

THE EMERGING SPANISH MIDDLE CLASS IN SELECTED DRAMAS
OF THE SIGLO DE ORO AND NINETEENTH CENTURY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION	1
The Problem	1
Statement of the problem	1
Method of Investigation	1
Material used	1
Periods studied	1
II. HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND	3
Definition of Comedia	3
Economic Emergence	4
Social Ramifications	5
III. LAS MOCEDADES DEL CID	7
Traits of Upper-Class Behavior	7
The Concept of Honor	9
The Dominative and Defensive Forces	10
Imperfections of the Upper Class	11
IV. FUENTEVEJUNA	12
The Role of Lope de Vega	12
The Decline of the Upper Class	13
The Wickedness of El Comendador	13
The Plight of Fuenteovejuna	14
The Growth of Fuenteovejuna	16
Fronoso's Decision	19

CHAPTER	PAGE
Laurencia's Denunciation	20
Rebellion and Trial	21
V. DEL REY ABAJO, NINGUNO	22
The Genius of Zorrilla	22
Zorrilla and the Monarchy	23
A Switching of Identities	24
The Lower Class Servant	25
The Second El Cid	27
Mendo, a Corrupt Count	28
Three Classes Combine	28
VI. EL HOMBRE DE MUNDO	31
A Middle-Class Comedia	31
The Lower Class Ascends	32
The Middle Class Compromises	33
A Changing Idea of Honor	35
Economic Emergence	35
VII. CONSUELO	37
Ayala's Purpose	37
The Role of the Servants	38
A New Type	39
A Ruthless Businessman	41
Consuelo's Hypocrisy	41
Antonia's Wisdom	42
The Class Mobility of Fernando	44

CHAPTER	PAGE
VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	46
The Merger Begins	46
The Problem of Leisure	46
Generalizations and Exceptions	47
Causes for a Latent Development	48
War and Aftermath	48
A Contemporary Drama	50
The Full-Grown Middle Class	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY	53

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Many authorities believe that of all the arts, drama is the closest to the people. It was, therefore, through this vehicle that the dilatory emergence of the Spanish middle class was traced.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to explain the paradox of a freedom-loving country which has been one of the last to have a strong and influential middle class. It has also been the purpose of the investigator to emphasize the points at which there was a merging of the upper and lower classes.

II. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Materials used. Five dramas have been chosen to illustrate this merging of the classes. They are: Las mocedades del Cid by Guillén de Castro, Fuenteovejuna by Lope de Vega, Del rey abajo, ninguno by Rojas Zorrilla, El hombre de mundo by Ventura de la Vega, and Consuelo by López de Ayala.

Periods studied The dramas have been selected from the Golden Age period, (1492-1681) and from the Nineteenth Century. Brett has pointed out the relative sterility and decadence of the Eighteenth Century. The theatre was virtually prostrate during

this period and became little more than a caricature of the Golden Age.¹ Patt mentions the abortive attempts to imitate French neo-classicists and the debased and frigid tragedies of the Calderonian school.² Historical sources and contemporary dramas have been used in the second chapter and also in the last to substantiate certain claims.

¹Lewis E. Brett, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1935), pp. 4-10.

²Beatrice P. Patt and Martin Nozick, Spanish Literature: 1700-1900 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1965), pp. 1-4.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND

The Spanish drama is known as a comedia and is a particularly unique type of drama which is difficult to place into distinct categories. Lope de Vega is said by Underhill to have ". . . conceived the comedia which fused the most diverse elements into one spacious whole."¹ Alpern explains this uniqueness as a reflection of the national spirit which has been tempered over the years by patriotism, enthusiasm, and faith.² There are very few comedias in which the classical unities of action, time, and place are rigidly followed. In fact, the comedia resembles the novel more than it resembles the classical theatre. It is also Alpern who expresses the idea very succinctly by saying, "A la demanda popular nace esta modalidad literaria que se llama comedia pero es completamente ecléctica. . . ."³ To further give a clear impression of this literary genre he explains that, "Estos personajes son de todas las clases sociales . . . sin limitación de rango social, estado, ni posición económica."⁴

¹John Garrett Underhill, Four Plays by Lope de Vega (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. xii.

²Hymen Alpern and José Martel, Diez comedias del siglo de oro (New York: Harper & Row, 1939), pp. xiii-xiv.

³Ibid., p. xv.

⁴Ibid., p. xiv.

A better understanding of how the comedia differs from other national theatres allows the reader to foresee the emergence of a middle class in Spain. Jameson calls realism Spain's outstanding dramatic tradition.⁵ The dramatists cited in this investigation knew the democratic ingredients for a middle class had always been present and went far beyond the mere transcribing of facts. The actual transformation awaited only a favorable economic and social combination.

With the possible exception of Consuelo, sources other than dramas must be consulted for the economic emergence. In Galdós's Torquemada en la cruz, the blind brother Rafael bitterly observes that in the new materialistic society the important thing is to have money, without inquiring about how it was acquired. In his own words he describes a new, albeit despicable rich, ". . . los aristócrates arruinados, desposeídos de su propiedad por los usureros y traficantes de la clase media."⁶ Torquemada's great admiration for Donoso leads him to crude attempts to imitate him. The social graces do not come easily, and don Francisco forgets himself at times, ". . . escupía, pisoteando luego su saliva con la usada pantufla de orillo"; he refers to questionable ancestry, "Yo soy noble: mi abuelo castraba cerdos, mi tataratío, el inquisidor, tostaba herejes, y tenía un

⁵Storm Jameson, Modern Drama in Europe (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Howe, 1920), p. 231.

⁶Patt, op. cit., p. 345.

bodegón para vender chuletas de carne de persona." Rafael, no doubt, includes don Francisco when he talks of "esos burgueses groseros y viciosos."⁷

Patt also gives historical evidence of this economic progress in this statement:

The signing of the Constitution of Cadiz in 1812 marked the emergence of the liberal bourgeoisie as a political and economic foe of the old aristocracy and the church. Expropriation of ecclesiastical property and the abolition of the smaller entailed estates made it possible for the rich middle class to purchase vast tracts of land and form a new kind of landed aristocracy at the expense of the old.⁸

A cursory examination of some of the literature of this period will aid in understanding some of the social ramifications implicit in these changes. Mariano José de Larra is described as "incisive" and "cruel" for his disgust at the ignorance and backwardness of his countrymen. His comments, however, give the reader an insight into the great gap that existed between the economic and social progress of the new middle class. One of the most hilarious scenes in the Spanish language occurs when a representative of this middle class, Braulio, attempts to appear cultured at his own birthday party. Fourteen people are made to sit at a table made for eight; an inexperienced carver sends a chicken flying through the air to spill gravy on Larra's shirt; a mean little brat nearly blinds him with an olive; and he is made to recite poetry over his strenuous objections. One is not surprised to find Larra making the following comments:

⁷Ibid., pp. 338-345.

⁸Ibid., pp. 345-346.

¿Hay nada más ridículo que estas gentes que quieren pasar por finas en medio de la más crasa ignorancia de los usos sociales; que para obsequiarle le obligan a usted a comer y beber por fuerza, y no le dejan medio de hacer su gusto?

In El sombrero de tres picos by Alarcón a good example of ascending bourgeoisie and declining aristocracy is found in the persons of tío Lucas, the miller, and don Eugenio de Zúñiga y Ponce de León, the government official. Don Eugenio, known as El Corregidor, demands respect but loses it by his misuse of authority. His laughable attempts to seduce Frasquita, the wife of Lucas, coupled with his ire when he thinks a similar situation has developed in his home, add to the contempt the reader feels toward one who should be an exemplary model for the populace. Although Lucas's behavior is also somewhat less than exemplary, by comparison with that of don Eugenio, it adds stature to the new middle class.¹⁰

Throughout the thesis these paradoxes in class behavior, as well as a natural merging of upper and lower classes, will be stressed. In the conclusion, contemporary dramas will be cited to substantiate the continued trend in this direction.

⁹Ibid., p. 64.

¹⁰Pedro de Alarcón, El sombrero de tres picos (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1958).

