> Para mí; yo me recojo.
> Quédense, que yo me fundo
> En que no hay cosa en el mundo
> Que me merezca un enojo. (468b)

He attempts to recast the situation by placing everyone else beneath him, and while this strategem might have worked effectively in one such encounter, its repetition leads to comic effect.

Don Julián similarly converts social criticism to praise when he asks his servant what people are saying about him:

> Criado: Que cansas.
> Don Julián: Es justo,
> Si a todos les doy cuidado.
> Criado: Que te quieres demasiado.
> Don Julián: Hago bien. Tengo buen gusto.
> ¿Qué más?
> Criado: Que eres mal nacido.
> Don Julián: Buen parto tuvo mi madre.
> Criado: Que no te conocen padre.
> Don Julián Fue muy poco entremetido. (461b)

The list of flaws—and the play on words—continues. Rather than taking offense or mending his ways, don Julián simply hears what he wants to hear: the social criticism does not register.

Don Julián's exaggerated vanity deviates from the accepted standard of courteous conduct and sets him up as a target of

ridicule. Gracián states that "Siempre fue enfadosa la vanidad; aquí reída" (438). Vain individuals are not taken seriously, as *El lindo don Diego* clearly proves some years later. The extent of the scorn directed at this social type is revealed when water is unceremoniously dumped on don Julián from an upper story window (469c). This sort of low, phyical humor à la Rabelais was once the rustic clown's providence; making a nobleman the butt of such a joke lowers his presumed status in society. He is, as Bernardo says, an "animal" (461a) who remains solidly indifferent to the community's accepted codes of coduct.

In Castillo Solórzano's *El Marqués del Cigarral* the provincial hick and the presumptuous dandy are combined in one character, an *hidalgo* who is trying to convince the world that he deserves to be a Spanish grandee. The play begins with the *galán*, don Antonio, betrothed to an *indiana* cousin. On his way to Seville to meet his bride-to-be, he passes through Orgaz where he falls in love with Leonor, the daughter of a wealthy farmer. Completely infatuated, he assumes the guise of a student named Celio and enters the service of a nobleman who has recently moved to Orgaz: don Cosme de Armenia. This individual traces his lineage back to the Old Testament patriarchs and claims to be a close relative of the Emperor Carlos V (the current monarch). When don Cosme

sees Leonor, he forgets his grief over his former wife (a Mexican princess who died suddenly after eating a cucumber salad) and asks Leonor to be his concubine since she is not noble enough to be his wife. She rejects him soundly, but before she can take her leave, a letter arrives that explains that Leonor is actually of noble birth and that she is to go to Consuegra to be placed under the guardianship of the Prior. Don Cosme is very pleased with the news, and invites himself to come visit her there.

In Consuegra the Prior receives a visit from don Iñigo, coincidentally one of don Antonio's uncles. The Prior and don Iñigo find don Cosme's pretentious behavior hilarious, and when don Iñigo finds out that don Cosme believes himself worthy of being a grandee, he tells the gullible *hidalgo* that Carlos V has declared him marquis of a *cigarral* near Toledo. The Prior has even brought doña Leonor into the game, telling her to reciprocate don Cosme's gestures of courtship. Her real interests remain with Celio, although she is certain that their unequal status will keep them apart. This prompts Celio to reveal to her his true identity.

Meanwhile, the Prior has prepared celebrations in honor of his guests which include having don Cosme participate in a bullfight. He has also devised a joke to play on don Cosme. Doña Leonor invites him to come to her balcony at night, and, once he is

perched there precariously, she leaves him to "make sure the Prior is asleep." Don Iñigo then plays the part of a malicious passerby who threatens to pelt him with stones unless he throws down his clothes. To further the humiliation, one of the maids then opens an upper story window and tosses the contents of a chamber pot onto don Cosme. The next day, doña Leonor and don Antonio meet again. This time, don Iñigo observes them. He realizes he has found his missing nephew and speaks with the Prior to arrange their marriage. Not surprisingly, don Cosme is less than happy with this new development, but his objections are mollified by the Prior's promise that Carlos V has arranged a marriage for him to a princess of Cuzco.

The preposterous nobleman in this play takes a more central role than the examples studied in *Cada loco con su tema.* The traditional *galán* and *dama*—don Antonio and doña Leonor—have resolved the tension in their love story by the end of Act II and are secondary to the outrageous behavior of don Cosme de Armenia.

His name alone sparks laughter, in part because Cosme is not a particularly dignified name for a nobleman;[11] but also because his use of an exotic place of origin as a surname is

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[11] Another famous *figurón* by the name of don Cosme can be found in Antonio de Solís' *Un bobo hace ciento* (1655).

reminiscent of the identifying tags adopted by the knights errant in the *libros de caballería*, such as Amadís de Gaula or don Belianís de Grecia. The title he is given by the Prior and don Iñigo—el Marqués del Cigarral—neatly summarizes the unrealistic pretentions of this character and his provincial background. The marquises, along with the dukes, were the Spanish grandees, a group restricted to only twenty-six individuals during the reign of Charles V (Elliott 112); and *cigarral* was the generic term for a small country estate along the Tagus River. Having such an exalted title attached to an insignificant piece of property subverts the traditional associations made with "marquis" and suggests that the other characters—and the audience—hold don Cosme in as much esteem as they would a carnivalesque clown.

