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**THE GRACIOSO IN THE THEATER OF FRANCISCO DE
ROJAS ZORRILLA: AN APPROACH TO THE
MANIFESTATION OF CARNIVALESQUE HUMOR IN SIGLO
DE ORO THEATER**

by

MARÍA CONKLIN

DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

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DEDICATION

First I would like to give a special thanks to my director Professor Mary B. Quinn who was instrumental throughout this long and arduous process. Thank you to those who formed part of my committee, Professors Rivera, Cardenas and Colahan. I also want to thank my parents, Tomás and Luz who have always been there for me no matter what and have encouraged me to follow through and complete this goal. To my grandma, my Illa, who has always provided me with the self-confidence and belief that I can achieve anything. To my mother-in-law Susan for her time and dedication that has made it possible for me to complete my studies. To my sisters, Lituca and Natalia for their presence in my life. To my husband Bobby, whose love and support has been the key to my success, I love you. To my two 'hiccups' I had along the way, Tomás and Alfredo, my sons who have been my motivating force to finish this project. I want to thank Bob, Saul, Laura, Eric, Luz Maria, Loli, Molly, Grandpa Bob and Grandma Dolly, for their interest and support. And last but not least I want to thank my grandfather Alfredo Rodríguez who is not only the most outstanding scholar I have ever met but the best Grandpa in the world. I thank you for instilling in me your passion of literature and because of it I dedicate this work to you.

The *Gracioso* in the Theater of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla: An Approach to the Manifestation of Carnavalesque Humor in *siglo de oro* Theater.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the humor employed by the stock comic figure, known as the *gracioso*, in the plays of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla, a major playwright of Early Modern Spanish Theater. The self-mocking nature of the humor employed by that theater's indispensable *gracioso*, with its subsequent prioritization of laughter, ties the comic figure to the then surviving medieval tradition of the popular carnivalesque. This tie lends the popular stock comic figure's humorous output an overall popular/carnavalesque identity that gives expression to a popular sub-culture. As a representative of the popular sub-culture, the stock comic figure's comical contribution, the laughter it produces, may be seen as a manner of confronting the hegemonic establishment and the societal values identified with the dominant echelons of society.

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All the acts of the drama of world history were performed before a chorus of the laughing people. Without hearing this chorus we cannot understand the drama as a whole. (Bakhtin 474)

Between the two poles of royal procession and carnival procession stands public theater. Theater must bow in the direction of the power structure because that authority legitimizes its role and existence. . . . Yet theater bows equally toward popular, carnival culture . . . because it includes elements of festival, imitation, representation, role-playing, costume, raucous language, popular sentiment. . . . (Blue, *Spanish Comedies* 19-20)

Introduction

One thing seems evident when considering theatrical presentations as public spectacles during the Golden Age of Spanish letters: ¹ their decided favoring of the comical in persistently seeking the laughter of their audiences. This is evidenced by the fact that the theatrical presentation seems to have been organized, in all its components, with the conscious goal of projecting a predominant hilarity within a popular ambience.² To begin with, the informative *loa*,

¹ For a detailed account of Spain's Baroque theater as festive spectacle, see, for example, Díez-Borque's *Teatro y fiesta en el barroco*.

² The *corral*, with its *patio* for *mosqueteros* and its *cazuela* for women, was patently organized to accommodate common folk. See, for example, Aubrun 56, Jose Antonio Maravall 18, Reichenberger 304-305 and Díez Borque *Sociología* 356-57. In this regard, note especially Cohen's Marxist-based conclusion that "although the plays attracted virtually all urban social

which traditionally preceded the first performance of the play, was itself intended to make the audience laugh.³ Because of its comical intent, it is not surprising that the *loa* was generally recited by the *gracioso* of the *comedia*. According to Flecniakoska, "...la loa es preciso subrayar desde ahora que es un juego cómico de comicidad tan varia como matizada, lo que explica que, generalmente, se confiaba su recitación al gracioso o a un especialista del entremés" (67). The *loa* was soon replaced after that first performance by literary elements of an equally or even greater comical potential. Aubrun indicates:

Cuando una loa explicativa es inútil—por ejemplo en Madrid, en las obras ya conocidas—el tono es el que inicia la interpretación. Es un ‘romance’ cantado a dos o tres voces, que invita al público a que entre en el juego escénico, compenetrándose con los ‘pastores’ o los ‘caballeros’ que van a aparecer en la escena. Pero con el tiempo,

strata, the lower classes probably dominated the audience numerically. The public theater accordingly provided fertile ground for the fusions of popular and classical materials that distinguishes English and Spanish dramas" (19).