CHAPTER III

LAS MOCEDADES DEL CID

This selection, although it was written at a much later date, deals with the eleventh century and will serve as an example of the upper class of that century. No true dramas existed before the closing decade of the sixteenth century although Crawford describes the paso as ". . . a farcical scene with dramatic unity and with characters drawn from the lower classes."¹ Pastoral plays and religious dramas called autos were also common at this time, but there was very little dialogue used in these. Espina calls Las mocedades del Cid ". . . una de las obras más hermosas, vibrantes y poéticas del teatro español."² Its inclusion as an example of upper-class behavior, however, can only be justified by several traits employed and not by the play as a whole. It was not a classical play if Benavente's comment is correct:

Although the Spanish Theatre of the Golden Age has long been regarded as standard or classic, it was by no means classic in the precise acceptation of the word.³

¹J. P. Wickersham Crawford, Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), p. 108.

²Antonio Espina, Las mejores escenas del teatro español e hispanoamericano (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), p. 189

³John Garrett Underhill, Four Plays by Lope de Vega (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 359.

The protagonist of the play, Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, is the quintessence of all that is noble, just and pure in the Spanish upper class. Although he can and does kill, it is always in a way of which society approves whether it is out of loyalty to the king or to uphold the honor of his family. El Cid, as he is named by the Moors is somewhat the ancient example of the cowboy hero who always conquers in spite of any and all odds.

Other traits of upper class behavior are also evident in the play. The shepherd is more or less the counterpart of the Greek chorus. He describes the action scenes, such as El Cid's battle with the Moors. Along with two soldiers he becomes the antithesis of Cid's compassion and humility when confronted with the disagreeable idea of eating with a leper. The role of the servant and other representatives of the lower class is very minor. Elvira, the servant of Ximena, does not carry messages or otherwise act as a romantic intermediary as will prove to be the case in other dramas which will be examined later. To balance the drama, a feminine equivalent of El Cid must be found. Ximena's loyalty to her father's dying wish for vengeance in spite of the agony it causes her gives her the proper credentials.

All the elements of a Greek tragedy seem to be present, but in the dénouement the seemingly unsolvable situation is resolved in true Spanish style without loss of honor to the principals and in a way which pleases and entertains the audience. After a heated argument over who is to be Prince Sancho's tutor, El Conde Loçano slaps Diego Laínez in the face. Diego, although he has formerly been a great

warrior, is now feeble and unable to avenge this terrible affront to his honor. He delegates this responsibility to his son, Rodrigo, who is deeply in love with Lozano's daughter, Ximena. Just how much this insult has hurt Diego is evident in his departing speech before leaving the castle:

Y yo me iré, si es que puedo,
tropezando en cada paso
con la carga de la afrenta
sobre el peso de los años,
donde mis agravios llore
hasta vengar mis agravios.⁴

One of the curious qualities of this honor was that the more public the insult, the more serious it was. Having been committed in the presence of the king and his advisors, it becomes imperative that, ". . . sangre sola quita semejantes manchas."⁵

Rodrigo's foe is indeed a formidable one with his ". . . mil amigos Asturianos . . ." and his influence with the king, ". . . sea su voto el primero, / y en guerra el mejor su brazo."⁶ Rodrigo, however, is much more concerned with the conflict between loyalty to his father and his love for Ximena. He thus faces a dilemma tantamount to that of Hamlet's, but chooses the painful course with very little vacillation. In his own soliloquy Rodrigo expresses this inner turmoil:

⁴Hymen Alpern and José Martel, Diez comedias del siglo de oro (New York: Harper & Row, 1939), p. 335.

⁵Ibid., p. 342.

⁶Ibid., p. 344.

¿Qué haré, suerte atrevida,
 si él es el alma que me dió la vida?
 ¿Qué haré (¡terrible calma!),
 si ella es la vida que me tiene el alma?
 Mezclar quisiera, en confianza tuya,
 mi sangre con la suya,
 ¿y he de verter su sangre? . . . ¡brava pena!
 ¿yo he de matar al padre de Ximena?⁷

Rodrigo is forced to kill Lozano in a duel, and it appears the dominative and defensive forces of which Marx speaks are set in conflict at this point.⁸ The defensive force which is the love between Rodrigo and Ximena would seem to have little chance of overcoming the dominative force of fate. The reader's belief that the play will end as a tragedy is further strengthened by Ximena's declaration that she will marry the man who brings her Rodrigo's head, and by Marx's statement that, "The conflict in tragedy always ends disastrously for the protagonist."⁹ The clever chicanery with which El Cid delivers his own head alive after a courageous deed in behalf of the king accentuates the uniqueness of Spanish drama.

There is no middle class in this drama, and there is no growth toward this change on the part of the lower class. In all probability this was a carry-over from the pastoral plays which Crawford describes as ". . . entertainment for aristocratic audiences on the occasion of betrothal, wedding, or other festivity. . . .

⁷Ibid., p. 343.

⁸Milton Marx, The Enjoyment of Drama (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1920), p. 23.

⁹Ibid., p. 59

They represented courtly traditions, and when rustic scenes were introduced, it only served to contrast the delicate sensibilities and polished speech of gentlefolk with the ignorance and rude language of shepherds."¹⁰

Curiously enough, except for El Cid and Ximena, all the other upper class people including the king and his family have personality flaws. The king himself is indecisive; Prince Sancho is envious and plans to murder his sister; Princess Urraca is jealous of Ximena; Cid's brothers are cowards. The flawless characters of El Cid and Ximena stand out like a beacon and will serve as an example of upper class values at its best. This will continue to be true even if Callcott's comments on the historical Cid are correct:

No real evidence has yet come to light to indicate that the Ximena he married was the daughter of the Count Gómez de Gormaz, and, what is still more disappointing, it seems that the whole episode of the killing of his sweetheart's father to avenge the supposed insult to his own father, . . . falls into the same category as does the story of Washington and the cherry tree.¹¹

In the dramas that follow, a decline from this pinnacle along with a converging lower class will be observed.

¹⁰Crawford, op. cit., p. 67.

¹¹Frank Callcott, "The Cid As History Records Him," Hispania, XVII (February, 1934), p. 44.

CHAPTER IV

FUENTEOVEJUNA

The emergence of a middle class entails at least two important facets. The first is a lowering of the standards of the upper class: usually, this is an involuntary action. The second is a striving on the part of the lower class to emulate the qualities and habits of the upper class. Both of these movements are well illustrated in Fuenteovejuna.

The role of Lope de Vega as an innovator is well known to all students of Spanish drama. Díaz de Escovar and Lasso de la Vega report that:

Lope de Vega realizó la reforma del Teatro, atrayendo a la vez al pueblo y a los poetas por el sendero del buen gusto; corrigió los desarreglos de unos y otros, atajando el paso a las monstruosidades y a los delirios de algunos, y a las groserías e indecencias de muchos.¹

"La fórmula de nuestro drama nacional," says Menéndez Pelayo, "podría estudiarse íntegra en las comedias de Lope de Vega que hoy tenemos."²

Underhill ascribes Lope to have ". . . conceived the comedia which fused the most diverse elements into one spacious whole."³ It is

¹Narciso Díaz de Escovar and Francisco de Lasso de la Vega, Historia del teatro español (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1924), p. 153.

²Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, Edad de oro del teatro (Vol. VII of Obras completas, ed. Miguel Artigas. 54 vols.: Madrid: Consejo Superior De Investigaciones Científicas, 1941), pp. 1-23.

³Underhill, op. cit. xii.

not surprising, therefore, that Lope would press for the rights of the lower class in an age when "El honor en el villano era cosa de poca importancia: sólo el caballero podía ser sujeto de aquél."⁴

A comparison of the characters of El Cid and Fernán Gómez, otherwise known as El Comendador, will show the extent of the decline in upper class behavior. The only admirable trait they hold in common is their valor in battle. One important battle would not have been won, ". . . a no le dar [sic] Fernán Gómez orden, ayuda y consejo."⁵ Another of his feats, ". . . venciendo moriscos, fuertes como un roble, de Ciudad Reale [sic] viene vencedore [sic]." is sung by the musicians of the town.⁶ Gómez, however, chooses to misuse his prowess against Fernando and Isabel, the rightful king and queen of Castilla. He treacherously persuades the young and inexperienced maestre Rodrigo Cirón, to do likewise.