Throughout the play, don Cosme demonstrates an obsession with names and titles. When he hires his new servants in Orgaz, he revises their names and nonchalantly adds the title of *don* so that his new household will reflect his presumed status. For instance, he transforms Pascual Zapatero into don Pascual Zapata, his new steward (311a). When he explains how he derived Zapata from Zapatero, his longtime lackey, Fuencarral, responds: "Así lo harán / muchos figuras del siglo" (311a). This pointed remark refers to the practice of buying patents of nobility from the Crown,

then tweaking one's name to make it sound more aristocratic.[12] It reflects directly on his master, as well as on the society at large, by emphasizing that names and titles are signifiers with unstable meanings. They may be donned or discarded like an article of clothing. Ironically, in the case of don Antonio, don Cosme insists that he discard the *don* if he wishes to be a secretary in don Cosme's household (311b), which effectively demotes don Antonio to plebian status.

Don Cosme's own status is placed in question when, at the beginning of the play, don Antonio and his servant, Fabio, discuss the unusual gentleman with whom they are about to seek employment:

Don Antonio: ¿No es caballero?
Fabio: Al soslayo,
Un villano es bien nacido,
Que, loco de una desgracia,
Ha dado en decir por gracia
Que es ilustre, y procedido
Del patriarca Noé,
Más noble y más excelente
Que todo humano viviente. (309b)

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[12] In *Imperial Spain: 1469 – 1716* (London: Penguin, 1990), J. H. Elliott quotes the 1592 Cortes: "The sale of *hidalguías* is giving rise to numerous inconveniences, for they are generally purchased by wealthy persons of inferior quality. . . This is hateful to all classes. Nobles resent finding people of inferior condition obtaining equality with them simply through the expenditure of money, to the consequent disparagement of nobility. . . while *pecheros* (tax-payers) are annoyed that people of no higher origin than themselves should secure precedence over them merely because of their wealth. . . " (116).

This description of don Cosme first questions his identity as a *caballero*: he may have the trappings of nobility, but he does not otherwise fit the mold. Then, Fabio pokes fun at his insistence on his lineage, which he traces back to Noah and the Ark. This could be taken as a satirical reference to those individuals who came up with very creative pedigrees in order to prove they were *cristianos viejos*, of pure and longstanding Christian bloodlines. Going back to Noah is about as "*viejo*" as one can get, although not exactly "Christian."[13]

Fabio's description also indicates that don Cosme is crazy, not merely a fool. This assessment is supported by don Iñigo, when he asks Fuencarral if don Cosme is as insane as ever (315b). In his article on *comedias de figurón*, Edwin Place states that "*El Marqués del Cigarral* has as chief protagonist *un loco*—an insane man (with a mania) who by virtue of his openly recognized and duly labelled insanity is enabled to flout the whole accepted pattern of behavior laid down for the stage *galán*" (413). I would argue, however, that don Cosme does not come across as an insane individual in the play. Instead, his actions are frequently

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[13] If one considers that Noah was from the pre-Christian era and therefore technically Jewish, Fabio's statement could also be hinting that don Cosme has a *converso* heritage.

driven by greed, conceit and cowardice; in short, they are the actions of many so-called *figurones* who are not considered crazy.

His sanity can be seen in his asides to the audience, in which he expresses a desire to act according to the community's sense of taste. For instance, when he is balancing on doña Leonor's balcony and is being threatened by the anonymous passerby (don Iñigo), he remarks to the spectators:

> ¡Oh quién el libro de duelo
> Y una luz tuviera aquí,
> Para saber lo que debo
> Hacer en esta ocasión! (320c)

He is asking for a reference book (and a light) to guide him through this encounter, almost like an actor seeking a prompt. If his insanity were complete, one would suppose that he, like don Quijote, would invent appropriate responses and mold the situation to fit his reality. Instead, he confesses his ignorance to the spectators. When he finally gets down from the balcony, he shares another aside with the audience: "Amor, desde hoy más no pienso / Andar contigo en tramoya; / a pié quedo galanteo" (321c). Thus, he is not so crazy that he does not learn something from his experience, although he refrains from sharing such thoughts with other characters on stage. Lastly, when don Iñigo

tells him he should slide his sword between the bull's shoulderblades to end the bullfight, don Cosme asks dubiously:

don Cosme: ¿No es más seguro a la panza?
don Iñigo: Sí, es, mas no está en el uso.
don Cosme: ¿Que hasta en esto del matar
Al uso habemos de andar? (322b)

Don Cosme recognizes that decorum is regulated by a social norm, and he aspires to that norm. However, his façade of superiority has some substantial fissures in it that keep him from attaining his goal.

