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Founded by Everett W. Hesse

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Published semiannually by the Comediantes, an international group of scholars interested in early modern Hispanic theater, the Bulletin welcomes articles and notes in Spanish and English dealing with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century peninsular and colonial Latin American drama. Submissions are refereed by at least two specialists in the field. In order to expedite a decision, contributors should send a copy of the essay and an abstract to the editor by e-mail attachment (edward.h.friedman@vanderbilt.edu). They should also submit a hard copy and a CD to the editor's address, along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Essays should adhere in format to the current MLA Handbook. All rights remain with the author. Contributors are asked to subscribe to the journal. Books for review should be sent directly to the book review editor. Advertising space is available.

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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 cunning 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 scraglio 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 comedia 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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morisco and Spanish noble characters or the particular speech patterns of Alcuczuz,
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in the action of drama and that his character holds structural as well as societal
significance for the audience. On one hand, he behaves as a typical gracioso; on
another, he connotes morisco integration into Spanish society. Alcuczuz’s humor
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Calderón’s audience a temporary release from anxiety surrounding the morisco
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Donald T. Dietz

ABSTRACT
It has been studied and generally acknowledged that Calderón loved art, publicly
defended painters, and recognized and felt an intrinsic, almost divinely inspired
relationship that existed between painting and his dramatic work. However, what
has not been fully appreciated is the extent to which Calderón understood the
iconographical methodology that the early painters and, later, his contemporaries
employed to portray the hidden theological and doctrinal mysteries, which
the Church demanded that they help convey to instruct the faithful. This study
focuses on Calderón’s auto sacramental, La béstalga del valle, to illustrate how
the dramatist combined his extensive knowledge of art history and theology to
portray and visualize, on the stage, one of the central tenets of Catholicism, the
Immature Conception. After reviewing Spain’s important role in the debates
concerning this controversial doctrine, which circulated throughout Europe, the
essay discusses the five principal icons used by baroque artists in their paintings and
how these same icons are imbedded in Calderón’s auto. After a brief consideration

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UXORICIDE AND ABSOLUTION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MORETO’S EL DEFENSOR
DE SU AGRARIO AND CALDERÓN’S EL MÉDICO DE SU BONARA
Ricardo Castells

ABSTRACT
Wife-absolute dramas represent part of the corpus of Spanish honor plays, but they
have not received the same critical attention as the major uxoricide dramas. This
study analyzes the different outcomes in these two kinds of plays by comparing the
behavior of the jealous husband and supposedly unfaithful wife in one of the later
wife-absolute comedias, Moreto’s El defensor de su agravio, with the best-known
wife-murder drama, Calderón’s El médico de su bonara. The study concludes that
there are several explanations for these contrary outcomes, but the most important
factor is whether the husband retains the use of his national faculties in order to
judge his wife’s fidelity properly. While the Duke of Athens is able to recover the
use of reason at the end of El defensor de su agravio, Guiterre is unable to do
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overcome his jealousy and determine his wife’s innocence, a transformation that
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play’s conclusion. (RC)

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Carlos-Urani Montiel

ABSTRACT
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 librerio
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,
dos que 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. (CUM)
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 Martin 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 festshrift entitled En buena compañía: Estudios en honor de Luciano García Lorenzo, edited by Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, Oscar Carnago Bernal, Abrahm Madroñal Durán, and Carmen Menéndez-Ortuña (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 bonra*

Ricardo Castells
Florida International University

As 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 bonra, 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.* The study will then compare this play to the most problematic of all the wife-murder dramas—Calderón’s *El médico de su bonra*—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 comedilla 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 artífices." (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 mujer 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 composición de su obligación, viven con desahogo, aflorzando 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 mujer: "Finalmente, hablando Marco Aurelio de las mujeres, dize: El amor de todas se puede dixer con sola una pildora, y la pasión de una sola no se despilbará con todo el ruybarbo de Alexandria" (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 tengo aviso de acordále lo que le cumpliere, no dexándole caer en errores, y con buenas palabras procure siempre de guiarle 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 este será el verdadero engendrar y juntar y expresar 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 comedilla 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 comedilla 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 agravi0 was originally published in 1671—two years after the playwright's death—in the Parte XXXV de las comedias nuevas, escritas por los mejores ingentes 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) (xvii). Although the work is long forgotten, Kennedy describes it as an excellent play (50), while Fernández-Guerra indicates that it is an “obra muy bien escrita, y bien recibida siempre del público” (xxx). 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. 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
discrecciones 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, and 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,
yo que vivo tan unida
a dos almas una vida,
dos vidas en un albedrío,
de tu amor y gentío 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” (3-8), 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 darle 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 guallar por el camino de la virtud y verdadera honestidad, y hajar [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 Gutierrez’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 Gutierrez does while trying to hide his shame. Moreover, the Duke and Gutierrez 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 Gutierrez’s burning jealousy makes him predisposed to accept Mencia’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 padeciz 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 Gutierrez 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 Calderon’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 esto 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, / mátame 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 alicanto,
templado, afable y benigno,
hasta saber mis agravios,
y si es cierto su delito,
tiemble mi furor la tierra,
tiemblesme montes y ríos,
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 “estrago 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 resuelve, el alma que esto tiene

Pero de amor y honor le 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 reconocimiento” (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 decides? ¿Sabés 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 “¿Sabés quién 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 en 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 Mencia 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 Gutierrez'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 Gutierrez 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 Gutierrez and the graciosos 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 Gutierrez quickly realizes that it matches Enrique's sword. Once Gutierrez 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 vanonil 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,
bién podéis, ojos, llorar:
no lo dejéis de vergüenza.5 (2.1593-600)

Despite this moment of weakness, Gutierrez 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), Gutierrez's actions are always guided by 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, Gutierrez 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. Gutierrez, 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:

Dissimulare, 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, Gutierrez'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. Gutierrez'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, Gutierrez has now assumed a dangerous identity which he will not relinquish even as the play ends. (192)

Gutierrez 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).