Whereas El Cid considered it his duty to defend the helpless and to befriend the friendless, El Comendador feels the villagers are just property to be used and discarded. He shows his disdain for the village women in this conversation with a servant:

A las fáciles mujeres
quiero bien y pago mal.

⁴Federico Ruiz Morcuende, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla: Teatro (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S. A., 1931), p. 13.

⁵Joaquín Montaner, ed., Selección de obras de Lope de Vega (Barcelona: Montaner y Simon, S. A., 1954), p. 264.

⁶Ibid., p. 261.

Si éstas supiesen ioh, Flores!
estimarse en lo que valen. . .⁷

El Cid and El Comendador are types, and their behavior always represents the extreme of goodness and badness. The normal upper class citizen of this age would have been a combination of these traits. However, as a trend toward a lowering of the optimum standards is being considered, a further comparison of the two types will be valuable.

El Cid's attitude is always one of modesty and humility in spite of all the praise and honor he earns. On the other hand, El Comendador is an arrogant braggart. He feels compelled to list his previous conquests to one and all:

¿No se rindió Sebastiana,
mujer de Pedro Redondo
con ser casadas entrambas,
y la de Martín del Pozo
habiendo apenas pasado
dos días del desposorio?⁸

This remark is given the perfect squelch by Laurencia's statement that ". . . también muchos mozos merecieron sus favores."⁹

El Comendador's complete lack of compassion for the people whom he should be defending is shown in his cruel treatment of Mengo and by various comments by the villagers themselves.

Mengo, a young farm boy, tries to protect Jacinta from El Comendador's servants by appealing to the Comendador's sense of justice and pity. As a reward for his efforts he is tied to a tree

⁷Ibid., p. 274.

⁸Ibid., p. 267

⁹Ibid.

and beaten with leather straps until he is covered with black and blue welts. Jacinta, a village girl, suffers an even worse fate, ". . . del bagaje del ejército has de ser."¹⁰ The plans, ". . . y jura el comendador/ que le ha de colgar de un pie," are equally as vicious for El Comendador's rival, Frondoso.¹¹ Fernán Gómez is not above lying as he does when he gives his reason for breaking up the wedding and arresting Frondoso. His true character comes out at last when he cringes before the townsfolk and begs for another chance to rectify his mistakes.

El Comendador's own actions and statements are enough to betray him, but through the speeches of various people in Fuenteovejuna some in-depth understanding of his character can be gained. Laurencia tells of his persistent pursuit of amorous adventures; Mengo calls him more cruel than the Roman emperor Heliogabalo; Laurencia compares him to a bloody beast; Esteban reveals his callous habit of giving castoff women to his servants for their pleasure; Barrildo calls him a barbaric murderer who leaves all without honor. It is apparent that Lope uses to full advantage his frequent technique of ". . . making plain the abuses to which the subservience of womankind may lead."¹²

In contrast to the previous play in which the activities and problems of the nobility were stressed, in Fuenteovejuna "The

¹⁰Ibid., p. 279.

¹¹Ibid., p. 276.

¹²Rudolph Schevill, The Dramatic Art of Lope De Vega (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 77.

characters merge in the common mass until the people become the protagonist."¹³ The story of a town of farm people striving for honor and justice must have been a radical departure even for Lope.

Underhill states that, "In general it was Lope's practice to idealize the upper classes . . . This was indeed obligatory under an autocracy such as that of the Philips."¹⁴

As the name implies, the inhabitants of Fuenteovejuna are a meek and sheep-like people who render complete subservience to Fernán Gómez. The town is feudalistic in nature and, therefore, the serfs are a good example of the lower class. The relationship between a comendador and his village was traditionally a reciprocal one in which the serfs were allowed to work the land and in return gave a portion of the crop to the comendador. The farmers do not reject the value system of the upper class because of the tyranny of Gómez. In fact, in the very act of rebellion they extol the king and queen with these words, "¡Vivan Fernando e Isabel,/ y mueran los traidores!"¹⁵ This seeming paradox is at least partially explained by Marín's statement regarding another drama, ". . . en contraste con Fuenteovejuna donde el conflicto entre rey y noble forma una intriga secundaria independiente."¹⁶ Esteban in his bold answer to the Comendador further says:

¹³John Garrett Underhill, Four Plays by Lope de Vega (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. xv.

¹⁴Ibid., p. xix.

¹⁵Montaner, op. cit., p. 293.

¹⁶Diego Marín, "Técnica de la intriga secundaria en Lope de Vega," Hispania, XXXVIII (September, 1955), p. 273.

que reyes hay en Castilla,
que nuevas órdenes hacen,
con que desórdenes quitan.¹⁷

The revolt of Fuenteovejuna was not a part of a nationwide uprising against an unpopular government. Goldston informs that, "At the beginning of the twentieth century, the peasants still labored under feudal conditions on huge estates."¹⁸ It was, rather, the spontaneous and exasperated reaction of a totally oppressed people of a single village. That their action was revolutionary for that time and place, however, cannot be denied and is stated in Laurencia's plea that ". . . acometamos a un hecho/ que de espanto a todo el obre."¹⁹ In the opinion of Schevill, "Fuenteovejuna presents the vigor of an untutored, democratic community standing out for its rights against the vicious overlord. . . ."²⁰ Underhill's viewpoint is very similar, "Fuenteovejuna must be accounted a drama of extraordinary power, whose democratic and communal tendencies have only in our own day caused its rescue from oblivion."²¹

As would be expected, an act as dramatic as this one in which the village risks all by killing the king's representative was preceded by a number of lesser protests. At first, the townspeople dare

¹⁷Montaner, op. cit., p. 287.

¹⁸Robert Goldston, The Civil War in Spain(Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), p. 23.

¹⁹Montaner, op. cit., p. 292. ²⁰Shevill, op. cit., p. 84.

²¹Underhill, op. cit., p. xv.

only to give cautious reprimands. When the Comendador brags of the wives who have succumbed to his charms and that the men should be honored, Esteban rebukes him with these words: ". . . y vos, señor, no andáis bien/ en hablar tan libremente."²² One of the councilmen uses even stronger language when talking of the same insult:

Lo que decía es injusto;
no lo digáis, que no es justo
que nos quiteis el honor.²³

The strangely subdued manner of speaking from men who were so angry is not entirely out of fear as Wilson explains:

The powerful hierarchies of Church and State in Golden-Age Spain placed great emphasis on the proper form of address, since the form used was indicative of a person's rank within his own group.²⁴

Another rebuff for the Comendador also points out the growth which is taking place in the minds of the lower class with regard to honor. When the Comendador asks Jacinta for an answer to the incredulous idea that she could prefer a farm boy to him, she replies:

porque tengo un padre honrado,
que si en alto nacimiento
no te iguala, en las costumbres
te vence.²⁵

²²Montaner, op. cit., p. 272.

²³Ibid.

²⁴William E. Wilson, "Some Forms of Derogatory Address During the Golden Age," Hispania, XXXII (August, 1949), 297.

²⁵Montaner, op. cit., p. 278.

Perhaps the turning point for Fuenteovejuna comes when the first act of physical disobedience occurs. Laurencia has gone to the brook for the ostensible purpose of washing clothes. Frondoso, who is also there wooing her, hides in the branches when he hears the Comendador approaching. The Comendador is hunting deer but decides to change prey:

Mas si otras veces pudiste
huir mi ruego amoroso,
agora [sic] no quiere el campo,
amigo secreto y solo:²⁶

Laurencia's pleas for help force Frondoso to make what must be considered a revolutionary decision. He picks up the Comendador's crossbow and threatens to kill him unless he lets the girl go:

Comendador generoso,
dejad la moza o creed
que de mi agravio y enojo
será blanco vuestro pecho
aunque la cruz me da asombro.²⁷

The boldness of Frondoso's action is explained by Schevill:

The Comendador, far from being a mere individual, represents the privileged class, which the sane and democratic people of Spain have never thoroughly assimilated, the overbearing lord, who considers the lower class merely as tools to his own ends.²⁸

Even the Comendador himself is stunned by the audacity of this action as he later relates to his servant:

¡Que a un capitán cuya espada
tiemblan Córdoba y Granada,

²⁶ Ibid., p. 267.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 268.