His failure to assimilate the role of the ideal nobleman, the stage *galán*, comes in part from his inability to exercise good taste. As we saw in *Cada loco con su tema*, appearance does matter, and the apparel that don Cosme wears creates a dubious first impression. According to the stage directions, he appears on stage in the first act "ridículamente vestido de luto" (310a).[14] His state of mourning is suitable, since his *indiana* wife has just recently died, but the implication is that he has overdone the traditional attire. By Act II he is apparently over his grief, since he appears on stage dressed as a "galán de figura" (315b). The use and meaning of the term "figura" in this context can be inferred from Quevedo's

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[14] Although in many cases, stage directions have been added in later editions to the *comedias*, the references to don Cosme's costume found in the 1951 BAE edition match those from a seventeenth-century manuscript originating from *Parte 37 de las comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores ingenios de España.*

Vida de la corte y oficios entretenidos de ella (1605): "Pocos se reservan de figuras, unos por naturaleza, y otros por arte" (qtd. in Lanot 132). Those who are "natural" *figuras* exhibit some physical flaw, such as being bowlegged. Others become *figuras* through their "art," or rather, their lack thereof: these are the egotists, cowards or fools. Having don Cosme appear as a *galán de figura* suggests that he has tried too hard to follow fashion, with the end result being clownlike. The last stage direction that indicates don Cosme's costume appears in the text after don Cosme discovers that doña Leonor is to marry his secretary. He then rushes on stage "armado ridículamente con un chuzo y una rodela" (324b). He arms himself in a manner more befitting a shepherd than a nobleman. Once again, his poor choice of attire, or weapons in this case, is a sign to the audience that don Cosme lacks an understanding of decorum.

His attempts to speak in an elegant, refined manner are no less misguided than his fashion sense. The *gongorismos* with which he sprinkles his speech are met by blank stares from the townspeople. When detailing his exalted lineage, for instance, he refers to the ark as a "nadante edificio" (310a). To ask if the town has any pretty women, he inquires "¿Y de la esfera feminea / Hay faces de buena data?" (312c). And, he indicates that he wants to

speak to the *labradora* Leonor by saying, "Se inclina / Mi gusto a confabular / Con ella" (313a). His efforts to *hablar culto* become all the more entertaining when he resorts to vernacular in order to make himself understood, or when he stumbles onto topics that do not lend themselves to elevated conversation. After riding to Consuegra, don Cosme asks for doña Leonor's hand in marriage, and she pretends to agree. He responds with:

> Diera aquí dos cabriolas
> De placer, hermosa dama,
> Si no me pusiera estorbo
> El bataneo del haca. (317a)

He would jump for joy if he were not so saddle sore. While jumping for joy may not convey the sense of dignity expected of a nobleman, being saddle sore is definitely not the impression most men would want to leave with their newly betrothed.

In terms of valor, don Cosme makes a show of prowess and bravery, but once again, his asides to the audience undo him. The scatological humor usually reserved for lackeys instead originates from don Cosme's cowardice. When balancing on the Prior's balcony, he turns to the audience and says:

> A trueque de no inquietar
> Al Prior, a quien más temo
> Me habré de quedar desnudo;
> De darle las calzas huelgo
> Que han de tener que limpiar
> Que las ha mojado el miedo. (321a)

He rationalizes that he does not want to disturb the Prior, but the true motivation for submitting to the "ruffian's" demands becomes obvious with his next comment: he was so scared that he wet himself. Later, when discussing strategy for the bullfight, don Cosme learns that he will be riding a horse named El Rodado, or the Dappled Grey. His response is a play on words that once again plunges the *hidalgo* into the realm of low humor: "Ya el nombre me hace temer; / Que si dél vengo a caer, / Seré en basura rodado" (322a). He realizes his skill is limited and fears falling from the horse into the mud and manure of the ring. Then, while practicing for the bullfight, the wranglers let a fierce bull loose, and in the process of running away from it, don Cosme's pants slip down and he ends up getting bruised and battered by the animal (324a-b). Such humiliating circumstances strip away any presumed dignity don Cosme might have and compounds the comic element of his cowardice.

As a further strike against his ability to carry out the role of *galán*, don Cosme's relationships with women have nothing to do with courtly love, but instead reveal his greedy nature. He married a Mexican princess for her dowry, but, as he complains to the town mayor, she died without him having seen "ni un papagayo ni un

mico" (310b). Still "grieving" the loss of his first wife, he spies Leonor and wants to make her his mistress. As soon as he discovers her real status, he then pursues a legitimate marriage; however, when she is given to don Antonio, he is easily distracted from revenge by the promise that Carlos V plans to marry him to "una infanta del Cuzco" who has a dowry, according to don Iñigo, of one million crowns (325a). Not once does he demonstrate any true feelings of love. Instead, his actions are marked by greed, conceit and cowardice.

