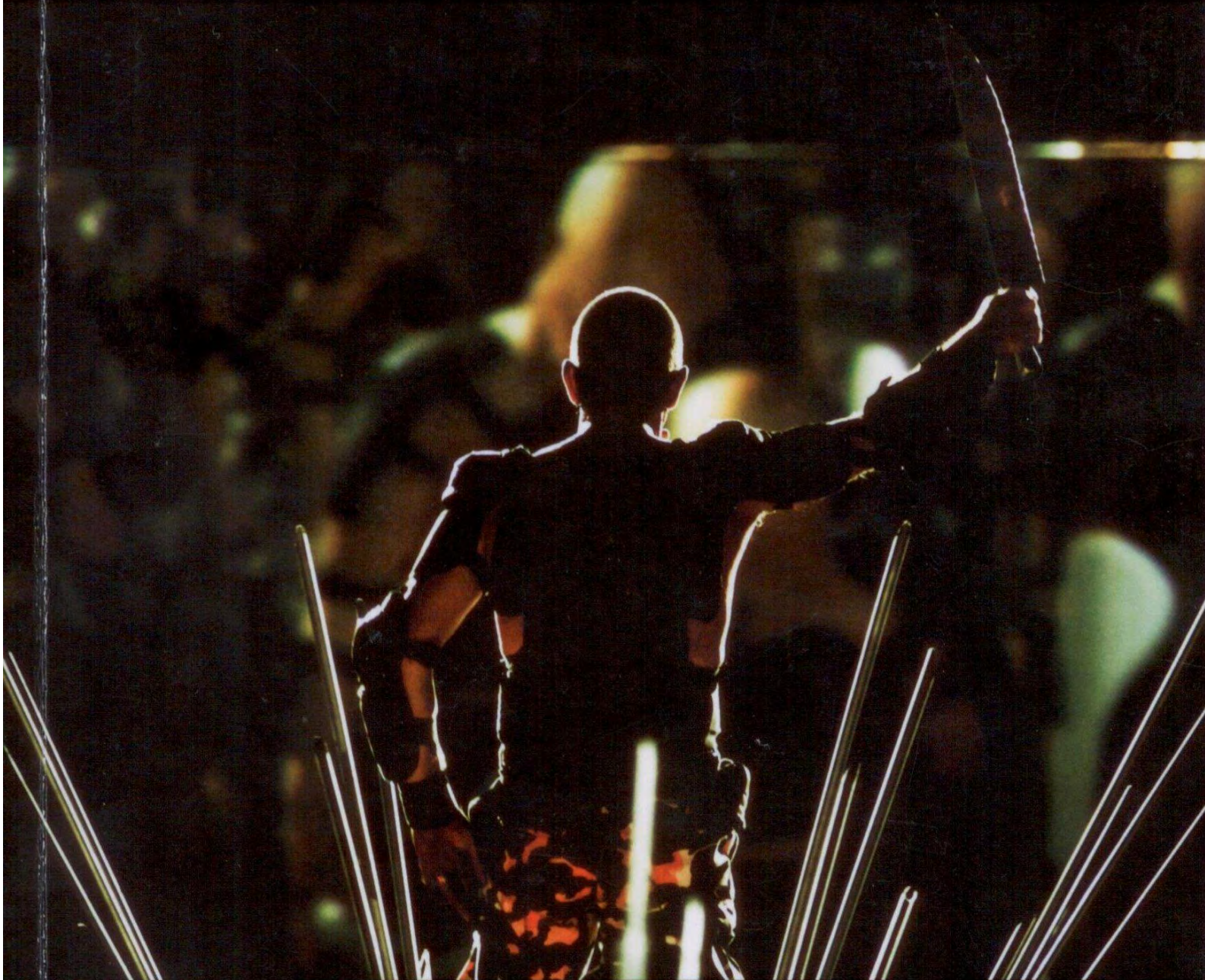


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Ellen M. Anderson

ABSTRACT

Four of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's eight *comedias* published in 1615 show significant variations on a common plot: a motherless female protagonist tries to escape imprisonment by her father or his representative in order to achieve a marriage her masculine jailor opposes. In them, female characters become agents of change, reaching their goals through artful role-playing and disguises that subvert theatrical decorum. This study traces the increasing autonomy and originality of Cervantes's dramatic heroines by demonstrating their evolving ability to make themselves heard and respected by fathers and lovers while befriending other women of their station for whom theatrical convention of his time would prescribe rivalry for love of the same *galán*. The farther the plays' settings move from Christian Spain, the more inventive, artful, and individual the female protagonists become. This article analyzes the failure of love and friendship among Spanish aristocrats in *La entretenida*; the subversion of the honor code and the winning of the beloved's heart by cross-dressing female friends in the Italy of *El laberinto de amor*; the recognition of the Christian *mujer vestida de hombre* in Oran by her father surrogate and her beloved as their peer in valour and intelligence, aided by courtly Muslim opponents in *El gallardo español*; and, finally, the reconciliation of father and daughter, Muslim and Christian, male and female among Christian captives in the Turkish seraglio of *La gran sultana*. Cervantes's plays offer an alternative theatrical practice to that of Lope de Vega's *comedia nueva*: a collaborative, conversational model of dramatic composition and theatrical performance, one typical also of the *commedia dell'arte*. The essay concludes that Cervantes wrote for an audience in the image of his heroines: individuals capable of enjoying and evaluating the complex play of competing perspectives that gives his theatrical writing its inventiveness, profundity, and startling modernity. (EMA)