²⁸ Schevill, op. cit., p. 111.

un labrador, un mozuelo
ponga una ballesta al pecho!
El mundo se acaba, Flores.²⁹

The die is now irrevocably cast, for the Comendador must seek revenge. He chooses the wedding of Frondoso and Laurencia to commit the ultimate of outrages. Frondoso is arrested and taken away to be hanged: Laurencia is forcibly removed to El Comendador's home for immoral purposes: Esteban's emblem of authority, his staff, is broken over his head.

It requires, however, one of the most scathing denunciations in the Spanish language on the part of the recently violated Laurencia to finally force the town to act:

Ovejas sois, bien lo dice
de Fuenteovejuna el nombre. . .

Liebres cobardes nacistes;
bárbaros sois, no españoles.
Gallinas, ¡vuestras mujeres
sufrís que otros hombres gocen!

Hilanderas, maricones,
amujerados, cobrades,
y que mañana os adornen
nuestras tocas y basquiñas,. . .³⁰

This vituperation proves to be the spark needed to ignite the explosive rebellion which carries the town as one to the Comendador's palace. A part of the grisly scene which occurs there is described to the king by one of the wounded servants who escapes:

²⁹Montaner, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp. 290-291

. . . rompen el cruzado pecho
 con mil heridas crueles,
 y por las altas ventanas
 le hacen que al suelo vuele,
 adonde en picas y espadas
 le recogen las mujeres.³¹

The king conducts an investigation to find the guilty parties, but the only answer that the examiner receives after torturing three-hundred townspeople is that Fuenteovejuna did it. Some insight into the staging of plays during the Siglo de Oro is gained through this comment:

We do not see the actual process of torment, but we can hear the cries of agony from the rack as one person after another is invited to confess.³²

After further inquiry proves the town loyal, the king grants a general pardon.

Thus, with one bold stroke the town establishes that the national characteristics which Goldston ascribes to the Spanish people--courage, a spirit of independence, and idealism--could apply to the lower as well as the upper class.³³ This action would later pave the way for an economic breakthrough towards the establishment of a middle class.

³¹Ibid., p. 296.

³²"Some Aspects of the Grotesque in the Drama of the Siglo de Oro," Hispania, XVIII (February, 1935), 82.

³³Goldston, op. cit., p. 10.

CHAPTER V

DEL REY ABAJO, NINGUNO

The spirit of independence learned by the lower class in their rebellion against the overlord, Fernán Gómez, is amplified in this play to include the king himself. Rojas Zorrilla had the difficult task of inculcating into this play the idea that lower-class honor and dignity take precedence over the unjust desire of a king without showing open defiance. The ability of Rojas Zorrilla to accomplish such a task is well within his capabilities because, "Posee, sin embargo, gracia, facilidad técnica y cierto sentido lírico-humorístico de las situaciones, que hacen de él un autor de relevante personalidad."¹ Díaz speaks of his ". . .preciosas dotes, tanto cómicas como trágicas; por una parte su agudeza, su donaire, su sal, y por otra su nervio, su entonación, su brillante ingenio, su estilo severo y varonil. . ." ²

There is little doubt that this play is a true picture of this expansion of lower class values. As Peers states:

Rojas Zorrilla was essentially a man of his age. Since he had never traveled, his ideas were bounded by the frontiers

¹Antonio Espina, Las mejores escenas del teatro español e hispanoamericano (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), p. 332.

²Narciso Díaz de Escovar y Francisco de p. Lasso de la Vega, Historia del teatro español (Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1924), p. 178.

of his own country. Consequently, it is to be expected that his plays will portray the Spain of his day;. . .³

Rojas Zorrilla, it appears, may have had cause for personal resentment toward the monarchy. The opening scene between the king and Mendo parallels very closely an event in Rojas' own life in which "Le costó no pocos forcejeos y amarguras obtener del rey la merced del hábito de Santiago."⁴ At any rate, his rebellious spirit is legendary. According to Ortigoza he was the ". . . mayor atrevido del teatro del Siglo de Oro, que juega a su antojo con los prejuicios de su época. . . ."⁵ Espina adds that Rojas ". . . gustaba más de la actitud rebelde que de la sumisa a los dictados y prejuicios del medio en que vivía."⁶ Morcuende concurs by saying, "Rojas tuvo la constante preocupación de apartarse de las normas tradicionales seguidas por sus contemporáneos."⁷

Rojas, however, cannot ignore the royal command that the upper class of the Golden Age be idealized. He is well aware that "Whatever the customs and privileges associated with royalty, the monarch is always described with the same respect, and even with awe."⁸ Whitby talks of

³Allison E. Peers, Spanish Golden Age Poetry and Drama (Liverpool: Institute Of Hispanic Studies, 1946), p. 101.

⁴Espina, op. cit., p. 330.

⁵Carlos Ortigoza Vieyra, Los móviles de la comedia (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 1954), p. 339.

⁶Espina, op. cit., p. 331.

⁷Federico Ruiz Morcuende, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla teatro (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1931), pp. 24-25.

⁸Peers, op. cit., p. 339.

the confusion in Del rey abajo ninguno between the appearance and reality of worth in the principal characters.⁹ Rojas veils the true purpose of his play by subtly switching and masquerading the identities of the king, Mendo, García, and Blanca. Through this device, García, who is disguised as a farmer, ". . . se atreve a decirle a éste [rey] durísimas palabras, que siendo la verdad escueta esconden una grave falta de respeto a aquél a quien García cree el rey;. . ."10

In many ways this play is an expansion and variation of the ideas presented in Fuenteovejuna. García struggles with the same problem of honor versus loyalty, but his struggle is to a great extent introspective and compounded by love. Whereas the townspeople of Fuenteovejuna were striving to prove that the lower class has the same social and moral aspirations as the upper class, García and Blanca represent a fusion of all three classes and are striving to find their true identity. It is not the king's representative in this play who threatens to besmirch the honor of García, but rather it is the king himself although through a case of mistaken identity.

It is not, however, the problem of honor nor the acquisition of new values which makes this play a prime candidate for inclusion in this study. For the first time all three classes are given a clear-cut

⁹William H. Whitby, "Appearance and Reality in Del rey abajo, ninguno," Hispania, XLIII (May, 1959), 186.

¹⁰Vieyra, op. cit., p. 339.

exposure in the same play. In addition, the mobility from one class to another can be traced.

Of the four servants, Bras alone has a major role and will serve as an example of the lower class. He embodies many of the characteristics traditionally associated with the servant. Hendrix relates that, ". . . the device of language is used by those characters, who for one reason or another, may be made fun of . . ."11 Bras's rustic speech shows his lack of education and helps to establish a standard with which to judge the other two classes. His ignorance often results in a humorous paraphrase of what others have said. "Vuestra persona,/ aunque vuestro nombre ignoro,/ me aficiona," is rendered, "Es como un oro;/ a mí también me inficiona."12 After the king and Mendo have wished Blanca many children, Bras says, "Si todo el campo pobraran [sic]/ ¿dónde han de estar mis cochinos?"13

Riddles and proverbs also play a significant role in the formation of the character of the lower class. It would almost appear that Rojas Zorrilla is forcing these concepts in a very weak scene immediately preceding the turning point. Blanca and the servants are waiting for the return of García from the hunt and Bras offers, "Un gorrino le daré/

11 William Samuel Hendrix, Some Native Comic Types in the Early Spanish Drama (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1915), p. 72.