Don Cosme serves as a satirized social type: a member of the evolving class of lower nobility with money (or dreams of money) and illusions of grandeur. The same general social type is used as a blocking figure in Rojas Zorrilla's *Entre bobos anda el juego.* In this play, we find the *dama*, doña Isabel, has already been betrothed to a wealthy *hidalgo* from Toledo, don Lucas del Cigarral. Not surprisingly, she is leery of marrying a man whom she has never met, and her misgivings are increased by the fact that her heart already belongs to another: a young man who saved her from an attack by a bull. Don Lucas's lackey, Cabellera, arrives with a letter, and proceeds to describe his master in most unpleasant terms: don Lucas is a miser and a braggart, with a poor physique. This description is immediately contrasted with

that of don Pedro, don Lucas's cousin, whom the lackey paints as the perfect gentleman. When don Pedro arrives to escort doña Isabel to Illescas, she recognizes him as the young man who saved her from the bull, and finds the torment of having to marry someone like don Lucas that much more unbearable. They get to the inn where don Lucas awaits, and she finds her husband-to-be no more charming in person than on paper. With them at the inn is don Luis, whose speech is punctuated with *gongorismos* and who is hopelessly in love with doña Isabel; and doña Alfonsa, don Lucas' sister who is planning to marry her cousin, don Pedro.

All of act two takes place in the middle of the night at the inn, with partially clothed characters scuttling here and there. Don Pedro and doña Isabel bump into each other in the dark, confess their undying love for one another, and are trying to contrive a solution for their problem when don Luis comes out of his room. Don Luis mistakenly goes to doña Alfonsa's room, wakes her, and professes his love for her, believing her to be doña Isabel. Doña Alfonsa assumes her late night visitor to be don Pedro, and therefore reciprocates. At that point, don Lucas awakens, and Cabellera tries to distract his master from checking on doña Isabel. When they finally enter the room, Cabellera promptly drops the candelabra, which plunges the room into darkness. Don Lucas

catches don Pedro as he tries to sneak out, and doña Alfonsa faints—or at least, pretends to faint—upon seeing her beloved in doña Isabel's room. Don Pedro says "sweet nothings" to her to try to bring her out of her swoon and assuage the suspicions of his cousin, but is overheard by doña Isabel. His attempts to assure her that the "sweet nothings" really mean nothing are overheard by doña Alfonsa. The act closes with both women furious at don Pedro, and don Lucas only partially believing don Pedro's story of guarding his betrothed from don Luis.

The next day, don Lucas pulls don Antonio aside to call off the wedding. Despite don Lucas's insulting behavior and the fact that don Antonio has recognized him as a boor, he is greedily determined that the wedding proceed according to plan. When they reach their next stop, however, doña Alfonsa informs her brother that don Pedro and doña Isabel are in love. Rather than fly into rage over his lost honor, don Lucas thinks to avenge himself by forcing them to marry, since they are both from poor families. In his mind, their love will fade as they live out their lives in poverty.

Don Luis is the token fop of the play. He is doña Isabel's unwelcome suitor, and is more a means to complicate the plot than an actual blocking figure. His melodramatic nature lies

primarily in his way of speaking, (although the potential certainly exists for an actor to magnify other aspects of this character). His fundamental flaws are revealed when doña Isabel informs her servant that "visto es mala figura, / pero escuchado es peor" (7). She cannot abide the way he speaks. The audience gets a demonstration of his overly cultivated speech when his servant, Carranza, asks him why they are on the road to Toledo (26): "Busco mi objeto" is don Luis's way of saying that he is pursuing doña Isabel. Despite Carranza's attempts to make his master speak plainly, don Luis continues in a similar vein until he breaks off with "Gente cursa el camino" (28). Don Lucas and his sister have arrived.

As mentioned previously, don Lucas is the primary blocking figure ridiculed in the play. His name reminds doña Isabel of a "galán de entremés" (10), or in other words, the male lead in a farce. When Cabellera describes his master to her, he too begins with the name:

> Don Lucas del Cigarral,
> cuyo apellido moderno
> no es por su casa, que es
> por un cigarral que ha hecho, . . . (11)

His recently acquired surname places don Lucas within the ranks of the upwardly mobile class who were able to purchase titles of

nobility. His name alone thus creates a particular type for the audience: a social climber from a rural background.