³ Even a cursory examination of the *loas* published in Cotarelo y Mori's collection reveals their predominantly comical intent. In a general judgment of the *loa*, this knowledgeable scholar of *siglo de oro* theater indicates, referring specifically to those of Rojas Villandrando, that "en cambio, sólo elogios merecen las demás por lo gracioso e interesante del asunto y su buen desarrollo, la dulce y rápida versificación y el lenguaje y estilo jocosos, irónicos, satíricos y siempre agradables y entretenidos" (*Colección* xxi).

el público se achabacana y se degrada; entonces esa obra liminar desciende a su más bajo nivel: es *la jácara*, dirigida a los ‘jaques’ termino *laudatorio* con el que se designa a los bravucones, a los vociferadores, que ocupan el patio (21)⁴

Between the play’s first and second acts an *entremés*, a comical theatrical subgenre replete with unequivocal echoes of carnivalesque humor,⁵ was normatively performed whether the plot development was tragic or comical.⁶ This process of comical interpolation was continued between the second and third acts of the play being performed when a *baile* was usually staged.⁷ The *baile* also sought the laughter of the audience. Quijano indicates, that “no pretendo aquí agotar el tema . . . sino sólo subrayar cómo la risa, desde la inteligente de los aposentos y gradas hasta la ruidosa carcajada mosqueteril, era el elemento clave del éxito, sobre todo entre el pueblo llano. De aquí que el baile la considerase como una de sus principales

⁴ Aubrun’s suggestion that a progressive moral degeneration of *comedia* audiences explains the eventual settling on a *jácara* to introduce the play is possible, but a simpler explanation would be the popular audience’s demand for a more popular comical introduction, which the *jácara*, with its humorous projection of society’s underclass (*hampa*), readily provides.

⁵ See Asensio 20. Burke describes the term carnivalesque as follows, “outside the current carnival season, there were festivals that emphasized the themes of renewal, or eating, or sex, or violence, or reversal, and so might be described as carnivalesque” (194).

⁶ Regarding the just designation of Spain’s *siglo de oro* theater as *tragicomedia*, which to some degree speaks to its indispensable comical content, see, for example, Aubrun 20.

⁷ The lyrics of these *bailes*, as judged in Cotarelo y Mori’s clearly suggest their comical intent. The definition of the *baile* that Cotarelo y Mori takes from Quiñones Benavente, the prolific creator of *bailes*, ‘*entremeses cantados*,’ leaves little doubt in this regard.

finalidades” (328).⁸ Often another *entremés*, whose comical/carnavalesque content has been underscored, was performed in place of a *baile*.

Finally, upon the play’s conclusion, again regardless of whether it ended on a tragic or comic note, a very carnivalesque *mojiganga* was customarily offered the public before its departure. This spectacle’s dictionary definition, “a public feast with masks, a minor dramatic humorous genre,” speaks for its primarily comical intent. Cotarelo y Mori touches on the comical costumes worn during the performance by mentioning the following: “porque consistiendo la mojiganga en los disfraces ridículos o graciosos de los personajes” (*Colección ccxciii*).⁹

⁸ See also Cohen 178.

⁹ For the mask as an element of traditional carnivalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 39. For an overview of all the comical interpolations listed, see, for example, Díez-Borque, *Sociedad* 273-97; and Rey Hazas 7-19. The latter’s summary comment is worth noting: “pero no es menos cierto, por razones obvias, que las piezas de teatro breve sólo encarnaban una de las dos caras de la moneda teatral áurea, la más cómica, risible y grotesca, la más carnavalesca, en fin” (12). A sociological datum, adding to the *siglo de oro* theatrical spectacle’s carnivalesque ambience, is that underscored by Díez-Borque as a ‘costumbre hispánica’ of the public’s uninterrupted eating and drinking throughout the dramatic performance: “a no ser que otorguemos un valor significativo a esa costumbre hispana del espectador de teatro del XVII de estar comiendo y bebiendo, continuamente, a lo largo de la representación, hasta el punto de otorgar al alojero un papel decisivo en la supervivencia de la representación teatral” (*Teatro y fiesta* 30). This custom, not merely a Spanish one, is found, as well, in English Elizabethan Theater. See, for example, Bryson 75.