12 Hymen Alpern and José Martel, Diez comedias del siglo de oro (New York: Harper & Row, 1939), p. 716.

13 Ibid., p. 717.

a quien dijere el más caro/vicio que hay en el mundo."¹⁴ Shortly afterwards Bras draws this conclusion following a love scene between Blanca and García:

Siempre he oído
que suele echarse de ver
el amor de la mujer
en la ropa del marido.¹⁵

The most commonly used trait, however, is the corruptibility and proclivity to accept bribes. As is usually the case, Bras divulges vital information to the lover about the most propitious time to approach the lady. García often hunts wild boar until dawn: Brass tells Mendo he must bring a ladder and enter through the balcony where he will find Blanca half-asleep. Bras has no trouble salving his conscience with the rationalization that, ". . .esto no es ser alcagüete [sic]."¹⁶ According to Morcuende, "Los espectadores exigían que el gracioso fuere desvergonzado, capaz de todos los vicios y malas acciones."¹⁷

Although the king and queen are logical representatives of the upper class, their stilted behavior and minor speaking roles disqualify them from serious consideration. There are, however, two men who closely parallel the two extremes of upper-class behavior presented in *el Cid* and *el Comendador*.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 741.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 745.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 733

¹⁷Federico Ruiz Morcuende, Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla teatro (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, S.A., 1931), p. 14.

El Conde de Orgaz is the confidant of kings and dukes. Although much of the plot of this play is predicated on mistaken identity and enigmas, El Conde alone knows the true ancestry of both García and Blanca and often gives cohesion to an otherwise impossibly complex situation. El Conde's loyalty and self-effacement rival those of El Cid. For a lesser man the charge ". . .en ti y estas joyas tenga/ contra los hados recurso/ este hijo de quien padre piadoso te sustituyo [sic] . . ."18 might have been a temptation to enrich his own treasury. El Conde fulfills this death-bed wish of García's father by finding García a farm and a wife who is his equal in birth. The Conde's attempts to restore García and Blanca to the good graces of the king are many and varied. He warns García by a note from his servant that the king, ". . .a examinar en secreto/su prudencia y su valor."19 He enlists the aid of the queen to obtain a pardon for the pair and serves as a marriage counselor when García tries to kill Blanca to preserve his honor, ". . . y he de estar de tu parte/ para servirte, Blanca, y ampararte."20 García receives this advice, ". . .como padre, como amigo, sus enojos; cuénteme todos sus males;/refiérame sus desdichas."21 The Conde's ability to govern and his valor in battle are affirmed in other parts. He is, therefore, a sterling example of those optimum qualities which the Spanish upper class has traditionally embodied.

18Alpern, op. cit., p. 770.

19Ibid., p. 715.

20Ibid., p. 758.

21Ibid., p. 759.

From the outset Mendo's character shows many of the same defects evidenced in el Comendador's. After twenty years the king finally agrees to allow him to wear an insignia which represents knighthood but with this warning, "Si la doy por honor a un hombre indigno, don Mendo, será en su pecho remiendo/ en tela de otro color."²²

Mendo arrogantly believes, as did el Comendador, that any farm girl would be anxious to be his mistress. His answer to Blanca's statement that she has a husband is a good example, "Y yo poder,/y mejores han de ser/mis brazos que honra te dan,/que no sus brazos."²³

Mendo reinforces the contention advanced earlier in the person of el Comendador that the upper class is capable of deceit and corruption. His successful attempt to bribe Bras has already been noted. When García mistakes him for the king he hastily adopts this masquerade to avoid a duel:

Yo sé que el Conde de Orgaz
lo ha dicho a alguno en secreto
informándole de mí.
La banda que cruza el pecho
de quien soy, testigo sea.²⁴

Mendo's fate is as inevitable as it is mandatory and he is quickly dispatched by an enraged García, who is pardoned by the real king in spite of his father's conspiracy.

García and Blanca form a family unit which is upper class in birth, upper middle class in economic status, and has a few lower class habits.

²²Ibid., p. 711.

²³Ibid., p. 782.

²⁴Ibid., p. 746.

These distinctions are by no means clearcut and become increasingly interwoven as the play progresses.

García is well aware of his noble birth and with this in mind always acts to protect his honor. The Conde is the only one who knows the true identity of Blanca. She herself believes, ". . . que una labradora soy/ tan humilde, que en la villa/de Orgaz, pobre me crié,/sin padre."²⁵ Her behavior, therefore, will provide a most interesting study of class mobility.

Although García is a prosperous farmer, his wealth is in the "quintales de cecina,/and fanegas de harina/. . ."²⁶ Blanca has servants but because of her upbringing helps with the domestic chores, ". . .y blanco pan les prometo,/que amasamos yo y Teresa."²⁷ A marked social maturation can be witnessed in her character as the play progresses. She is not awed by Mendo's promises and rebuffs him on many occasions. The panic she experiences when García tries to kill her at Castañar changes to a willingness to accept death once she knows it is to protect his honor:

. . .ya te la ofrezco a tus pies.
Ya sé quién eres, y pues
tu honra está asegurada
con mi muerte. . .

. . .que si te temí tirano,
ya te solicito fuerte;
anoche temí perderte
y agora [sic] llego a sentir

²⁵Ibid., p. 760.

²⁶Ibid., p. 707.

²⁷Ibid., p. 722.

tu pena; no has de vivir
sin honor. . .²⁸

It must be remembered that in the Siglo de Oro few people were aware of a middle class. But the groundwork was being laid and the desire to be respected and to receive justice, coupled with a growing economic independence were some of the motivating factors. Although Patt calls the eighteenth century one of ". . .intellectual stirrings, mainly abortive . . .," she also says:

The monarchy and church went unquestioned as institutions, and while the population of Spain almost doubled and the middle class grew in size, the percentage of the Spaniards claiming nobility was enormously out of proportion.²⁹

A comedia which would present this growth in a skillful and polished manner was not written for nearly one hundred years.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 764-655.

²⁹Beatrice P. Patt and Martin Nozick, Spanish Literature 1700-1900 (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1965), p. 3.

CHAPTER VI

EL HOMBRE DE MUNDO

When Ventura de la Vega wrote this play in 1845, the middle-class trend described at the close of chapter five had been developing for over one hundred years. In fact, by this time it was possible to present a comedia which showed ". . .a diverting and faithful portrayal of middle-class life and manners of a certain type."¹ The realism of the play is affirmed by Blanco García who says, "Parece arrancado a la realidad de la vida, y en lugar de presentarnos el prototipo de una buena o mala cualidad, nos ofrece aquellos otros que participan de alguna. . ."² According to Espina the play "Fué la obra de la temporada y de muchas temporadas más durante un cuarto de siglo."³ Pérez Galdós lauds it even more highly: "Es un modelo acabado en su género; encierra una profunda lección moral; su plan está tan bien distribuido y su diálogo es tan correcto y fácil, que entre todas nuestras comedias modernas no dudamos en darle el primer lugar."⁴

¹Lewis E. Brett, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1935), p. 371.

²Francisco Blanco García, La literatura española en el siglo XIX (Madrid: Sáenz de Jubera Hermanos, 1909), p. 320.

³Antonio Espina, Las mejores escenas del teatro español o hispanoamericano (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), p. 568.

⁴Benito Pérez Galdós, Nuestro teatro (Madrid: Renacimiento, 1923), p. 76.

A complete departure from the Siglo de Oro plays will be observed in this and the following comedia. The protagonists in the Siglo de Oro were struggling with the complex problems of love, honor, and loyalty. By the nineteenth century the emphasis had shifted to the complexities arising from everyday events. The upper class is never mentioned in this play and the wide gaps that formerly existed between classes have narrowed drastically. In fact, the only pronounced difference between the middle and lower classes in this play is an economic one.

In many ways Ramón and Benita fit nearly into the mold of the servants of the Siglo de Oro. Benita carries messages and buys gifts for Antoñito at the request of an extremely shy Emilia. Ramón's elation at being able to receive double payment for the same task is evident in the statements ". . .saquemos raja por este lado también . . ." and ". . .comamos a dos carrillos."⁵

Benita and Ramón, however, are not resigned to the idea of remaining servants forever as were their ancestors. No better example could be found than Benita's declarations that:

Y si ahora sirvo, mañana
puede que. . .No ha de ser una
toda su vida criada. . .

Y no es una ningún
monstruo; que a nadie le falta. . .
Y puede que antes que muchos
lo piensen. . .⁶

⁵Brett, op. cit., p. 399.

⁶Ibid., p. 409.