Cabellera's description of his master encapsulates both don Lucas's "natural" flaws and the defects attributable to his lack of "art." Beginning with the physical aspects of his master, Cabellera states:

> es un caballero flaco,
> desvaído, macilento,
> muy cortísimo de talle,
> y larguísimo de cuerpo; . . . (11)

He has a peasant's hands and big feet, is knock-kneed, and is going bald.[15] Don Lucas does not correspond in any way to society's ideal of manly good looks. Cabellera then elaborates on don Lucas's failings when it comes to courtly behavior: "mal poeta, peor ingenio, / mal músico, mentiroso, / preguntador sobre necio" (13). His one saving grace, Cabellera says ironically, is that he is miserly. The lackey has painted an antithetical picture of Castiglione's courtier or Gracián's *hombre discreto.*

Of course, the description of a malicious servant may be suspect; but immediately afterward doña Isabel reads aloud the letter sent by her husband-to-be. Rather than containing the

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[15] In her prologue to *Entre bobos anda el juego* (1998), Grazia Profeti suggests that these physical characteristics are a self-portrait of Rojas Zorrilla (xxxv).

anticipated endearments, the letter expresses his primary charm as his "seis mil y cuarenta y dos ducados de renta de mayorazgo," and her basic appeal as her ability to bear children: "me hereda mi primo si no tengo hijos; hanme dicho que vos y yo podemos tener los que quisiéramos; veníos esta noche a tratar del uno, que tiempo nos queda para los otros" (18). This tactless letter horrifies doña Isabel and doubtlessly jars the audience as well, as they realize that this character has not the slightest perception of the tasteful thing to say or do. The other possiblity is that the character does not care what will or will not offend. From ignorance or pride or a combination of both, don Lucas stands aloof from the unwritten laws that govern social interaction among the noble sectors of society.

Don Lucas's communicative "misfirings" do not improve when he appears in person.[16] His first words to doña Isabel (while she is still masked) give the impression of a traditional *gracioso* sidling up to the maid:

> Un amor que apenas osa
> a hablaros, dice fiel,
> que, una de dos, Isabel:
> o sois fea o sois hermosa. (33)

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[16] In *Language and the Comedia: Theory and* Practice (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1991), Catherine Larson investigates the failure of don Lucas and don Luis to fulfill Grice's maxims governing conversation, and the effect that speech acts have on the outcome of this play (40-60).

His inappropriate discourse forms a sharp contrast with that of his cousin, don Pedro, whose eloquent speech upon seeing doña Isabel's masked countenance is full of references to hierogyphs, enigmas and clouds covering the brilliant sun (21-22). Don Lucas's choice of words further accentuates a rustic background at odds with the social milieu of doña Isabel and her father. For instance, while listing reasons to don Antonio as to why he wants to back out of the wedding, don Lucas states that doña Isabel:

> . . . arguyó con mi primo
> daca el trato, toma el trato
> con que se le echa de ver
> que es tratante a treinta pasos; (85)

The colloquial quality of his accusation is emphasized by the alliteration of "tr-," the contraction "daca," and his oversimplified deduction. His discourse emulates the tempo and tone of *comedia* servants or *entremés* characters. In his *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (1609), Lope de Vega specifies that one should correlate the speech register with the status of the character (131). Don Lucas's character reveals a break in this code by using a lackey's language while assuming a superior air.

His social position becomes more ambiguous if one analyzes his honor code. A sense of what offends and what does not is crucial for the exercise of taste within a community, but don Lucas

does not have a secure grasp of decorum. When he and his sister arrive in Illescas, the teamsters (represented by voices off-stage) tease them. Don Lucas flies into a rage and draws his sword. Don Luis and Carranza, who were already at the inn, attempt to calm him; but, rather than listen to their counsel, don Lucas ends up trying to fight Carranza with don Luis in the middle (31). It is a ludicrous display that brings into sharp contrast don Luis's overly cultivated sensibilities and don Lucas's brutish nature.

His aggressive tendencies fluctuate, however, as the play progresses. When a twinge of suspicion takes don Lucas to his betrothed's room in the middle of the night, Cabellera is able to distract him (at least temporarily) by asking him to read one of his plays (86-87). Don Lucas just happens to have one on him and actually pulls it out and begins reading it -- <<Sale Herodes, y con él, / cuatrocientos inocentes.>> -- before a movement at the door reminds him of his original intention. Later, when don Lucas finally learns the truth about doña Isabel and don Pedro, he finds having been betrayed less upsetting than having insisted the two "hug and make up" when they were quarreling earlier:

> Mas de lo que estoy corrido,
> más que de todo mi mal,
> es que, riñendo por celos,
> los hiciese yo abrazar. (114)

He defies the expectations of the audience by responding differently than the jealous male figures made popular in so many *tragicomedias*. The impetuous individual who attacked teamsters and lackeys has suddenly become circumspect. His greatest fear is not, as he emphatically tells don Luis, an attack against his honor (109); rather, he fears losing control of a given situation and being made the fool.

Just as the Montañés was obsessed with honor and don Cosme with titles and prestige, don Lucas is obsessed with control. Many of his attempts to impose his will reveal, conversely, how little dominion he is able to exercise outside of his own small world. The power he wields comes from his wealth, and when wealth does not matter, the power dissipates.