The theatrical spectacle's centerpiece play added significantly to the humorous ambience of the event. This was accomplished via the *gracioso*, the play's most significant comical element. A *gracioso* is invariably present regardless of the comic or tragic character of the *comedia* being performed.¹⁰ The bibliography of *gracioso* studies is extensive but his definition remains elusive as Poesse points out:

The *gracioso* was, perhaps, the most fascinating character of the *comedia*. He is more complex and paradoxical than the *galan*, *dama*, or *viejo* (father) and interests for what he says as well as what he does. It is not easy to define a 'gracioso,' who could range from a merely comic figure in a minor part to the full-fledged character . . . who played an important and lengthy comic role. (110)

It is clear, however, that the *gracioso*'s principal and indisputable function, as his name suggests, was to move the audience to laughter. The indispensable participation of a *gracioso* in the *comedia*,¹¹ often designated as such in the *dramatis personae*, is perhaps best stated by Wilson-Moir who declares that "the basic characteristics of the Spanish *comedia* form (three acts and a well-developed polymetric system) and the custom of the play's having, whether it be comedy,

¹⁰ Rey Hazas in regards to the *gracioso*'s role in the *comedia* states the following: "en verdad que la *comedia* incluía un personaje central, el *gracioso* o figura del donaire, que servía de puente entre lo más alto y lo más bajo, entre la nobleza y el pueblo, entre los ideales y su sátira" (12). See also Jones 330-31.

¹¹ The Spanish use of the word *comedia* to designate all plays, probably popular in its origins, may well reflect its prioritization of the comical element. For an explanation of the phenomenon, which also occurs in French, see Newels 55.

tragedy or tragi-comedy, at least one full-fledged *gracioso* character in it” (43).¹² The invariable presence of a *gracioso* in a *comedia*, did not gainsay the presence of other fundamentally comical figures, which I will not directly deal with in this dissertation.¹³

¹² Cohen, too, agrees on the defining character of the *gracioso* in the *comedia* and states that “a number of the defining features of the Spanish stage already discussed—among them the *gracioso*, dramatists’ collaboration, actor-sharers, and clerical attacks on the theater—date either from the very end of the sixteenth century or from the seventeenth century itself” (267).

¹³ Particularly significant in this regard, multiplying the avenues for injecting laughter into the play, is the very frequent presence of a corresponding female comic figure, a *graciosa*, who is typically a maid. See, in this regard *La criada en el teatro español del Siglo de Oro*. The full and detailed reading of Rojas Zorrilla, one seventeenth-century Spanish playwright, suggests, however, that, if he is typical in this regard, almost half of all *siglo de oro comedias* contained an accompanying *graciosa*. Unlike the *gracioso*, the *graciosa* is never designated as such in the *dramatis personae*, suggesting that the authors, or at least the editors, did not consider this comical feminine figure as indispensable to the *comedia* as the *gracioso*. Only when particularly convenient to my presentation will I cite from the dialogue of other laughter-provoking characters. The indispensable *gracioso* and the frequently appearing *graciosa* have the same primary function, to wit, adding laughter to the play. This has prompted criticism to deal with the *graciosa* simply as a feminine *gracioso*. Although I believe that the *graciosa* merits a separate study as spokesperson for a feminine slant on the comical, I will, for the purposes of this study, which focuses exclusively on their laughter-eliciting primary function, follow the critical tradition of indifferently utilizing one or the other to highlight a specific comical content.

That Spanish *siglo de oro* theater should offer such a high level of comicality in its public projection is due in part to the more fully popular character of its Madrid audiences.¹⁴ The popular character of these was ostensibly greater, according to Cohen, than that found in English theater of that period. He mentions that “the greater weight of the English bourgeoisie helps account . . . for the unusual psychological complexity of the protagonists in Shakespearean romantic comedy” (194-95). A socio-demographic explanation for this phenomenon may lie in the difference between Madrid and London or Paris, the centers of the other two great theaters of that period. The latter were millennial hubs of commerce with large middle-classes.¹⁵ Whereas Madrid, which was designated Spain’s capital only in 1561, would not have had a comparable middle class in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.¹⁶

Spain’s public theatrical spectacle would have thus sought to satisfy a popular taste, especially drawn to laughter rather than to serious philosophical or aesthetic appreciation. As Bristol states in regards to laughter, it is “fundamentally incompatible with philosophical

¹⁴ For the social, public nature of laughter, see, for example, Maravall, citing Henri Bergson 150.