Ramón is well aware of this and the fact that with a few wise decisions he could be on the same financial level as Luis. He does not feel it impudent, therefore, to tell Luis, "¿Usted no merecía/que yo le dijese nada!"⁷

Pride and ambition are becoming more and more common traits of the servant in this century. Benita at one time "era una malva" but now delights in showing her gifts to friends in order to make them jealous, "¡Ya estaba yo rabiando/por enseñarla mi regalo! ¡Qué dentera la he dado!/Qué rabia!"⁸ She also claims:

Yo soy única, y no tengo
necesidad de servir:
¿estamos? Y si me meto
en mi casa, seré reina:
¿estamos?

The middle class by now share many character defects with the lower class that the upper class never did in the Siglo de Oro. It has also diluted many of the noble traits considered mandatory in the upper class of the Siglo de Oro.

Luis should not have been surprised to learn that Ramón was spying on him and helping his friend, Juan, to deceive him for pay. Luis has allowed Ramón ". . .ser confidente de los íntimos secretos del amo" and to become an excellent student . . ." a aquellos principios que en nuestra escuela aprendiste."¹⁰ Ramón himself says, "Mientras

⁷ Ibid., p. 432.

⁸ Ibid., p. 408.

⁹ Ibid., p. 392

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 388.

estaba dentro/ el amo, ensayarme yo/ en conquistar el afecto/de una linda camarera!. . ."11 Emilia has gone to the heart of the matter with the proverb, "De tal maestro tal discípulo."12 In the Siglo de Oro any hardships which might befall the protagonist were ". . .solo a través de los hechos del gracioso, cuya condición cobarde es muy conocida."13 Luis can no longer use this form of rationalization.

Juan is a compulsive liar who has no scruples whatsoever at using a friend to further his own ends. In his attempt to seduce Clara, he infers and later states that Luis is unfaithful. Juan is not alone in this type of conduct, for Luis lies about losing the theater tickets, and Emilia does the same to protect her relationship with Antofito. Ramón no doubt feels himself to be in good company when he tells Juan that Luis and Emilia are lovers.

Clara is severe and unfair with her hard-working servant, Benita. Her snobbish attitude, "El que trata solamente/con cierta clase de gente,/ ¿qué extraño es que se equivoque?"14 and her meddling, "Lo que quiero/ es que se vean a su sabor"15 are unbecoming a lady.

The morality of an act is less important to the new middle class than the public scandal it might engender. Juan offers to make the supreme sacrifice for a rogue in suppressing the scandal of his friend,

11 Ibid. 12 Ibid., p. 394.

13 Irving P. Rothberg, "El agente cómico de Lope de Vega," Hispanofila, XVI (September, 1962), 79.

14 Brett, op. cit., p. 381. 15 Ibid., p. 378

Luis. Juan contends, "No parece completo el triunfo/ sin la salsilla de que corra."¹⁶ Luis agonizingly ponders, "¿Estaré en ridículo?/¿Iré yo por esas calles/como iba el pobre marido/de Rosita?"¹⁷ Clara threatens Luis with the ultimate shame, "¿Tú me provocas? ¡Ingrato!. . ./ ¿Quieres que en público diga/la razón que a esto me obliga?"¹⁸

The concept of redeeming one's honor which was of more importance than death to the men of el Cid's day is reduced to mumbled threats of retaliation on the part of Luis. His complete frustration is expressed in finding Antoñito with Clara, "¡Es situación infernal/ la de un marido!/¡Tenerlo aquí. . . y no poderlo ahogar!"¹⁹ He knows that he is receiving a just recompense for similar crimes and for him to react in any visible way would be hypocritical.

The improved economic situation itself is the cause of much of the embroilment. Although Peers was talking of the Siglo de Oro, his comments are just as valid when applied to this period:

The growing sense of personal honour and of the indignity of work resulted in a complete lack of purpose among the young men and women of all but the lower classes.²⁰

It must be assumed that Luis works at a job which gives him a great deal of leisure time, for he frequents both the cafe and the theatre with regularity. The only time mention is made of work is in reference to Juan.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 390.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 420.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 439.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 430.

²⁰Allison Peers, Spanish Golden Age Poetry and Drama (Liverpool: Institute of Hispanic Studies, 1946), p. 104.

With so much extra time neither Luis nor Clara can resist the temptation to meddle in the affairs of Emilia and Antoñio. The prosperity which allows the spouses to buy each other trinkets also gives them the wherewithal to bribe others to verify suspicions they have. The continued fusion of the classes and the emergence of a new middle class is further evidenced by Luis's decision to give Clara his hacienda in Andalucia to avoid the scandal of a separation. It is an action the upper class of the Siglo de Oro would not have taken and one which the lower class still could not take.

As is the case in any merger, the whole is more than the sum of its parts. The particular orientation of the Spanish middle class at a given time would depend upon the background of those involved and of the situation in which they found themselves. The upper and lower limits of the middle class were becoming increasingly difficult to define as moral standards declined and the earning capacity rose. Ramón and other servants like him were learning to imitate the good and bad habits of their masters and birth was becoming less important.

CHAPTER VII

CONSUELO

Consuelo is the story of a woman who chooses wealth and luxury in preference to true love, and pays the penalty for it. Once again all three socio-economic classes are represented and there is an opportunity to witness mobility from one class to another. Morality, however, is often trampled in the frantic race for wealth and security. López de Ayala saw the need for an eclectic philosophy which would retain the old values while encompassing these new changes. His attempt to inculcate this idea in Consuelo is best understood by reading an excerpt from a foreword to another play:

He procurado es éste mi primer ensayo, y procuraré lo mismo en cuanto salga de mi pobre pluma, desarrollar un pensamiento moral, profundo y consolador. Todos los hombres desean ser grandes y felices: pero todos buscan esta grandeza y esta felicidad en las circunstancias exteriores, es decir, procurándose aplausos, fortuna y elevados puestos. A muy pocos se les ha ocurrido buscarlos donde exclusivamente se encuentran: en el fondo del corazón, venciendo las pasiones y equilibrando los deseos con los medios de satisfacerlos, sin comprometer la tranquilidad.¹

Espina believes the effort was successful, for he calls the play "valiosa" and reports that it ". . .despertó enorme entusiasmo en el público."²

¹Lewis E. Brett, Nineteenth Century Spanish Plays (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1935), p. 643.

²Antonio Espina, Las mejores escenas del teatro español e hispanoamericano (Madrid: Aguilar, 1959), p. 580.

The middle class of El hombre de mundo was content to relax and enjoy the leisure of its newly acquired economic status; the middle class of Consuelo has become obsessed with wealth and is pursuing it as an end and not merely as a means to that end. It has become possible for a man to advance from extreme poverty to a position of great power in a short period of time. The methods employed to achieve this transformation are of much value in understanding the continued development and expansion of the Spanish middle class.

The role of the servants, Rita and Lorenzo, has been reduced to a minimum in this play. Their main activity is to scale down peaks of emotions or to provide comic relief. Many of the trends noticed in El hombre de mundo are also in evidence in this play. Rita is quite proud of her background:

Pero ¿es posible que a mí
tal desgracia me suceda?
¡a mí, nacida en Sevilla,
en la misma Macarena,
criada con tanto mimo
por mi madre! ¿Habrá quien crea
que yo estoy enamorada
de un gallego?

Lorenzo's desire to better himself is very similar to that which Benita related in chapter six:

¡Non [sic] sirvo mais! [sic] Ya non [sic] sirvo
mais [sic] que a Dios y a mi Ritiña!

³Adelardo López de Ayala, Consuelo (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), pp. 74-75.

Heredada del mío padre
teño [sic] una casa bonita: . . .⁴

He is not averse to using dubious means to further this ambition. When he learns that Antonia is near death he tells Rita to ". . . mímala: así/cuando el testamento escriba/te dejará algún recordo."⁵

Rita's answer proves that not all servants are this greedy and that loyalty and a feeling of rapport are often established between the classes:

¡Eh, calla! Lo mismo haría
si fuera mi ama más pobre
que las ratas. ¡Pobricita!. . .
¡De puerta en puerta pidiera
limosna para asistir!⁶

Ayala chooses to let the various actors in Consuelo set forth a comparison of the ideas presented in his foreword. Fulgencio, Ricardo, and Consuelo are convinced that material abundance is a goal to be reached at all costs. Antonia and Fernando believe that honor is more important than wealth which is gained through fraud.