He orders his bride-to-be to leave Madrid and meet him in Illescas. She is to cover her face with a mask, and her father is to remain behind. These three conditions would hypothetically enable him to remove her completely from the court community, the social "norm" against which he would be judged, and bring her into his world on his terms.

The attempt fails for various reasons. First and foremost is the presence of his cousin. Don Pedro is described as an ideal gentleman by Cabellera:

es agradable, cortés,
es entendido, es atento,
es galán sin presunción,
valiente sin querer serlo. . . . (15)

Don Lucas has, in effect, brought the community's taste along with him and places himself in direct and unflattering contrast to don Pedro's reputed graces. Doña Isabel complies with his order to wear a mask, although don Lucas later complains that it was only "media mascarilla" (85). Beyond the potential effacing effect of covering her face, the order carries an ulterior motive. After doña Isabel removes the mask, don Lucas asks his cousin to speak to her in his stead, since:

. . . cubierto, yo me atrevo
a hablar como una manteca,
pero en mi vida he sabido
hablar tierno a descubiertas. (37)

He loses his self-proclaimed composure when he has to look a woman in the eye. Of course, one could argue that he has no concept of courtly behavior whether or not the woman is concealing her face. The point, however, is that he admits weakness, a linguistic weakness that becomes all the more apparent as don Pedro and doña Isabel run verbal circles around him. His third request is ignored by don Antonio, who insists on accompanying his daughter to Toledo. Apparently, there are limits to what infringements on decorum the father is willing to tolerate.

The voices off-stage in Illescas represent another instance where don Lucas loses control. He makes the mistake of retorting to the teamsters' taunts, which only spurs on their ribald comments: "The innkeepers, coachmen, wagondrivers, mule skinners, and itinerants of all sorts speak a rough, scathingly funny, jargon-filled language of disrespect, principally to Lucas. In their presence, Lucas's power vanishes" (Blue, "Diverse Economy," 81). At that point, he resorts to physical retaliation, since he cannot intimidate them in any other way.

With the other noble characters don Lucas exercises authority through his money. "While not necessarily bringing grace, beauty, respect, or a silver tongue, money is power, raw, brutal power" (Blue, "Diverse Economy," 83). Don Lucas attempts to control both don Antonio and don Pedro through his wealth. Don Antonio is willing to marry his daughter to someone he admits is a "majadero" (87) in order to have a secure financial future. Don Pedro relies entirely upon don Lucas for his livelihood. Even don Lucas recognizes that his inheritance is one of his most attractive qualities. He describes himself to don Antonio as:

> . . . discreto, valiente,
> galán, airoso, bizarro,
> diestro, músico, poeta,
> jinete, toreador, franco,
> y sobre todo teniendo

de renta seis mil ducados. (84)

His self-portrait reveals first that he cannot see himself relative to the community's sense of taste. Then, the last two lines indicate that he considers all of the above talents of little consequence compared to the steady flow of his wealth.

His last attempt at domination in the play stems from this unswerving belief in money's overarching power. He decides the young couple's future by demanding they marry and proclaims that his vengeance will be felt when their passion is consumed by their hunger. This equivocal ending has prompted varied interpretations of the play by modern critics. In her prologue to the play, Grazia Profeti indicates that "Por primera vez, pues, no es la corte quien rehusa al que viene de la provincia, sino que el punto de vista se desplaza al exterior, y es el provinciano mismo quien rechaza los usos de la corte" (xlv). MacKenzie suggests that "[l]a actitud de Don Lucas, por grotesca que sea, refleja en su modo distorcionado los valores falsos y materialistas de la sociedad de la época de su creador" (102). And, in "The Diverse Economy of *Entre bobos anda el juego*" Blue investigates various possible renditions, from seeing poverty-stricken marriage as poetic justice for the young couple (who, while "tastefully" drawn, are not exactly free from vice), to seeing don Lucas, doña Alfonsa and don Luis as

satirized caricatures of particular sectors of society (84-85). If viewed from the perspective of the authority of taste, don Lucas remains marginalized due to his lack of cultivation: his boorish actions would receive no validation by a society that would most probably sympathize with the young, beautiful couple. However, if money cannot buy love, love cannot spontaneously create money. The play unveils the hypocrisy of pretending that high ideals and true love can transcend base necessities. These characters do not receive a sudden inheritance; no gift arrives from the Viceroy.[17] They are faced with having no means of support in an increasingly materialistic world.