¹⁵ With respect to Shakespeare’s London, Dover Wilson indicates that “London is a large, excellent and mighty city of business, and the most important in the whole kingdom; . . . the river is most useful and convenient for this purpose, considering that ships from France, from Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Hamburg and other kingdoms, come almost up to the city to which they convey goods and receive and take away others in exchange” (115-116).

¹⁶ London and Paris were, at this time, much larger cities than Madrid. Both, unlike Madrid, were situated on navigable waterways (Thames and Seine) and had been centers of commerce for a thousand years. With respect to Madrid at that time, Cohen indicates that, “Spain of course scarcely had a middle class of any kind” (139).

statements, this incompatibility deriving from the connection laughter has with what is socially and intellectually low and commonplace, and from the privileged status that jesting provides for logical contradiction and equivocation” (125-26). In this sense, Lope de Vega’s *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, probably the most significant theatrical poetics of the period despite its ironic presentation,¹⁷ openly underscores the artistic impositions upon the playwright of a theater-going public characterized as *vulgo*.¹⁸

Under these circumstances, it is reasonable to associate the exceptional comic characteristics of the Spanish theatrical spectacle, its patent prioritization of laughter, with the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor. As pointed out by Bakhtin, the expressive hallmark of the carnivalesque *weltanschauung*, the popular and extra-official manner of perceiving reality, is a self-mocking and diverting laughter. He states:

¹⁷ For the controversial level of irony involved in Lope de Vega’s defense of the *comedia nueva*, See Lope de Vega’s *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* (53-60). Cohen would explain Lope’s equivocal irony by indicating, that “Renaissance dramatic theory was generally incapable of grasping the nature or significance of Renaissance dramatic practice in these two countries” (406). For a bibliography of that controversy, see, for example, García Valdés 19-20. For the work’s impact on the literary polemics of its day, see Entrambasaguas.

¹⁸ Maravall’s perspective on *siglo de oro* theater in *Teatro y literatura en la sociedad barroca* focuses on the main plots and settings of the plays, thus concluding that that theater, as a whole, is a propaganda tool for hegemonic ideals. He fails, I believe, to take this popular character of that theater into account, thus down-playing the social impact of its omnipresent comical dimension.

Let us say a few initial words about the complex nature of carnival laughter. It is, first of all, a festive laughter. Therefore it is not an individual reaction to some isolated 'comic' event. Carnival laughter is the laughter of all the people. Second, it is universal in scope; it is directed at all and everyone, including the carnival's participants. The entire world is seen in its droll aspect, in its gay relativity. Third, this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives. Such is the laughter of carnival. Let us enlarge upon the second important trait of the people's festive laughter: that it is also directed at those who laugh. The people do not exclude themselves from the wholeness of the world. They, too, are incomplete, they also die and are revived and renewed. This is one of the essential differences of the people's festive laughter from the pure satire of modern times. The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it. The wholeness of the world's comic aspect is destroyed, and that which appears comic becomes a private reaction. The people's ambivalent laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it. (11)¹⁹

When the expression popular/carnavalesque humor is used in this study, it will be based on Bakhtin's definition as quoted above.

¹⁹ For further comments on carnivalesque laughter see Bakhtin 6, 8-9, 20-21, 24-28, 38, 66, 88, 90-91, 142, 149, 415. For an excellent examination of carnivalesque laughter as expressive of a popular 'philosophy,' see Bristol 125-39.

Bakhtin's study, based on a narrative Rabelasian work, focused primarily, in its references to Spanish literature, upon the presence of carnival humor in *Don Quijote*.²⁰ But all that I have underscored with respect to the theatrical spectacle of Spain's *siglo de oro* seems to suggest that it, as a whole, is what best reflects that particular humor's presence in the literature of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain. This is due to its decisive prioritization of that laughter that is the principal and indispensable manifestation of the carnivalesque world view. Two other factors reinforce this impression: its theatrical nature in itself, the literary genre logically preferred for the public expression of the jocund carnivalesque spirit in societies characterized by illiteracy,²¹ and its fundamentally popular basis, in great part determined by the character of the attendant public at the *corrales* of Madrid. The *siglo de oro* theatrical spectacle may even be medieval carnivalesque humor's most authentic, direct and durable projection in post-medieval Europe.²²

²⁰ Bakhtin 20, 22-23, 54-66, 72, 104, 201, 209, 275, 434.