A new kind of personality or "type" is created by Ayala in the person of Fulgencio. He often states that his only desire in life is to help his friends. He appears to be kind, philanthropic, and long-suffering. The shallow nature of his character soon becomes apparent, however, when he is confronted with a situation which could reflect on his reputation:

Mira, mira: eres testigo
del gozo particular

⁴Ibid., p. 150.

⁵Ibid., p. 152.

⁶Ibid., p. 153.

con que ayudo al bienestar
y al deleite de un amigo,
Mas si surgen, incidentes
de drama, y tú te alborotas,
y ella se irrita, y hay notas
desafinadas, no cuentes
con mi apoyo.

Counselo is not fooled by Fulgencio's hypocrisy. When he tries to hide Ricardo's unfaithfulness from her, she reminds Fulgencio of his wife's similar behavior:

Ya basta: y esa paciencia
que con su ejemplo predica,
guárdela usted para sí,
que toda la necesita.⁷

The indictment of Fulgencio would not be complete without hearing in his own words his part in a stock fraud and his subsequent attempt to entice Fernando to participate:

En producción
estaba una rica mina,
cuando de pronto, vecina,
desapareció el filón. . .

Yo supe, como he sabido
mucho de lo que hoy sucede
que el filón estaba adrede
oculto, mas no perdido; . . .

. . . a este chico,
con ansia de hecerlo rico,
le di cuenta del suceso. . .

"En Barcelona hay acciones,
le dije: vé a Barcelona;
buscas, indagas, adquieres
cuantas hallares . . ." ⁹

⁷Ibid., p. 110.

⁸Ibid., p. 163.

⁹Ibid., pp. 31-32.

Fulgencio's condescending manner and pseudo-concern at seeing everyone happy are in reality only guises to protect him from his guilt feelings.

Ricardo is, perhaps, a prototype of the evils of modern businessmen. He eagerly accepted Fulgencio's fraudulent offer and became rich and powerful. The description ". . .toma con gran interés los negocios . . ." is a gross understatement of Ricardo's obsession.¹⁰ His beautiful wife's longing to know him and have him love her deeply is unsatisfied:

Ricardo en su pecho
algo para sí reserva:
algún rincón donde vive
solo, donde no penetra
mi ternura, donde guarda
su indómita independencia.¹¹

The ruthless use of others is not confined to business dealings, for he strongly implies that an illicit affair with a popular singer is to be the first of many. The more financial success he enjoys, the more callous his attitude toward others becomes. He is completely impervious, "Si tengo que resolver/asuntos de gran urgencia;/¿he de disculpar mi ausencia/con que llora mi mujer?"¹² to the impassioned pleas of Consuelo.

Consuelo at first is the perfect mate for Ricardo as she herself admits:

Es verdad: le dí mi mano
sin amarle. Su soberbia
posición, su tren, su lujo
resucitaron las muertas
memorias de mi colegio:

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 116

¹¹ Ibid., p. 90

¹² Ibid., p. 188.

recordé mis opulentas
amigas; puse la mira
en igualarme con ellas.
Es vano continuamente
me acusaba mi conciencia,
recordando la ternura
de Fernando y mis promesas.¹³

Her pitiless rejection of Fernando and her indifference to Antonia's intercession on his behalf give her little cause to expect compassion from Ricardo. If Consuelo typifies the middle-class woman of this era, then a grim paradox is evident in Rita's remark that Consuelo ". . .se desmayó de pena/cuando se murió el canario."¹⁴ Her first thought when she discovers the unfaithful conduct of Ricardo is to retaliate in kind and is only dissuaded by the stigma of scandal. It is difficult to believe it is love rather than pride that causes her to beg Ricardo not to go to Paris. Fernando's final accusation does not seem overly harsh.

¿De qué lloras y te espantas?
¿Qué te importa que jamás
Logres amor? Vivirás
como tantas, como tantas
cerca de de ostentación
alma muerte, vida loca,
con la sonrisa en la boca
y el hielo en el corazón.¹⁵

Antonia's experience has led her to see the dangers of greed and ambition and the worth of patience, loyalty and empathy. She has been a widow since Consuelo was an infant because of her husband's desire to climb socially:

¹³Ibid., pp. 88-89.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 189-190.

De ese modo
 tu padre infeliz me hablaba.
 Quiero ascender, me decía;
 quiero ceñirme la faja
 de general, y moverme
 en una esfera más alta.¹⁶

Although she raised and educated Consuelo by making sacrifices, she is still able to reject the appeal of materialism that lures her daughter. She does not need a country home for she can enjoy the same pleasure in the public parks of Madrid; she would rather hear Consuelo play the piano than go to the opera in Italy; she has no desire to own expensive paintings when they are readily available in the museums of the city. Antonia continues to provide the only voice of calmness and reason for Consuelo even though Consuelo has hurt her deeply. The sage counsel that Antonia imparts is always tempered with diplomacy as it is when she remarks:

Di, ¿no te empalagan esos
 recién casados que, en fuerza
 de mimarse tanto, dan
 al matrimonio apariencia
 de unión ilícita. Halagos,
 delirios en la primera
 temporada; luego hastío
 y frialdad, que degeneran
 en recíprocas traiciones
 y en cínica indiferencia.¹⁷

It is Antonia who prevents Fernando from committing a crime of vengeance against Consuelo and guides him back to the paths of virtue. She dies knowing she has failed to instill honesty, love, and honor in Consuelo, but that Fernando will continue to make them a part of his life.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 55

¹⁷Ibid., p. 86.

Fernando has learned these virtues in the home of Antonia where he lived as a youth after the death of his family. They are the beacons which guide him in combining success with humility and in separating the mercenary from the generous.

A more suitable subject than Fernando for the study of class mobility would be difficult to find. His first recollections are of dire poverty:

Cierto: la escasa
intercadente pensión
di mi tío. Sin más padre
ni más sostén que mi honrado
corazón, solo enlutado
por la muerte de mi madre. . .¹⁸

Antonia remembers him as ". . .aquel mísero escolar. . ." and he adds that in ". . .libros prestados aprendí las matemáticas."¹⁹

In time, however, he is able to sell some plans to a construction firm and earn a fixed salary for three years. His fear of the future and his remembrance of the bad luck of the past are expressed in this remark to Antonia:

No sabe usted cuan intenso
es mi terror cuando pienso
que puede llegar un día
sí de esta España infelice [sic]
Dios no tiene compasión
que, estéril mi profesión,
termine el contrato que hice,
y a encontrar otro no acierte,
y mi familia se vea
pobre, abatida. . .Esta idea
me aterra más que la muerte.²⁰

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 19

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 17-21

²⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

As Antonia gently reminds him that it is God's plan that man be dependent upon Him for daily bread, she makes an astute observation. She believes the society of that day is praying for all the bread it can eat for the rest of its life at one time.

Girded with this faith in God and in himself, he is able to discern the inherent immorality of an act in spite of the glitter attached to it. Fulgencio's pragmatic idea is, "Si en aquello hubo maldad, ¿tú la hiciste? Estaba hecha." Fernando is able to answer with "El que calla y se aprovecha, ya tiene complicidad."²¹

As Fulgencio and Ricardo advance financially through their deceit, Fernando does so through honesty and hard work:

¿Sabe usted
que el tal Fernando se eleva? . . .
Fué a Londres por material
para su línea, y empieza
a tratar ingleses. Luce
porque la tiene, su ciencia;
y como es tan formalote,
y sabe el inglés, y piensa
seriamente, se ganó
la confianza completa. . .²²

Fernando's path is by no means an easy one as the corrupt appear to prosper. His one weakness is Consuelo who entices him into aiding the vices of Ricardo and Fulgencio. As has previously been noted, however, he is rescued and given new incentive by Antonia. His example will stand as a guide to the middle class and will prove that wealth does not always leave one in the position of Fulgencio to whom ". . . el remordimiento no exista."²³

²¹Ibid., p. 33

²²Ibid., p. 94

²³Ibid., p. 137

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the Spain of el Cid there were only two classes. The upper class was the possessor of honesty, cultured behavior, honor, and all other good qualities. The only virtue expected of the lower class was loyalty. It was perhaps el Cid himself who began the merging of the two classes by his compassion for the lowest of the lower class--the leper.