Gutierrez'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 Gutierrez "ador[a] y reverenc[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 Gutierrez'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 sniffs 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 llego, / sin luz y sin razón, dos veces ciego” (3.1911-12).

In a moment when he needs complete control over his mental faculties, Gutiérre’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 Gutiérre and that he should never return to the house because they will not get away with the same ruse again. Gutiérre’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, Gutiérre does not continue the deception until he resolves the mystery, as he instead decides on an impromptu course of action almost immediately: “¡Mi venganza a mi agravio correspondá!” (2.1948). While he could engage his wife in a long and albeit deceptive dialogue as the Duke does in Aurora’s jail cell, Gutiérre 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, Gutiérre 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 Gutiérre, 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 rabiia, todo fuego!” (2.1950).

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-abolition 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, Gutiérre 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. Gutiérre, 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 varón character traits found in Covarrubias, Gutiérre does not exhibit the necessary faculties of razón and juicio, as his irrational ravings prevent him from fulfilling this masculine role. On the contrary, Gutiérre 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. Castaño has noted, Agustín Moreno 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 orginal approach to the dramas de honor in his El defensor de su agravio. Nevertheless, the many parallels that exist between Moreno’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, Moreno 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, Moreno both reinforces and questions standard gender roles in the Spanish comedia. Although Moreno 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.
Gutierrez 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 Gutierrez tells the King, "[Q]ue hombres como yo / no ven; basta que imaginen, / que sospechen, que prevengan..." (3.212-27). In this way, the differing reactions in Gutierrez 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 Gutierrez, 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 fábula de un engaño, grandes artifices" (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 problematic 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. Jochert, Peter Podol, and Melvinda McKenzie have noted that many of the wife-absolution plays are comic works, so they see not directly comparable to the wife-murder dramas. As McKenzie writes on Lope's "la victoria de la honra" and "la locura por la honra," "These plays are not straightforward enactments of marital infidelity and ritual murder. They treat a serious, tragic theme in a lighthearted, flippan manner—"in other words their technique is that of the burlesque" ("Lope" 12). While Podol concludes that los embustes de Fábula is Lope's "only serious drama in which the basic approach to the honor problem is blatantly non-convessional" (455), the play 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 ferias 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'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 desire 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 unconsiously into Menza's house, she tries to react appropriately by reminding herself that "Yo soy quien soy" (1.133). Nevertheless, she soon adds that "si no te persuade yo mia" (1.139), which reveals her uncertain character as she struggles to overcome her attraction for Enrique. Significantly, she quickly ends up inviting the Invante to see her again. When Enrique tells Gutierrez that he must continue his journey because of the jealousy that he feels over a woman who spurned him for another, Menza interjects: "quiso / fuéza, y yo muñan, fué; / oída vos, que yo se / que ella se disculpara" (1.421-24). Enrique accepts the invitation without Gutierrez realizing it—"bursache / a esta dama, y de ella oíre / la disculpa" (1.486-88)—thereby setting up a meeting with Menza that would be impossible for someone who truly wished to defend her honor. Menza'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, Gutierrez later reveals in an aside that he is aware that Menza is not at all what she should be: "Menza es una escula / y soy quien soy. No hay quien pucia / borrar de tarro estupor / la bernaosur y la fieza. / Pero si pudies, mal digo" (2.1029-33). See also Georgina Dospico Black's analysis of this theme (132-39).

4. See Dunn (86), Casa (132), Bandera (6), Black (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 Gutierrez's actions and thoughts are directly linked 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 melancholy...is a disease of the heart and the mind...he misinterprets every thing that is said or done, most apt to mistake or misconstrue..." But Burton likewise stresses the tendency toward emotional abstractions apt to plague such an erratic individual: He will sometimes sigh, weep, sob for anger...curse, threaten, bravew, scold, fight; and sometimes again flatter, and speak fair, as mentioned...and their eyes teem with tears...like a mad man..." (184). This behavior continues throughout the play, as Gutierrez, even eneves in front of the King at the beginning of the third act (3.203-69). Shortly thereafter, Menza tells Jacinta that Gutierrez "consigue llora" (3.2556), while Gutierrez later skis himself, "Quisiera ver mis enojos / azotar las manos, y llorar los ojos" (3.2456-57).

6. Dan Fox sees Gutierrez as a more prudent husband than the one described in this paper. Even accusing his fidelity, Gutierrez only forwords to give 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). When Gutierrez continues to debate Menza's fate in Act 3, he does not challenge the assumptions that he made to the end of the second act. Rather than gather new information, Gutierrez 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 Gutierrez "cuadernamente / sus agravios satisfizo" (3.2753), 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 Gutierrez must be "el cruel que anochez hizo / una acción tan increíble" (2.2759-91). Juan de Urrea de San Juan observes in his Ensayos de ingenio that "los que tienen mucha imaginación son cólicos, asustos, malignos y cavilosos, los cuales están siempre inclinados al mal y deben hacerse con maña y prudencia" (qtd. in Wardropper 395), which explains why Gutierrez would be more rational covering up a crime than committing it.
Works Cited


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, pertinentes 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 entremeses 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 luego un breve recorrido de casos particulares hasta llegar al Registro de representantes...