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La interpretación del teatro breve de la segunda mitad del siglo XVI ha exigido, tanto a su público contemporáneo, como al lector actual, completar el texto por medio de la reconstrucción del contexto. La extensión de la obra requiere el empleo de la información del mundo del espectador, fenómeno contrario al de una comedia que crea y expone sus propias reglas, convenciones y lenguaje. En 1570 el librero valenciano Juan Timoneda publicó el *Registro de representantes*, una colección de "los pasos más modernos y graciosos." De los siete entremeses que conforman el libro, tres son apócrifos y pertenecen a la pluma del comediante Lope de Rueda, de quien se usa fama y nombre para asegurar la venta. En la construcción de los personajes-tipo, anclados en modelos estables y comportamientos previamente delineados, hay cierta novedad que los guía hacia la diferencia y que genera tensión entre la denuncia y la promoción, entre la crítica y el escarnio, entre el retrato de costumbres de una determinada localidad y la producción dramática que se exporta a los dominios del imperio hispánico. El *Registro de representantes* está sujeto a un proceso de actualización simultáneo donde, por un lado, la tradición teatral incorpora ideas locales, mientras que, por otro, las piezas se incorporan y adaptan a nuevas condiciones sociales que funcionan como signos de una modernidad incipiente. Mi trabajo contempla al entremés como un canal de información que representa una porción de la realidad en un momento donde la publicación de antologías, diccionarios, poéticas, cartografías y calendarios está vinculada de forma directa con la estandarización de sistemas que almacenan, transmiten y organizan información. (C-UM)

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Editor's Note

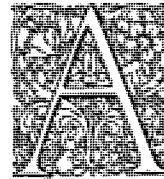
The *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, now well into its seventh decade, continues to showcase the work of a range of Comedia scholars, from distinguished professors emeriti to talented graduate students, and a wide range of playwrights, from the long canonical to the more recently discovered or rediscovered. We invite essays on texts from colonial Latin America as well as from the Iberian Peninsula. Scholarship on early modern Hispanic drama has reflected, in these sixty-plus years, significant trends in approaches to the study of theater, along with an impressive array of theoretical and critical models. We thank our contributors for providing profound and provocative commentaries, and our editors and editorial board for their hard work and sound judgment. My thanks to managing editor Vincent Martín and assistant editor Gwen Stickney for their especially diligent work on this number. As always, we encourage submissions, and we thank our readers for their interest in the journal.

All of us at *BCom* would like to congratulate our superb colleague from Spain (and frequent visiting professor in the United States) Luciano García Lorenzo, who recently has been honored in a festschrift entitled *En buena compañía: Estudios en honor de Luciano García Lorenzo*, edited by Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, Óscar Cornago Bernal, Abraham Madroñal Durán, and Carmen Menéndez-Onrubia (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2009). The tribute could not be more well deserved nor the honor more conspicuous: the essays by a few close friends and admirers add up to more than 1,400 pages.

E.H.F.

**Uxoricide and Absolution: A Comparative Study of
Moreto's *El defensor de su agravio* and Calderón's
*El médico de su honra***

Ricardo Castells
Florida International University



S MATTHEW STROUD HAS DEMONSTRATED in his study of Golden Age wife-murder plays, there are many different interpretations of these *dramas de honor*, in part because there are a number of barriers to a full comprehension of these works. First, Stroud notes that most critics have but a partial understanding of this topic because modern scholarship has traditionally concentrated on only four out of the more than thirty uxoricide dramas: Lope de Vega's *El castigo sin venganza* and Calderón de la Barca's *El médico de su honra*, *El pintor de su deshonra*, and *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza* (18). Second, Stroud demonstrates that honor and conjugal infidelity have a long and complex history in the Italian *novelle* and *Commedia dell'Arte*, as well as in the Spanish *exempla*, *romancero*, and *crónicas*, so the subject is far richer than many scholars have realized. Finally, Stroud indicates that this topic is also somewhat contradictory because there is also a countercurrent of Spanish *comedias* and *autos* in which the jealous husband does not kill the wife that he suspects of infidelity and dishonor.

Although these wife-absolution plays do not form part of Stroud's study, he notes that "they partake of the same traditions of the wife-murder plays: the disobedient and at least potentially treasonous wife; the bad, absent, or neglectful husbands; arranged marriages; the intrigue created by other characters; and the workings of fate and fortune" (74). Since wife-absolution dramas form a distinct but related part of the corpus of honor plays, they may help us to understand better the literary and cultural practices that inform the behavior of the suspicious husbands and the victimized wives in Baroque wife-murder dramas. This essay will analyze the actions and motivations of the husband and wife in one of the later wife-absolution *comedias*, Agustín Moreto's *El defensor de su agravio*.¹ The study will then compare this play to the most problematic of all the wife-murder dramas—Calderón's *El médico de su honra*—to determine if Moreto's *comedia* sheds any new light on the nature and causes of uxoricide in Golden Age theater.

There is little doubt that contemporary European attitudes towards gender and power play an important role not only in the *dramas de honor*, but also in the Spanish *comedia* in general. As Elizabeth Rhodes observes in her study of Tirso de Molina's *El burlador de Sevilla*,

In stark imitation of biological categories, gender in seventeenth-century Spain was defined as either masculine or feminine. ... The associations between *Varonil*, power, and control, founded upon the essential equation of Male is Order, are obvious in Covarrubias's definition of the word *varón*: "Vale hombre de juicio, razón y discurso, y de buena conciencia" (952). The contrast to this judgment, reason, and moral rectitude is *mujer*, whose inferior attributes serve as a foil to the dominant construct. Covarrubias cites St. Maximus as saying of women, among other things, "en la fábrica de un engaño, grandes artifices." (767)

These gender-based notions of reason and morality are essential for our understanding of the honor plays, but we must also remember that contemporary writers recognize that there are important exceptions to the female characteristics cited above. For example, Benito Remigio Noydens writes the following commentary on the definition of the word *muger* in the second edition of the Covarrubias dictionary (1674), a section that includes the St. Maximus citation above: "Lo que yo diré ahora se entiende de las que, huyendo la modesta compostura de su obligación, viven con desahogo, aflojando las riendas a su natural, para que corra libre y desbocado hasta precipitarse; no de las cuerdas y recogidas, cuyo honor es su destino, a quien consagran el recato, la honestidad y el recogimiento" (818a-b). In other words, Noydens believes that there is an absolute contradiction between a woman's *obligación* on the one hand and her *natural* on the other, which means that an honest woman's moral responsibility is to restrain her natural inclinations in order to live an honorable and virtuous life. The justification for this notion of gender is the common belief that women—just like young men—do not possess the rational faculties required to rein in their sensual passions. As a reflection of this general opinion, Noydens includes the following closing comments on the definition of *muger*: "Finalmente, hablando Marco Aurelio de las mugeres, dize: El amor de todas se puede dixerir con sola una pílora, y la pasión de una sola no se desopilará con todo el ruybarbo de Alexandría" (818b).