²¹ Although he studies, in Rabelais, a narrative work, Bakhtin constantly refers to the theater as the most appropriate literary vehicle for popular/carnivalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 7, 15, 102, 155, 167, 182, 255, 257, 260, 264-65. See also Burke's comment on carnival being seen "as a huge play in which the main streets and squares became stages, the city became a theater without walls and its inhabitants, the actors and spectators, observing the scene from their balconies" (182).

²² The presence of significant popular/carnivalesque elements in the picaresque literature of the Spanish Baroque, especially in *Guzmán de Alfarache* and *El buscón*, is well documented. See, for example, Cros.

A possible explanation of the significant irruption of popular/medieval carnivalesque humor in Spain's baroque theater can be made via the following suggestive parallel.²³ Counterreformation Spain's official stress on the devaluation of this life and world intensified the anguish proper to living in it rather than in the promised after-life. This replicated the anguished ambience of the medieval, in which carnival culture, popular and comical, developed as a life-cushioning escape valve.²⁴ As Bakhtin indicates, "and yet, the scope and importance of this culture were immense in the Renaissance and the Middle Ages. A boundless world of humorous forms and manifestations opposed the official and serious tone of medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture" (4). The official position and the dominant philosophy of the Spanish Baroque coincides to a great extent with those that predominated during the Middle Ages. As Cohen affirms:

By about 1620, Spanish religion had taken a path that corresponded to the general direction of the country. The moral code narrowed, emphasizing sexual conduct and its elaborate taboos; the chivalric ideal compatible with Christian piety in the sixteenth century, now formed the antithesis to religious life; and that life took on

²³ For literary manifestations of the popular/carnivalesque *weltanschauung* in the European sixteenth centuries and seventeenth centuries, see Bakhtin 11, 14, 18, 72, 136.

²⁴ Referring to carnival, Burke indicates that "the world turned upside down was regularly reinacted. Why did this upper classes permit this? It looks as if they were aware that the society they lived in, with all its inequalities of wealth, status and power, could not survive without a safety-valve, a means for the subordinates to purge their resentments and to compensate for their frustrations" (201).

a gloomy cast, emphasizing death and damnation while rejecting the world and its pleasures. (380)

It would not be shocking to find, then, that, like in the Medieval, there should arise in the Baroque a similar popular/carnavalesque vital reaction, possibly restored from elements and attitudes still very much alive in the customs and traditions of the people. The latter would have been capable, through the medium of laughter, both degrading and regenerative,²⁵ of effecting the temporary evasion of the depressing and anguish-promoting official line. In this regard, Robert Jammes states:

la poesía burlesca en general se funda sobre un conjunto de valores opuestos a los valores dominantes: en una sociedad oficialmente dominada por una ideología en la que predominan lo espiritual, lo austero, el desprecio de los placeres de la vida, la exaltación de la penitencia, y una cantidad de prohibiciones (de orden sexual principal- mente) es normal que estos ‘antivalores’ en que estriba todo lo burlesco se constituyan en sistema materialista (en el sentido más elemental de la palabra). En esta actitud materialista se fundan los temas habituales de la literatura burlesca: elogio de la comida, del vino, del amor carnal, del sueño, de la prudencia opuesta al heroísmo, del egoísmo, etc. Veo que, a propósito de Rabelais, aparecen más o menos las mismas ideas en el conocido libro de Bakhtine... La risa expresa esa rebelión de lo bajo, lo corporal, lo material contra el espiritualismo dominante: es el triunfo de Sancho Panza. (8)²⁶

²⁵ For the ambivalent quality of carnivalesque laughter, see, for example, Bakhtin 21, 24-28, 149, 415.

Or, as Wardropper has put it, in more concrete sociological terms:

La monarquía, la estructura de clases, la Inquisición, los estatutos racistas de limpieza de sangre y otras instituciones sociales eran, en un último análisis, instrumentos políticos concebidos para hacer uniforme y unánime la sociedad. Y así era, con raras excepciones, la sociedad española, al menos en sus manifestaciones públicas. Pero los seres humanos no están cortados todos por el mismo patrón. Así, si uno tenía una abuela de ascendencia judía, tenía que ocultar el hecho a la sociedad; si alguien era hijo ilegítimo, no podía comentarse este detalle . . . si alguien tenía sus dudas acerca de la inmortalidad del alma, era más prudente no expresarlas ni siquiera a un pariente o a un amigo íntimo. La necesidad de una intimidad tan absoluta debió someter a los individuos a una severa tensión psíquica. Esta vida interior mental en conflicto con la sociedad tuvo que adoptar la improductiva forma del ensueño: se soñaba en un mundo diferente . . . en el que los pensamientos íntimos prohibidos pudieran exteriorizarse. El fantaseo tenía que ser saturnal, orgiástico, de ‘mundo al revés,’