In all three plays, the *figurón* characters accentuate the collision between a base, object-oriented world and the lofty principles attributed to an idealized noble caste. David Castillo has observed that "[a]s the [seventeenth] century goes on, the process of aristocratization tends to eliminate the lowest noble strata including instead moneyed groups and public management professionals" (203). The categorization of the society's upper echelon becomes confused as lineage, performance, and wealth blend together as its defining characteristics. In a stinging

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[17] One is left wondering, however, if don Pedro still remains the sole heir in the event that don Lucas has no children.

denunciation of the Montañés's arrogance, don Hernán acknowledges this new world order:

> ¡Oh, qué soberbio que estás!
> Advierte, Luzbel segundo,
> Que ser hidalgo, en el mundo
> Es ser hidalgo, y no más.
> (. . .)
> Ya no es el tiempo del Cid;
> Que ahora más ricos son
> Que los grandes de León
> Los chapines de Madrid. (470c)

Don Hernán paradoxically admits the influence of money in society, yet at the same time desires the old family name. He wants the best of both worlds. The three men who vie for doña Isabel's hand each offers a different kind of investment in noble status: el Montañés represents true blue blood; don Julián, wealth; and don Juan, the performative aspect of nobility. *El Marqués del Cigarral* presents a less complicated picture. Don Antonio and doña Leonor act like the archetypal *galán* and *dama*, and the crude topic of wealth is never mentioned. Don Cosme, on the other hand, lacks noble lineage as well as the artful conduct becoming a courtier. His money is given to him in order to support his outrageous behavior and provide entertainment for the "real" nobles. In *Entre bobos anda el juego*, don Antonio comes from the wilting "lowest noble strata," and is desperately trying to refresh the family's image by marrying his daughter to money. Don

Lucas's classification as nobility hinges on society's appreciation of wealth—an appreciation that had undoubtedly escalated in the 1630's because of the failed economic reforms proposed by the Olivares administration.[18] It is clear, though, from the unflattering portrayal of don Lucas's character that wealth alone is not enough.

These plays produce a marginalized individual who does not fit with the community's taste and who becomes a loose end at the play's conclusion. The endings are in keeping with the nature of satire, whose form is "most commonly anticlimactic, foreshortened, perplexing, defective—ending unsatisfactorily. Hence the audience distinctly feels the absence of resolution and catharsis. . ." (Clark 51). These characters either remain unmarried (don Julián and don Lucas) or await proposed marriages with "consolation prize" female characters (el Montañés and doña Leonor, don Cosme and a fictitious princess from Cuzco, don Luis and doña Alfonsa). None of the *figurones* shows a change in demeanor that would indicate he has "learned his lesson"; instead, they remain stubbornly fixed in their incongruous behavior.

Like the *figurones* themselves, the plays underscore social problems but do not suggest a particular course of action for

[18] See J. H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: the Statesman in an Age of Decline*. (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1986): 409-42.

change. In fact, these *comedias* frequently contradict themselves in terms of what they are criticizing. Their satire impartially attacks the obsolete feudal nobility and the social-climbing nouveaux riches; it censures severe and foppish garb, uneducated and overly educated speech; it denounces an underdeveloped sense of honor as readily as an overdeveloped one; it berates spendthrifts as well as misers. To further complicate the issue, the court, the very community that represents the standard against which others are judged, itself becomes the target of criticism. In *Cada loco con su tema*, the Montañés complains:

> Todo cuanto hay en la corte
> Es, como lo imaginé,
> Poca verdad, mucho engaño,
> Trato doble y mala ley. (469c)

The play has set up the Montañés to be held in disdain by the audience; yet after his denunciation of the court, would the spectators continue to laugh at this hapless provincial who cannot compete with their wiles and wit, or would they feel ashamed of the court's reputation as a double-dealing and dishonest place? The society comes under fire, but from a source with little authority, and the individual spectators must decide how much weight to allocate such criticism.

It is difficult to determine if the playwrights themselves were deliberately seeking social change through the satirical representation of these characters and customs. Hurtado de Mendoza and Rojas Zorrilla wrote primarily for the court, and their target audience may well have influenced their choice of character foibles. However, Castillo Solórzano spent only about ten years of his life in Madrid, his duties as secretary to various counts and marquises keeping him occupied in the provinces after 1628 (Soons 15). He therefore would have been writing for a more diverse population, yet many of the same issues present in the other two plays appear in *El Marqués del Cigarral.*

Moreover, social reform was a long and difficult road, as witnessed by the *Junta de Reformación* that in 1623 had issued twenty-three articles of reform in which "morals and economics were inextricably intertwined" (Elliott, *Imperial Spain,* 327). After three years the only change to come from these articles was the abolition of the ruff. These plays from the 1630's, with their contradictory criticism of morals and money, had little chance of success where the *Junta* had failed. However, they showcased the socio-economic tensions afflicting Spanish society and, in so doing, had the potential to influence the public's perception of the world around them.