The concept of public order presented by Rhodes is also closely related to contemporary notions about the sacred foundation of love and marriage. From classical Greece all the way up to the Baroque period, European writers recognize the absolute divergence between the honest and pure love expressed

through holy matrimony and the insane passions found in mundane love. Marriage embodies the need for social order that Rhodes describes in Baroque Spain, as in theory it ensures the happiness of both spouses while simultaneously confirming masculine control over the relationship. For example, according to Juan Boscán's sixteenth-century translation of *El cortesano*, Baldassare Castiglione uses the character of Pietro Bembo to provide the following advice to the Renaissance Courtier:

Acate, sirva, honre y siga en todo la voluntad de su dama, ... y ame en ella no menos la hermosura del alma que la del cuerpo. Por eso tenga aviso de acordalle lo que le cumpliere, no dexándola caer en errores, y con buenas palabras procure siempre de guialla por el camino de la virtud y verdadera honestidad, y haga que en ella no tengan lugar sino los pensamientos limpios y puros y apartados de toda fealdad de vicios ... y éste será el verdadero engendrar y juntar y exprimir la hermosura en la hermosura, lo cual, según opinión de algunos, es el sustancial fin del amor. (347-48)

Castiglione's words remind us that even though both men and women must abide by these social rules, a husband is ultimately responsible for providing the appropriate guidance to his wife, who seemingly would be incapable not only of rational thought but also of the principled conduct produced by this mental faculty. If we add the honor code to these basic assumptions, then we can understand why personal relationships and public responsibilities become so onerous for both spouses in Golden Age theater. The husband in the *comedia* must insist on faultless behavior from his wife, but he also has to punish anyone who threatens or even casts doubt on his reputation. The wife—as the easily-cracked mirror of the family's honor—cannot allow even a hint of moral scandal, or she could become the victim of her husband's disgrace. The contradictory result of these ideas is a social system designed to maintain order by defending the rationality of honest love, but in the *comedia* it can produce a completely different outcome. Instead of providing a necessary structure of stability, the honor code often generates chaos in the institution of matrimony, and rather than support rational thought it can lead to the hysterical lunacy of jealous obsession.

While the *dramas de honor* often exhibit this kind of violence and suffering, the existence of unconventional honor plays demonstrates that Spanish playwrights possess a range of dramatic outcomes for the characters in these works. Moreto's *El defensor de su agravio* was originally published in 1671—two years after the playwright's death—in the *Parte XXXV de las comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores ingenios de España* and again five years later in the *Verdadera tercera parte de las comedias de don Agustín Moreto*. It is one of twenty-two works that

Ruth Lee Kennedy groups under Moreto's plays of character and idea (15-16), while Luis Fernández-Guerra catalogues it under the *obras profanas (históricas y tradicionales)* (xlvii). Although the work is long forgotten, Kennedy describes it as an excellent play (50), while Fernández-Guerra indicates that it is an "[o]bra muy bien escrita, y bien recibida siempre del público" (xxxix).

As the play begins, the *galán* Alejandro—the *privado* to the Duke of Athens—tells the *gracioso* Comino about his love for Nisea, one of the Duchess's ladies in waiting. While Alejandro lets Comino know that he hopes to marry Nisea one day, he also notes that the Duke has been "tan afligido estos días / de tristes melancolías" (1.491c). A short while later, the already-married Duke tells Alejandro the reason for his sudden melancholy: he too has fallen in love with Nisea, and he asks the *galán* to help him to woo the young woman so that the Duchess Aurora—Alejandro's cousin—will not realize that he is suffering from this mundane desire. To complicate matters further, Lidoro—another nobleman in the Athenian court—has also fallen in love with Nisea, but he knows that he cannot realize this "locura ciega" unless he eliminates both Alejandro and the Duchess from the picture (1.497b). As a result, in the second act he will accuse the two cousins of having an adulterous relationship, which leads to the Duke's frenzied jealousy and the threat of a public execution of the supposed lovers.

This unusual ménage typifies the stark contrast between the rational love and the insane passions described by neo-Platonic writers such as Castiglione and Marsilio Ficino.² While Alejandro hopes to wed his beloved Nisea, the Duke and Lidoro are interested only in a strictly physical relationship with the young woman. This kind of erotic melancholy seems to be a natural part of Lidoro's character, but the Duke is sensible enough to recognize the dramatic change that has recently come over him. In fact, he admits to Alejandro that for three years he had an ideal marriage to the Duchess until he thoughtlessly began to notice Nisea's physical beauty:

Yo me casé enamorado,
halló en mi esposa el deseo
discreciones para el alma,
hermosura para el cuerpo,
finezas para el cariño,
atención para el respeto,
agasajo para el trato,
viveza para el ingenio. (1.493a)

Despite having had such a positive relationship with Aurora at the beginning of their marriage, and even though the Duke recognizes that she continues to be his ideal companion, he is now suffering from an irresistible physical infatuation for Nisea. While on a purely intellectual level the Duke understands that he is destroying his own piece of mind and threatening the very tranquility of all

Athens—he admits to himself that "yo de aquel tierno amor la paz quebranto" (1.496b)—his erotic melancholy seems to be so strong that he cannot resist this overpowering temptation. His reasonable faculties thus appear to be far weaker than his base, animal desires for Nisea, but since he can still distinguish between right and wrong, he is capable of reforming himself if he ever decides to restore order in his marriage and his dukedom. Nevertheless, he will not recover his rational character until it becomes a matter of life or death for his beloved wife and for his *privado*.