²⁶ See also Bristol who states that “laughter is a saving response because it places everything in a down-to-earth perspective. It offers a capacity to revitalize fundamental impulses of love and belief by dissolving the authoritative claims of temporal institutions such as church and state . . . Laughter is, additionally, an antidote to fear and intimidation” (133). For the long struggle between the dominant culture of the Counter-Reformation Spanish Baroque, fundamentally expressed via a life-denying, other-world spirituality, and the theatrical spectacle of that age, comically and vitally worldly, see, for example, Aubrun 44-45.

del mismísimo mundo de la comedia. Una importante función de la comedia del Siglo de Oro sería—sugiero—ésta: proporcionar una salida legítima a pensamientos y aspiraciones ilegítimos. (232)²⁷

The prioritized prominence of the comical in the public theatrical spectacle of *siglo de oro* Spain appears to reflect a relevant presence of the popular, medieval carnivalesque in its development and projection. A preliminary study is required in order to verify, with some measure of analytical concreteness, both the extraordinary comical density that appears to jump out at us and the latter's formal and thematic ties to popular/ carnivalesque humor. In the process of documenting, via examples, that comical density, many laughter-provoking incidents cited may not be directly linked to medieval carnivalesque humor. There is, of course, a good reason, already clarified by Bakhtin, why those links may be blurred and sometimes imperceptible. It is the fact that what survives of that medieval tradition in post-medieval times, the Renaissance and the Baroque, presents itself already mixed with other forms of comicality. Nevertheless, an extraordinary prominence of the humorous, which a dense comicality would indicate, would always suggest a prioritization of laughter, the key projection of popular/carnivalesque philosophy.²⁸

I have underscored the comical intent and carnivalesque character of the interpolated and supplementary components of *siglo de oro* Spain's theatrical spectacle: the *loa* (or *romance/jácara*), the *entremés*, the *baile* (or second *entremés*) and the *mojiganga*. But any sense of the comical density and carnivalesque flavor of that spectacle in its totality must also focus on

²⁸ As Blue indicates in regard to laughter, that “perhaps the most dangerous element common to carnival and distinct from official order is laughter” (*The Prince* 90).

its centerpiece, the *comedia*. This is so because the play occupies the greater part by far of that spectacle. It is also recognized, artistically, as superior to its supplementary additions and interpolations. But the *comedia* was not always primarily comical or decidedly carnivalesque, which differentiated it from its invariably comical and carnivalesque supplementary additions and interpolations. The *comedia*, thus, represents the only variable component, with respect to comical density and carnivalesque content, of the theatrical spectacle. Given the *comedia*'s indicated central importance, a study of its comical density and carnivalesque content is necessary in order to offer a meaningful perception of these as projected in the theatrical spectacle as a whole.

In this sense, it is only logical that a study of the *comedia* would require focusing on the comical contribution of the centerpiece play's *gracioso*, who normally monopolizes humor in the *comedia*.²⁹ Such a study would involve nothing less than the analysis of an inordinate number of *siglo de oro comedias*. This is due to the fact that there are hardly any of the thousands written that fail to boast at least one *gracioso*.³⁰ As Ley indicates, "aun en las obras—la minoría—que no tienen un gracioso claro y definido hay figuras afines a él" (145). It is a scholarly task requiring the dedication of an entire lifetime and well beyond the limited goals of a doctoral dissertation. With this in mind, I was confronted, initially, with the problem of selecting a single Early Modern Spanish playwright for my study. This playwright's complete theatrical production had to lend itself to such an analysis within the quantitative limitations of a doctoral dissertation and be, to a significant degree, representative of the theater of the entire period.

²⁹ It must be borne in mind that this primary focus on the *gracioso* includes the contributions of the *graciosa*.