Through the satire of social types, these plays stressed serious issues in society: the reduction of the lower nobility and the rise in the importance of material wealth; the need to define one's self through the eyes of the community; and the crumbling of ideological values commonly attached to the naturalistic world order, such as lineage, honor and virtue. With their tasteless display of language, appearance, and performance, the *figurones* create the impression of being frivolous and laughable. At the same time, however, they hint at the dissolution of social boundaries and categories in a world seemingly on the verge of being out of control. By revealing social concerns through ridicule, the plays entertain while they criticize, but they leave any possible solutions to the *público discreto.*

Conclusion: Schools of Thought

> Y así, con mucha razón, podremos
> llamar á estas tales comedias
> escuelas donde se enseña todo
> género de torpeza con ingenio,
> agudeza y disimulación (qtd. in
> Cotarelo y Mori 252).
> --P. Juan Ferrer, 1613

> Y no hay otra escuela, otro maestro
> ni otra guía que produzca frutos
> más fértiles y provechosos que la
> comedia . . . (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori
> 97).
> --Melchor de Cabrera y Guzmán,
> 1646

Juan Ferrer and Melchor de Cabrera y Guzmán may have disagreed on the moral propriety of theatre, but they seem to have shared the view that theatre functions as a "school" where something is taught and, presumably, something is learned. Those favorably disposed towards the theatre in seventeenth-century Spain claimed it yielded beneficial results to society, while theatre's detractors insisted that it promoted immoral behavior. Neither stance can be judged right or wrong, informed or naïve, since any long term effect of these plays on society ultimately depended on the individual spectator's interpretation and subsequent assimilation of information. Although the spectators, like Michel de Certeau's "consumers," might indeed have made use of what

they were seeing and hearing, they would have done so in potentially unpredictable ways. It was, perhaps, the unknown element of reception that made the *comedia* appear so dangerous to the moralists.

This study has examined the ways in which diverse plays and playwrights made use of the very ambiguity of reception in order to communicate their messages. The five chapters include a combination of *entremeses*, *comedias de enredo*, *tragicomedias*, and *comedias de figurón* from eleven different dramatists. Despite this diversity, two pervasive concepts emerge: the equivocal nature of the sign, and the importance of being able to interpret and manipulate signs in seventeenth-century Spain.

In order to convey the openness of signs and their potential manipulation, these plays place emphasis on the use of dramatic irony, dissimulation, language, costume, disguise, space, and theatrical conventions. Such techniques constitute theatrical signs that correspond closely to the signs used in the characters' presentation of self. Even as the plays unanimously address the unstable relationship between signifier and signified, between art and life, they offer different means of directing audience perspective.

The characters from the early interludes ("Cornudo y contento" and "Entremés de un viejo que es casado con una mujer moza"), the *graciosos* from comedies of intrigue and *tragicomedias* (*El caballero de Olmedo, No hay vida como la honra, No hay burlas con el amor,* and *Lucrecia y Tarquino*), and the marginalized protagonists from the disguise plays (*Desde Toledo a Madrid* and *La moza de cántaro*) all establish contact with the audience in order to guide the perception of events transpiring on stage. The spectators share with these characters a cognitive superiority over other characters in the *locus* environment and are drawn in as accomplices to the artful machinations being enacted. Dissimulation and the ability to act oppositionally are positive qualities in these characters, who divert audience attention from reality to imagery and to the art involved in constructing a façade.

The characters in the later *entremeses* ("El examinador Miser Palomo," "La ropavejera," and "El doctor Juan Rana") and the con artists, social climbers, and *figurones* populating the plays of the last two chapters (*Hombre pobre todo es trazas, Los empeños del mentir, Abre el ojo, Cada loco con su tema, El Marqués del Cigarral,* and *Entre bobos anda el juego*) focus not only on erecting façades, but also on perceiving their imperfections. The characters in these plays typically evoke less sympathy and complicity from the

audience, since they spring from an unidealized world where material gain is more important than true love, and it is difficult to separate heroes from villains. The plays both glorify and censure the artful presentation of self as a means of constructing one's identity, and often cast this "skill" against the fading backdrop of a hierarchical society that is seen as more virtuous but less sophisticated than the present age. These plays provoke a greater critical distance between the audience and the mimetic representation as they direct audience attention from fanciful imagery to the reality of an imperfect existence.

The theatre during this time period had the potential to instruct an audience on the interpretation of signs and images. If spectators were able to read between the signs in a theatrical presentation, they would likewise be capable of reading between signs in life, both on the level of the individual and of the government. The plays studied in the preceding chapters exhibit characters who manipulate signs to their advantage and thereby act ouside of social boundaries. In this sense, the plays offer a non-conformist discourse geared towards acting oppositionally. However, similar information on the instability of signs, couched in the form of social satire, criticizes the misuse of signs through

either unscrupulous art or ignorance, and echoes the calls for social reform repeatedly expressed by the government.

The rhetoric of renovation sponsored by the Count-Duke of Olivares proposed political, economic, and social reforms. While this analysis primarily considers the latter, the three are often intricately intertwined, as attested to by the diverse interests of the *Junta de reformación.* The monarchy's discourse promoted an image of political and social stability, and economic prosperity; but the plays present a world with shifting social boundaries, wavering authority figures, and growing financial anxieties. In such an unstable environment optical illusions abound and elicit an increased awareness of the openness of signs and their potential manipulation.

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