Although the Duke shares the same burning jealousy as Gutierre in *El médico de su honra*, there are significant differences between Moreto's and Calderón's dramatic characters. While some scholars have concluded that Gutierre is jealous by his very nature, in reality he believes that he enjoys a perfectly happy marriage to Mencía at the beginning of the play. The first time that he is alone with her in Act 1, Gutierre expresses his ideal love for his wife as he requests her permission to go to Seville to see King Pedro:

Bellísimo dueño mío,
ya que vive tan unida
a dos almas una vida,
dos vidas a un albedrío,
de tu amor e ingenio fio
hoy que licencia me des
para ir a besar los pies
al rey mi señor, que viene
de Castilla. (1.495-503)

In Gutierre's eyes, the two of them live in what Castiglione calls "el sustancial fin del amor" (348), but Mencía's response to his request reveals that they have an unexpectedly conflictive relationship, at least on her part: "¿Qué cuidado / más te lleva a darme enojos?" (2.511-12). Mencía is sure that Gutierre still preserves some of his *deseo* for Leonor (1.515), the woman he previously courted, even though he assures her that Leonor's *estrella* does not compare with her *sol* (1.543-44). This conversation reveals that Gutierre and Mencía are not two souls joined as one as he mistakenly believes, which means that their marriage—which was arranged against her will—is inherently unstable. Moreover, it seems that despite Gutierre's affection for his wife, he does not follow Castiglione's advice "de guialla por el camino de la virtud y verdadera honestidad, y ha[cer] que en ella no tengan lugar sino los pensamientos limpios y puros y apartados de toda fealdad de vicios" (347-48). This defect not only means that he is a weak and ineffective husband, but also that Mencía does not fully respect Gutierre's authority in their marriage, an unhappy combination that helps lead to the play's final tragedy.

As a result of these contradictory character traits and personal relationships, the jealous husbands in the two plays reach radically different conclusions

when they face the possibility of an idolatrous wife. Because of the power of the oligarchy in Athens, Aurora's and Alejandro's guilt or innocence will be determined by the Areopagus, the council of elders that serves as the Athenian court. As Stroud has noted, there is a great difference between guilt-based and shame-based systems of judgment in the Spanish *comedia*. In a guilt-based structure such as in *El defensor de su agravio*, the husbands "carry out the imperative of the society as a whole—that is, to pursue the cause of the disruption of the social order. They do it openly and are duly rewarded" (Stroud 113). In a shame-based system as in *El médico de su honra*, however, the wife's guilt or innocence is secondary to the husband's attempt to avoid public knowledge and sanction of his potential dishonor. As a result, "Husbands who kill in an attempt to expiate or avoid postoperative shame do so secretly and with personal motives" (Stroud 113).

In spite of the differences between the public and private nature of the Duke's and Gutierre's circumstances, the jealous husbands handle both cases in similar ways. Since Lidoro's false testimony before the Areopagus would surely condemn Alejandro and Aurora to death, the Duke is the only character in the play who can save their lives by discovering the truth before the trial begins. For this reason, he must investigate his wife's culpability in secret, much as Gutierre does while trying to hide his shame. Moreover, the Duke and Gutierre both express similar jealous doubts about their wives' comportment, and—as we will see—they reach a critical decision in almost identical scenes. Nevertheless, the Duke's rational faculties allow him to determine Aurora's innocence, while Gutierre's burning jealousy makes him predisposed to accept Mencía's guilt. It therefore appears that the most important difference in the outcome in these two plays is not the precise form of justice employed, but rather whether the presumably masculine attribute of reason will allow the husband to function appropriately within each particular system.

Act 2 of *El defensor de su agravio* presents a radical change in the Duke's thinking once Lidoro tells him about Alejandro's and Aurora's supposed adultery. While the Duke immediately forgets about his amorous obsession for Nisea once he hears the bad news from Lidoro, he never seems to lose the sense of right and wrong that he first exhibits in Act I. He is therefore quick to recognize that he is partially responsible for his possible dishonor: "Yo, si padezco este engaño, / le causé y fui mi enemigo" (2.499a). At the same time, despite the shock of the revelation about Aurora, he is able to fight his jealous passions and become more rational and sensible than he was in Act I. As a consequence of this transformation, the first time that he sees Aurora and Nisea after hearing the terrible news, he immediately realizes how much he loves the Duchess and how much her purported infidelity has hurt him. The Duke's principal interest thus is not to safeguard his honor—as we see in Gutierre and in many other jealous husbands—but rather to discover the truth about his

wife's betrayal. Even though his potential disgrace is still a secret, which means that he could kill the Duchess in private as some of Calderón's husbands do, the Duke indicates that he does not want to act against Alejandro and Aurora unless he finds convincing evidence of their wrongdoing:

Demás, si aquesto fuera
traición, sin haber tenido
evidencia, o gran sospecha
para acusar el delito,
era la traición en vano,
si yo la culpa no averiguo. (2.501a)

Because of his desire to resolve this mystery, the Duke's behavior is quite different from that of the typical jealous husband in the Spanish *comedia*. First, he understands the difficulty of uncovering "los secretos escondidos / de los pechos de los otros" (2.502a), which means that he does not expect an easy answer to this problem. Second, the Duke is not inclined to accept his wife's adultery recklessly because he sincerely hopes that she is innocent of wrongdoing: "Mas, cielos, / mátenme antes mis celos / que en mi esposa haya traición" (2.502c). As a logical consequence of his desire to find the truth, combined with his fundamental goodwill towards Aurora, he demonstrates an unusual level of patience and prudence when faced with the threat of dishonor. Instead of automatically assuming that Alejandro is now his enemy, he will wait until he is certain about his *privado*'s culpability, but if necessary he will react with uncontrolled brutality to avenge his humiliation:

Pero yo le daré aliento,
templado, afable y benigno,
hasta saber mis agravios,
y si es cierto su delito,
tiemble mi furor la tierra,
tiémbenme montes y riscos,
y tiemblen los elementos. (2.502a)

Alejandro and Aurora are, of course, completely innocent, but they are finally arrested for adultery because of a misunderstanding on the Duke's part. Since Alejandro no longer has to hide his love for Nisea now that the Duke's ardor has waned, Aurora allows him to enter her garden one evening so that he can be alone with his beloved. After the encounter, he tells Comino that the Duchess "[l]e ha hecho su favor / dueño de tan deseada / y dichosa posesión" (2.503a), but the Duke overhears him and misconstrues the meaning of these words. Like other offended husbands, the Duke concludes that his wife has been unfaithful based on partial or ambiguous information, but his fury is such that he immediately attacks Alejandro in public at the end of Act 2. While this rash

response makes his dishonor common knowledge in Athens, at the beginning of Act 3 Nisea tells the Duke that Alejandro was actually in the garden to see her, which means that he must now question Lidoro's dishonest version of events.