This humanization of the upper class coupled with the struggle of the townspeople of Fuenteovejuna for justice and honor were further steps in the establishment of a new type of individual. Collectively these individuals formed a middle class which was neither upper nor lower class but which borrowed its habits and attitudes from both groups.

Fortified with the knowledge that no one including the king himself had the right to disgrace them unjustly, many of the lower class gained the self-respect necessary to make political and economic demands on their government.

When the technological revolution and the urban trend made their belated entry into Spain creating new types of jobs, it was doubtless this new kind of man who filled those jobs. Birth alone no longer awed these people who often had wealth of their own and the leisure hours in which to spend it. This leisure time plus the lack

of fully developed social graces often led to interesting and humorous situations and gave the writers of that day much material for their novels and dramas.

The ability to make money presented complex moral dilemmas for the middle-class men. Many were able to ignore their conscience for the chance to amass fraudulent fortunes. Peers makes this clear in his statement:

Spain might be idealistic in one way, but those who wished to better themselves recognized that the achievement of their ideal depended upon the acquisition of material wealth.¹

Others, however, attempted to forge a new idealism combining the old virtues with the new goals.

In a study of this type where such terms as upper class, middle class, and lower class are used, generalizations are the rule. It must be remembered, however, that in every age and in all classes there have been extremes and exceptions. Underhill explains that "The dramatists elevated or lowered their styles according to the rank and sentiment of their characters."² El Comendador is ample evidence that not every knight was of the caliber of el Cid. Ricardo and Fernando were both representatives of the middle class, but were poles apart in their conduct. The characters described in this investigation were the pioneers of the middle class; the masses are still following the examples they set down.

¹Allison E. Peers, Spanish Golden Age Poetry and Drama (Liverpool: Institute of Hispanic Studies, 1946), p. 114.

²John G. Underhill, Four Plays by Lope De Vega (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 367.

The latent development of the Spanish middle class can be attributed to at least two major causes, the influence of the Catholic Church and a perverted sense of honor. The lower class soon learned that the path to power was much easier through the Church than through the Government. "The power of the Church," says Underhill, "came itself to be invoked against kings and ministers of kings."³ According to Goldston, much of the support given to the liberals by the lower class during the Spanish Civil War was due to the fact that, "Over the years the workers and peasants began to feel that the Church always supported the wealthy and neglected the poor."⁴ These poor were always led to believe that the old ways were the best. The poet José María Pemán used this same type of emotional appeal at the height of the Civil War when he said:

Twenty centuries of Christian civilization are at our backs;
we fight for love and honor, for the paintings of Velásquez,
for the comedies of Lope, for Don Quixote and El Escorial!⁵

Although the Golden Age concept that honor was only for the nobles had been altered somewhat, the demands it placed on all Spaniards were not conducive to class harmony. Pride made it nearly impossible to accept

³Ibid., p. 378.

⁴Robert Goldston, The Civil War in Spain (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company Inc., 1966), p. 27.

⁵Ibid., pp. 110-111.

forgiveness or confess poverty or failure even to one's most intimate friend. The results of these attitudes are apparent in Peer's comments:

Since work was to be avoided, there were necessarily many who had to live by their wits and keep up the appearance of wealth, whatever their actual poverty.

Moreover, respect for personal dignity was in fact egocentric, and each man defended his own rights without caring greatly for those of his neighbour. . . . Dishonour consisted not in committing, but in receiving an injury.

If by this means they [the oppressed] achieved wealth and status they were more than willing to live as nobles, ignoring the poor.⁶

An interesting combination of these two impediments to middle-class growth is evident in this statement of Underhill:

Since honor bound man to the defense of God and His Church, so the Church, in a spirit of reciprocity wholly comprehensible, permitted honor certain infractions of its rules.⁷

The conservatives offered little hope of economic improvement to the lower class. The liberals were able to convince the people that a better Spain would be possible only through the efforts of each citizen to achieve his fullest potential. If such efforts were to be successful some important questions needed to be answered:

Could her [Spain's] semi-literate masses be educated to rule themselves? Could her proud temperament lend itself to the arts of compromise and persuasion in place of fanatical fervor? Many middle-class Spaniards believed it possible.⁸

⁶Pears, op. cit., pp. 107-118.

⁷Underhill, op. cit., p. 363.

⁸Goldston, op. cit., p. 23.

The victory of Franco prevented any quick answers. Self-rule was not to be, but the evolutionary process of middle-class emergence was not arrested.

Eduardo Criado has written a highly informative play which demonstrates the extent to which this evolutionary trend had gone by the early nineteen sixties. Quando las nubes cambian de nariz deals with the problems of a contemporary middle-class family in Barcelona. The evidence of a dramatic change in the speech, habits, and goals of the Spanish middle class since the close of the Civil War will be witnessed.

The protagonist, Juan, is a dynamic businessman of forty-two who is more of an international type than a Spanish one. After returning from an extended business trip in France, he immediately goes to the phone for a long conversation with his partner instead of talking to his family. At the breakfast table he barely speaks to his wife while gulping down a cup of coffee and reading the newspaper.

The second act has an expressionistic tone and takes place while Juan is in a coma brought on from overwork. Juan is allowed to view the activities of the people of earth as the representative of this dream world, Cristóbal, points them out:

JUAN.--(Ríe.) Y ese muchacho despeinado, ¿por qué sella todos los papeles que caen en sus manos? Le van a saltar las gafas. . .

CRISTÓBAL.--Pone una estampilla roja que dice: "Urgente". . . "Urgente". . . "Urgente". . .

JUAN.--(Ríe a gusto, muy a gusto.) Y aquellos, y esos. Todos corren como locos. ¡Ja, ja, ja! ¡Qué gracia! Corren, corren. . . ¡Ja, ja, ja! (Se desternilla de risa.) Ese obrero, ¡por qué' . . . ?

CRISTÓBAL.--(sin mirar, fijando atentamente su vista en Juan)
Su turno empieza a las ocho.⁹

Criado also uses the person of Cristóbal to philosophize about what he considers one of the greatest sins of our generation--haste:

CRISTÓBAL.--Sí. . ., la prisa (Muy lento y cariñoso, como si reprendiera a un niño por haber roto un juguete.) Estáis viviendo una época interesantísima, Juan, como ninguna generación la ha vivido en la historia. La época de la prisa. Vivís esclavos de ella. Desde niños competís en rapidez con vuestros dientes, con vuestra estatura, con vuestros juegos, con vuestros estudios. Vivís a ritmo de cronómetro. Tomáis pildoras para activar vuestro trabajo y gotas para descansar más en menos tiempo. Para poder correr, lo exigís todo preparado. Habitáis casas prefabricadas, vestís trajes prehilvanados y coméis alimentos premasticados. Queréis correr más que el cerebro, que el sonido, que el calor. Tenéis prisa para todo. Para edificar y para destruir. Para reír y para llorar. Para nacer. . ., para vivir. . ., para morir. (Pausa. Lento.) Vuestra prisa es ya más que prisa, Juan; es ansiedad, es angustia porque habéis perdido. . .la esperanza.¹⁰

Juan's haste and interest in his business have given rise to the equally bad sin of neglect. He has minimized the problems of his son and daughter giving them nowhere to turn. He has spurned his father-in-law's attempt at friendship and given his wife little understanding or time. Juan is finally able to see the course his life is taking through a combination of retrospection and introspection and to remedy the situation as the play culminates.

An almost complete reversal of the problem is noted in El hombre de mundo is presented in this play. It is not the over abundance of

⁹Elizabeth Keesee, Gregory G. Lagrone and Patricia o'connor, Leer, hablar y escribir (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1963) p. 50.

¹⁰Ibid.

leisure, but the near absence of it which results in the misunderstandings of Juan.

The fact that this play could have been written in any one of dozens of modern countries is ample proof of the total emergence of at least one segment of the Spanish middle class. The total emergence of the remainder of that middle class awaits only a renewed and vigorous ascension on their part.

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