³⁰ See Aubrun 9

As the title of this dissertation indicates, I selected the theater of Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla. Some subjective criteria were involved, primarily matters of personal taste, but the following were the objective criteria that led to his choice for this dissertation. His dramatic output satisfied a dissertation's need of manageability and accessibility in its subject matter. It consists of a workably limited 35 *comedias*, either established as authentically his or convincingly attributed to him.³¹ Almost all of these are accessible in modern editions. As a member of the post-Lope de Vega generation identified with Calderón de la Barca that culminated Spain's *siglo de oro* theatrical production, Rojas Zorrilla would be at least chronologically representative of that entire period.

Unfortunately there is not much known about the playwright. He was born in Toledo in 1607, but by the age of three his family had moved to Madrid. He attended the same school as Pedro Calderon de la Barca and lived near the two principal theaters, the *Principe* and the *Cruz*. It is not known whether Rojas Zorrilla completed his university studies, but presumably he did attend the University of Salamanca where he roomed with Antonio Coello, a future collaborator. By the age of twenty-five he had acquired a reputation as a playwright and had a prominent role in the circle of writers associated with the court of Phillip IV. Attesting to his popularity in court

³¹ The manner of production and distribution of the plethora of Spanish *siglo de oro comedias* often makes the specific attribution of authorship very problematical. It is a problem confronting all scholarship in this extraordinary era and singular genre. See, for example, Reichenberger 304, 315. Rojas Zorrilla's many comedias written in collaboration with other playwrights, very much a feature of the Spanish Baroque's theatrical creativity, while not included, for obvious reasons, in the main body of this study, will be cited when appropriate.

circles is the fact that a significant event in the theatrical history of the period, the opening of the *Teatro del Buen Retiro*, at the royal court, was inaugurated with his *Los bandos de Verona*.

Rojas Zorrilla collaborated with prominent playwrights such as Calderon and Luis Vélez de Guevara . In this regard, Cohen states that throughout the Renaissance “plays written by more than one author do not appear to have been deemed inferior to the work of a single man” (173).

His first independent play was *Persiles y Segismunda*, a dramatization of Cervantes’s posthumous novel. In 1640, the year in which he published his first *Parte*, Rojas Zorrilla married Doña Catalina Yañez Trillo de Mendoza, and his one son was born two years later. Rojas Zorrilla also had an illegitimate daughter, Francisca María de Rojas Zorrilla, born in 1636 to the married actress María de Escobedo. His daughter became a leading actress and later the manager of a theatrical company. In 1643 king Phillip IV nominated Rojas Zorrilla for membership in the prestigious Order of Santiago. However, the required investigation into his lineage revealed that he had both Moorish and Jewish ancestry, which would have made him ineligible. The king, nevertheless, had his way and Rojas Zorrilla was officially approved for membership in 1645. In 1644 all theatres were closed due to the death of Queen Isabel and would remain so until 1649. Rojas Zorrilla took this time to publish his second *Parte*, printed in 1645. In 1648 Rojas Zorrilla died suddenly, for reasons unknown, a relatively young man of forty one.

The study of the comical content of Rojas Zorrilla’s theater as a manifestation of popular carnivalesque humor, centering on the invariable presence of the *gracioso* is innovative. To my knowledge, no systematic study exists of the comical functions of the *gracioso* in the complete works of a single playwright. This task is somewhat facilitated by my determining the five modes of humor most repeatedly employed by the comic figure of Rojas Zorrilla’s theater and

that are most likely valid for Early Modern theater in general. These will allow me to systematize my study of *gracioso* humor and are the following: comical names and mock genealogies; the social medium and its corresponding satire; literary satire and parody; the rejection of the honor code, and the defiance of theatrical illusion. Satire is a broadly generalized vehicle of humor. As noted, I have defined two of the above modes by the subjects satirized, namely social entities and literary outputs.

I do not pretend to have encompassed within these five modes of humor all the comical devices at the disposal of the *siglo de oro gracioso*. Comical devices such as punning and the euphemized allusion to the scatological, especially to defecation, run throughout the stock comic figure's recitations. They are decidedly necessary elements of popular theaters,³² and are readily linked, as well, to the popular/carnavalesque tradition, but, as sporadic devices, they lend themselves poorly to a categorized presentation of *gracioso* humor via frequently used comical modes. These will be analyzed as devices when employed within the five basic modes of *gracioso* humor.

Rojas Zorrilla shares these five comic modes with all the playwrights of his time. This underscores the representative character of Rojas Zorrilla's *gracioso*, of his comicality, with respect to Early Modern Theater in general.³³ But it should be kept in mind that modern

³² As Cohen indicates, "the late sixteenth century drama of the 'corrales' reveals a number of characteristic elements of popular theater—audience address, proverbs, word-play, disguise, dance in the mingling of comic and serious moments" (178).