After this revelation, the Duke remains onstage alone as he once again struggles to find the truth in the midst of so much confusion. Although he recognizes that the "información primera" that he heard from Lidoro is often the "estrage de las honras y las vidas" (3.506b), the Duke still requires some definitive proof of the two prisoners' guilt or innocence. Significantly, he concludes that in order to resolve the mystery, he must set aside his love and his honor—both of which can lead to illogical and flawed conclusions—and instead rely exclusively on the masculine virtue of reason:

Acudir al remedio me conviene,
y averiguar primero
que me resuelva, el alma que esto tiene
.....
Pero de amor y honor he de apartarme.
Y la razón desnuda,
solo aquí, como juez, considerarme
para apurar la duda. (3.506b)

The Duke decides on his wife's guilt in the same way as Gutierre in *El médico de su honra*: taking advantage of the nighttime darkness, the Duke disguises his voice and approaches Aurora and Alejandro in their jail cells. He first tells his wife that he has freed Alejandro and that he will take both of them home to safety in Crete, but Aurora surprisingly refuses to leave her cell because it would dishonor her further by seeming to confirm her guilt. In accord with Noydens's definition of *muger*, Aurora is clearly one of the "cuerdas y recogidas, cuyo honor es su destino, a quien consagran el recato, la honestidad y el recogimiento" (818b). As a result, just like any nobleman who knows who he is and who reacts accordingly, the Duchess cannot accept even the appearance of culpability because she must put her honor above her life and her freedom:

¿Qué decís? ¿Sabéis quién soy?
¿Yo, para librar la vida,
poner a riesgo mi honor
de hacer cierta la sospecha,
la imaginada traición? (3.567b)

The Duke finally recognizes his error when he receives a similar response from Alejandro, but he is faced with exactly the opposite situation as most aggrieved husbands in the Spanish *comedia*. Instead of trying to keep his dishonor secret, in this case "la satisfacción secreta ha sido" (3.509a), which means that he has no demonstrable proof of Alejandro's and Aurora's innocence

to present to the Athenian court, he thinks of a remedy that will return him to the ideal marriage he once enjoyed: "Yo contento y feliz, ella en mis brazos" (3.509a). When Lidoro appears before the Areopagus at the end of the play to testify against Alejandro and Aurora, the Duke comes onstage with his face covered and armed with a sword and shield, as he challenges Lidoro to a duel to prove the Duchess's virtue. Once Lidoro is defeated and admits his false testimony, the Duke reveals his identity and identifies himself as "*El defensor de su agravio*" (3.510c), thereby recovering his lost honor as he restores Alejandro's position and returns to his loving wife.

The unexpected conclusion to Moreto's play reworks many of the common characteristics found in other Golden Age honor plays. When Aurora angrily asks the Duke "¿Sabéis quien soy?" in her jail cell (3.567b), she demonstrates that she is as conscious of her honor and her social responsibilities as any of the noblemen famously studied by Leo Spitzer. According to Spitzer, when a gentleman in the Spanish *comedia* utters the phrase *soy quien soy*, "afirma su intención de no cometer una acción que contradiga su verdadero ser" (115). Although Spitzer notes that women must also know their true character—such as in the case of Estrella in *La Estrella de Sevilla* (127)—the words *soy quien soy* are typically used by men because the phrase "significa cierta estabilidad moral interior dada al hombre, si éste es verdaderamente . . . un varón noble, un estoico cristiano" (126). As a result, when Aurora uses a similar phrase in *El defensor de su agravio*, she is letting the Duke know that she is as moral and honorable as any *varón* in the honor plays, which means that if her sense of self-worth leads to her death, then she is quite willing to take it like a man.

Moreover, the need to find the truth should be far more important for the jealous husband than either preserving his reputation or maintaining his possible dishonor in secret. In matters of life and death, the emotions must give way to the intellect, as this is the only way that a suspicious husband will ever discover the reality about his wife's faithfulness. In fact, anything less would represent the shirking of the male responsibilities outlined by Castiglione. At the same time, while an aggrieved husband may forget his rational faculties because of his burning jealousy, it is even more essential for an accused wife to defend her honor to the death if she is ever to establish her innocence. It therefore appears that once there is a suspicion of infidelity in the Spanish *comedia*, then the only way that tragedy can be avoided is for both spouses to demonstrate principled and logical behavior, but this kind of reaction seems to be more the exception than the rule in the honor plays.

Gutierre also exhibits a kind of conversion when he begins to suspect Mencía of infidelity in Act 2 of *El médico de su honra*, but unlike the Duke of Athens, his alteration makes him less rational rather than more so. Gutierre is jailed overnight for threatening to fight Don Arias in front of King Pedro, but the warden allows him to go home that evening as long as he agrees to return by morning. The Infante

Enrique, who is infatuated with Mencía, takes advantage of Gutierre's absence and enters the house that evening with the help of Jacinta, one of Mencía's slaves. Although Mencía is frightened when she sees Enrique in the house (2.1129-35), these fears become even stronger when Gutierre unexpectedly returns home (2.1155). In order to get Enrique out of the house safely, Mencía tells her husband that she just saw a robber in her bedroom, and when she leads Gutierre and the *gracioso* Coquín to the room, she deliberately extinguishes the candle that she is carrying so that the Infante can make his escape in the darkness.⁴

Unfortunately for Mencía, the Infante drops his dagger in her bedroom, and back in Seville the next morning Gutierre quickly realizes that it matches Enrique's sword. Once Gutierre is left alone onstage in the royal palace, he too must try to find the truth about his potential dishonor, but his first reaction emphasizes how different he is from the Duke of Athens. Instead of responding with *varonil* calm and reason, he once again demonstrates his lack of character by crying, which in seventeenth-century Spain would be considered a feminine rather than a masculine reaction:

Agora, valor, agora,
salga repetido en quejas,
salga en lágrimas envuelto
el corazón a las puertas
del alma, que son los ojos;
y en ocasión como ésta,
bien podéis, ojos, llorar:
no lo dejéis de vergüenza.⁵ (2.1593-600)

Despite this moment of weakness, Gutierre is able to control his feelings temporarily, but he is still dominated by his sense of honor. Unlike the Duke, who is able to set aside both "amor y honor" in order to make a series of rational decisions (3.506b), Gutierre's actions are always guided by the the honor code rather than by a reasoned sense of justice:

Pero cese el sentimiento,
y a fuerza de honor, y a fuerza
de valor, aun no me dé
para quejarme licencia. (2.1605-08)

In this way, Gutierre is able to "tener paciencia" momentarily (2.1676), but he will proceed in a very different way than the Duke. As we have seen above, the Duke examines all the evidence "como juez" (3.506b), meaning that he will look at the facts as dispassionately as possible before arriving at a just conclusion. Gutierre, on the other hand, defines himself as "el médico de su honra" (2.1673), meaning that he must find a cure for an illness that he has diagnosed from preliminary and very ambiguous symptoms. Even when he decides to employ

the same strategy as the Duke and to see his wife at night while disguising his voice, he is once again overcome by his jealous feelings, further demonstrating that he is unable to control his mental faculties properly:

Disimularé, si puedo,
esta desdicha, esta pena,
este rigor, este agravio,
este dolor, esta ofensa,
este asombro, este delirio,
este cuidado, esta afrenta,
estos celos... ¿Celos dije? (2.1691-97)

As Teresa Scott Soufas has observed, Gutierre's jealous melancholy informs much of his behavior in Acts 2 and 3. Although in his own mind he believes that he is properly defending his honor, in reality he exhibits deranged ideas because he is psychologically incapable of prudent behavior. Soufas writes:

Particularly important in *El médico de su honra* is the symptomatic melancholic fixation. Gutierre's belief that he is the metaphorical physician who must heal his ailing honor exemplifies such irrational obsessions. . . . Commenting upon melancholic ideas of this type, [Robert] Burton attests: "No persuasion, no protestation, can divert this passion, nothing can ease him, secure or give him satisfaction." Indeed, due to his pathological melancholia, Gutierre has now assumed a dangerous identity which he will not relinquish even as the play ends. (192)

Gutierre may try to fight his jealousy by noting that with these emotions "faltará la ciencia" (2.1710), but it appears that his notion of science does not refer to *saber* or *erudición* or any other kind of knowledge, but rather to "la cura" that he is seeking (2.1711). In case the audience has doubts about what this cure may be, they simply have to observe the dagger that he often carries onstage or consider his "cuchilla" that Leonor mentions shortly thereafter (2.1829).

Gutierre's melancholic nature becomes even more pronounced once he returns home to carry out his ploy. Melancholics are dominated by the humor of black bile, and the darkness of this character trait seems to flourish at night (Soufas 182). It is little wonder then that Gutierre "ador[a] y reverenci[a]" the evening silence (2.1862), but he ominously notes that the darkness that surrounds him is like a "sepulcro de humana vida" (2.1864). Since Gutierre's monologue reveals that he has virtually decided on Mencía's guilt before speaking with her—"¡Ay, hermosa Mencía, / qué mal tratas mi amor y la fe mía" (2.1897-98)—the way that he approaches her reveals the lack of judgment

behind his jealous behavior. As he enters the stillness of her bedroom, he snuffs out the candle that he carries with him, leaving him in a literal and spiritual darkness that further alienates him from his rational faculties: "Mato la luz, y lego, / sin luz y sin razón, dos veces ciego" (3.1911-12).

In a moment when he needs complete control over his mental faculties, Gutierre's metaphorical blindness does not permit him to understand the meaning of the words that he hears from Mencía. Confusing her husband for Enrique in the darkness, she asks him if he "pretende ver [su] muerte" for the second time (2.1935). She also reminds the supposed Infante that he cannot keep hiding from Gutierre and that he should never return to the house because they will not get away with the same ruse again. Gutierre's jealousy is such that he immediately concludes that Mencía is not concerned about her honor, but rather about Enrique being inconvenienced by having to hide in the house. Moreover, unlike the Duke of Athens, Gutierre does not continue the deception until he resolves the mystery, as he instead decides on an imprudent course of action almost immediately: "¡Mi venganza a mi agravio corresponda!" (2.1948).⁶ While he could engage his wife in a long and albeit deceptive dialogue as the Duke does in Aurora's jail cell, Gutierre allows Mencía to continue speaking while he expresses his fury in a sequence of asides. Therefore, rather than a fruitful discussion with Mencía that would allow her to prove her innocence, what we see onstage is a series of two separate monologues because neither character seems to understand what the other is thinking.

As we have noted in Castiglione, a husband's duty is to guide and instruct his wife properly, which also means that he has to protect her from potential errors of thought and behavior. Instead of fulfilling this masculine responsibility, Gutierre sets Mencía up to fail completely, while at the same time assuring that his own jealous anguish will deepen. In contrast, the Duke's *industria* of allowing Aurora to speak freely in her jail cell in *El defensor de su agravio* not only gives him peace of mind, but it also makes him realize that he has been blind for doubting her innocence: "(¡Oh inocencia perseguida! / ¡Oh ciego y bárbaro yo!)" (3.567b). Unfortunately for Gutierre, since he lacks any comparable form of wisdom and insight, he remains *dos veces ciego* as he leaves a similar nighttime scene. Worse yet, instead of achieving any kind of serenity as the Duke does, he exits in a greater fury than ever, burning with a fire that adds heat to his passion, but absolutely no illumination to his intellectual understanding: "(¡Ay, Dios! Todo soy rabia, todo fuego)" (2.1950).⁷

This comparative analysis of *El defensor de su agravio* and *El médico de su honra* indicates that there are a number of factors that help to explain the contrasting outcomes in the wife-murder and wife-absolution dramas. If a jealous husband is to recognize his wife's innocence, then the couple should start with a happy and stable relationship, rather than with a conflictive, arranged marriage. It appears that a strong emotional connection between the two spouses creates

a reserve of goodwill that keeps the husband from automatically assuming the worst when he is presented with potentially damning information about his wife's infidelity. In addition, the wife should guard her honor with her life because if she values her *obligación* more than her *natural*, then she must be willing to sacrifice all to prevent the mere appearance of unfaithfulness. Moreover, the husband should be more interested in finding the truth about his wife's fidelity than in preserving his own reputation, as his notion of justice must be stronger than his sense of honor if tragedy is to be averted.

Finally, as Rhodes has observed, by definition a *varón* is an "hombre de juicio, razón y discurso" (767). While the Duke of Athens recovers the use of reason in *El defensor de su agravio*, Gutierre is unable to do so in *El médico de su honra*, so if the masculine truly represents judgment and order, then only the Duke properly fulfills his social and political obligations by saving the Duchess's life and by restoring public harmony at the conclusion of the play. Gutierre, on the other hand, merely tries to defend his lost honor, so he winds up leaving a trail of death and turmoil around him. While he may attempt to live up to the *varonil* character traits found in Covarrubias, Gutierre does not exhibit the necessary faculties of *razón* and *juicio*, as his irrational ravings prevent him from fulfilling this masculine role. On the contrary, Gutierre is only capable of producing turmoil, disorder, and violence at the close of *El médico de su honra*, all of which leave his defenseless wife as the ultimate proof of his intellectual and social failures.

As James A. Castañeda has noted, Agustín Moreto is unique among Baroque Spanish dramatists because he often ignores the standard presentation of both honor and tragedy found in Golden Age theater (29-30). As a result, it is unsurprising that this unconventional playwright would present such an original approach to the *dramas de honor* in his *El defensor de su agravio*. Nevertheless, the many parallels that exist between Moreto's play and *El médico de su honra* may not be mere coincidence, as *El defensor* could well represent a specific rewriting of some of the most important scenes in Calderón's tragedy. If this is so, Moreto may be presenting his dramatic reaction to the barbarous excesses caused by the honor code in earlier Spanish dramas. At the same time, by portraying conjugal honor in such a distinctive way, Moreto both reinforces and questions standard gender roles in the Spanish *comedia*. Although Moreto certainly accepts the idea that the husband is the final arbiter of his wife's guilt or innocence, he does not characterize the masculine as possessing an absolute control over the conjugal relationship, but rather as maintaining a form of emotional self-control. While the Duke is at first free to express his unbridled and insane passions for Nisea—something that would be completely unacceptable for any female character to do—he also recognizes that this sensual desire has produced a frenzied transformation in his behavior. As a result, he not only understands that he is ruining a loving relationship with his wife, but he also acknowledges that he is largely responsible for Aurora's possible infidelity.

Gutierre also acknowledges the changes in his character, but his emotions overwhelm his rational faculties to such an extent that—in direct contrast to the Duke—he must admit that he is powerless to control his own jealous suspicions. As Gutierre tells the King, “[Q]ue hombres como yo / no ven; basta que imaginen, / que sospechen, que prevengan . . .” (3.2127-29). In this way, the differing reactions in Gutierre and the Duke seem to embody the contrast between what Steven Wagschal has called suspicious jealousy and evidential jealousy in Golden Age literature (19). For the irrational Gutierre, it is enough to suspect or imagine that his wife has been unfaithful, but in Moreto’s play the jealous husband must weigh the evidence carefully in order to judge his wife’s virtue properly. At the same time, Moreto establishes a certain parity between masculine and feminine characters, as he indicates that both spouses are equally responsible for defending the honor code through the use of supposedly *varonil* reason. As we can see in the character of Aurora, female does not necessarily represent what Noydens describes as “en la fábrica de un engaño, grandes artífices” (952), as the Duchess demonstrates that she is as rational as any man, and probably more so.

Although over the years scholars have tended to study the honor code in only a small number of plays, Stroud is correct to conclude that the Spanish *comedia* offers a far more complex presentation of this topic than is generally recognized in the literature. While Calderonian tragedy will likely continue to be the focus of critical inquiry in the future, this comparative study of *El defensor de su agravio* and *El médico de su honra* suggests that literary and cultural critics should widen the scope of their research in order to take a broader and more nuanced view of these *dramas de honor*. Whether we analyze the behavior of jealous husbands, the relationships between men and women, or a variety of other possible subjects, these diverse works represent a problematical yet fruitful genre that will surely present unexpected challenges and opportunities for many years to come. As a result, the unorthodox approach of playwrights such as Moreto could well provide modern scholars with a more complete and more compelling vision of the diverse nature of conjugal honor in Baroque Spanish theater.

Notes

1. William L. Fichter, Peter Podol, and Melveena McKendrick have noted that many of the wife-absolution plays are comic works, so they are not directly comparable to the wife-murder dramas. As McKendrick writes on Lope’s *La victoria de la honra* and *La locura por la honra*, “[T]hese plays are not straightforward enactments of marital infidelity and ritual murder. They treat a serious, tragic theme in a light-hearted, flippant manner—in other words their technique is that of the burlesque” (“Lope” 12). While Podol concludes that *Los embustes de Fabia* is Lope’s “only serious drama in which the basic approach to the honor problem is blatantly non-conventional” (453), the play seems clearly comic. Since the dramatic action in some of these plays is deliberately absurd, even the most unexpected outcomes are possible, such as the murder of a jealous husband in Lope’s *Las fiestas de Madrid*. This is one of Lope’s earlier works, so it seems that marital infidelity was originally a humorous rather than a tragic subject in the *comedia*.

2. Ficino accepts the classical notion that love is a desire for beauty, but he believes that there are only three manifestations of true beauty. First, there is the beauty of a person’s soul, which is perceived by another person’s mind. Then there is the beauty of the body, which is captured by the eyes, and finally the beauty of sound, which is discerned by the hearing. As a result, Ficino establishes an absolute contrast between an honest and spiritual love on the one hand, and the insane desires of physical attraction on the other: “Since . . . the mind, the sight, and the hearing are the only means by which we are able to enjoy beauty, . . . love is always limited to the pleasures of the mind, the eyes, and the ears. . . . Love is therefore limited to these three, but desire which arises from the other senses is called not love, but lust or madness” (1.130).

3. At the beginning of *El médico de su honra*, when Enrique is brought unconscious into Mencía’s house, she tries to react appropriately by reminding herself that “Yo soy quien soy” (1.133). Nevertheless, she soon adds that “ni para sentir soy mía” (1.139), which reveals her uncertain character as she struggles to overcome her attraction for Enrique. Significantly, she quickly ends up inviting the Infante to see her again. When Enrique tells Gutierre that he must continue his journey because of the jealousy that he feels over a woman who spurned him for another, Mencía interjects: “quizá / fuerza, y no mudanza, fue; / oídla vos, que yo sé / que ella se disculpará” (1.421-24). Enrique accepts the invitation without Gutierre realizing it—“buscaré / a esta dama, y della oiré / la disculpa” (1.486-88)—thereby setting up a meeting with Mencía that would be inconceivable for someone who truly wished to defend her honor to the death. Mencía’s *natural* seems to be struggling with her *obligación*, a conflict that she reveals in her words to Jacinta: “tuve amor, y tengo honor” (1.573). Moreover, Gutierre later reveals in an aside that he is aware that Mencía is not all that she should be: “Mencía es quien es, / y soy quien soy. No hay quien pueda / borrar de tanto esplendor / la hermosura y la fineza. / —Pero sí puede, mal digo” (2.629-33). See also Georgina Dopico Black’s analysis of this theme (132-39).

4. See Dunn (86), Casa (132), Bandera (6), Blue (88-89), and Soufas (193) for the importance of darkness in the play.

5. Soufas makes an important observation when she notes that many of Gutierre’s actions and thoughts are directly related to the jealous melancholy that overwhelms his use of reason: “Particularly significant is the attention given to melancholic jealousy. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* . . . Robert Burton outlines this problem. Emphasizing the symptomatic fear, sorrow, and suspicion, he asserts that the jealous melancholic: ‘hunts after every word he hears . . . with a most unjust calumny of others, he misinterprets every thing that is said or done, most apt to mistake or misconstrue.’ . . . Burton likewise stresses the tendency toward emotional alternations apt to plague such an erratic individual: ‘He will sometimes sigh, weep, sob for anger . . . curse, threaten, brawl, scold, fight; and sometimes again flatter, and speak fair, as forgiveness . . . and then festoons, impatient as he is, rave, rear. . . like a mad man’” (184). This behavior continues throughout the play, as Gutierre even cries in front of the King at the beginning of the third act (3.2063-69). Shortly thereafter, Mencía tells Jacinta that Gutierre “consigo llora” (3.2356), while Gutierre later asks himself, “¿Quién vio en tantos enojos / matar las manos, y llorar los ojos?” (3.2456-57).

6. Dian Fox sees Gutierre as a more prudent husband than the one described in this paper: “Even suspecting her fidelity, Don Gutierre always bends over backwards to give her the benefit of the doubt. In that regard he, like his king, is inconsistent, having been so quick to believe Doña Leonor’s guilt earlier. Despite all the circumstantial evidence accumulating against his wife, he exhausts every alternative of which he can conceive for resolving the problem, short of doing away with her” (214). While Gutierre continues to debate Mencía’s fate in Act 3, he does not challenge the assumptions that destine her to die by the end of the second act. Rather than gather new information, Gutierre continues to come to the same mistaken conclusion because he is not rational enough to arrive at the truth.

7. While King Pedro observes that Gutierre “cuerdamente / sus agravios satisfizo” (3.2792-93), he is referring to the way that he covered up his crime rather than to the murder itself. Just before, the King also indicated that Gutierre must be “el cruel que anoche hizo / una acción tan inclemente” (2.2790-91). Juan Huarte de San Juan observes in his *Examen de ingenios* that “los que tienen mucha imaginativa son coléricos, astutos, malignos y cavilosos, los cuales están siempre inclinados al mal y saben hacerlo con maña y prudencia” (qtd. in Wardropper 393), which explains why Gutierre would be more rational covering up a crime than committing it.

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Registro de representantes: imprenta y personajes-tipo en la España de 1570

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A HIPÓTESIS DE ESTE TRABAJO es que la tipificación de grupos urbanos, pertenecientes al tercer estado o estado llano, por medio de un discurso dramático, establece comportamientos y costumbres dentro de un ecosistema cultural. En dicho proceso intervienen los elementos que sitúan al objeto comunicativo, en este caso una colección de entremeses, dentro de un circuito editorial que amplía el rango de distribución de la materia textual. Un personaje-tipo en la literatura es el equivalente a un estereotipo social, es decir, a una representación mental de un conjunto de características de uno o varios individuos que pertenecen a grupos específicos. Ya en 1923, W. S. Jack advertía la singular capacidad del elenco entremesil de incorporar tipos cómicos (67). En efecto, estos personajes-esquema son depósitos de información, lista para ser activada desde la enunciación o escritura del nombre genérico, que hace del sustantivo (vegetal, objeto, animal) un nombre propio. Eugenio Asensio intentó esbozar el origen de estas "personas de rango inferior," enraizadas en un espíritu cómico de "la celebración cristiana del Corpus y la pagana del Carnaval" (16). Los "rastros y reliquias de una comunidad más ligada a la naturaleza, las estaciones y el calendario" llegaron a un público de ciudad y urbanizado por medio del arte escénico de Lope de Rueda, quien se mueve entre "la pintura de la sociedad contemporánea con su habla y costumbres" y sus fuentes literarias (Asensio 19-20, 25). La construcción sistemática de los personajes en el teatro breve descansa, como dice María José Martínez, "sobre la pertenencia unificadora a una jerarquía sociodramática ínfima y se articula según una doble dimensión que integra simultáneamente los tipos tradicionales y las figuras modernas" (*El entremés* 111). Dicho de otro modo, la galería de tipos está "a medio camino entre la *imitatio* folclórica y el retrato costumbrista" nada complaciente, "pues aquí y allá aparece la nota de humor negro y de crítica social" (Huerta 135).

Para describir el proceso de tipificación literaria he dividido el trabajo en dos partes. En la primera, estudio la relación del teatro con la imprenta y hago un breve recorrido de casos particulares hasta llegar al *Registro de representantes*