³³ Professor Reichenberger perhaps best summarizes the homogeneous, uniform character of *siglo de oro* theater by stating that the "homogeneity of content and form is the overwhelming impression the student gains when approaching this genre for the first time, an impression the

sensibilities are geared to appreciate individualistic originality.³⁴ These sensibilities often fail to appreciate the necessary and defining importance of unoriginal redundancy itself in a humor, such as the popular/carnavalesque, that is subcultural and communal.³⁵

There are, as well, important extra-textual ways in which the *gracioso* elicits laughter; that is, ways that are not accessible via a strictly textual analysis. These would consist of the entire repertoire of laughter-eliciting elements contained in the *gracioso*'s projection upon the stage (physical appearance, dress) and those laughter-provoking actors' resources that, although not transmitted directly by the spoken word, would have been projected either visually or audibly. These would include movements, gestures, tonal variations in voiced expression, etc.

power of which remains undiminished no matter how familiar he may become with individual dramatists. As a consequence of this uniformity, mass of production and a certain degree of anonymity of the dramatists determine the place of the *comedia* in the literature of the seventeenth century” (304).

³⁴ For the significant difference between modern comicality, individualized and distinct, and the subcultural, communal humor of the carnivalesque, see, for example, Bakhtin 28-29, 321.

³⁵ For the distinguishing communal character of Spanish *siglo de oro* theater, ranging from the writing of a *comedia* to its themes, characters and actual presentation, see Reichenberger 304-307. See also, Cohen, who states that “if the riffling of previous literature conformed to the Renaissance notion of imitation, the pervasive tampering with the plays that went on in the public theater testifies to another heritage entirely—to the anonymous and multiple authorship, oral performance, and fluid texts of the popular tradition” (174).

Díez Borque's comment is especially applicable to the *gracioso* of *siglo de oro* theater. He states:

Se dan en la escena del teatro del Siglo de Oro evidentes relaciones entre lo que podríamos llamar retórica verbal y un código de entonaciones, gestos, expresiones faciales, y está por hacer el estudio que ponga en relación el conjunto de signos mediante los cuales se representa el mundo, la sociedad barroca, y el conjunto de signos escénicos. (60)³⁶

For example, it is very possible that some of the actors who achieved the role of *gracioso*, which was much prized in Early Modern Theater,³⁷ may have possessed and projected laughable physical traits. A prominent nose, for example, would automatically incite laughter every time it appeared on stage, and it is a feature, besides, that Bakhtin identifies, via its evocation of the sexual, with the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.³⁸ And Maravall indicates that the stage presentation of the *gracioso* entailed, if not a standard manner of dress, a distinctive,

³⁶Also see, for example, Ley 44, 72-74, 178. For more contemporary general studies of actors and acting in *siglo de oro* theater, see, for example, *Actor y técnica de representación del teatro clásico español*. In this regard note, as well, Burke's remark that "a text cannot record a performance adequately, whether it is a clown's or a preacher's. The tone of voice is missing, so are the facial expressions, the gestures, the acrobatics" (66).

³⁷ See, for example, Cotarelo y Mori, *Colección clvii-clxiii*. For the suggestion that only the best actors were offered those roles, see, for example, Castañeda 26.

³⁸ See Bakhtin 87. See Burke's comment in regard to the sexual dimension in the carnivalesque, that "*carne* also meant 'the flesh.' Sex was, as usual, more interesting symbolically than food because of the ways in which it was disguised, transparent as these veils may have been" (186).

laughter-eliciting (promoted by color or style) wardrobe.³⁹ This is clearly suggested, as well, by the existence of the occasional *acotación* such as ‘*vestido a lo gracioso*.’

Early Modern plays lack detailed stage directions.⁴⁰ But with that said one should not suppose that the *gracioso* failed to use acting resources such as movements, gestures and tonal changes. These, while following closely on the tradition of carnivalesque humor, would have represented a practical means of charging a text, innocuous in the eyes of the unavoidable censor, with a suggestive meaning that may not have passed if verbally expressed.⁴¹ In any case, whenever appropriate in my analysis of the indicated five modes, I will allude to the possibility of these textually ‘invisible’ elements.

Finally, my highlighting the many links that bind *gracioso* humor to the tradition of popular/carnivalesque humor grants *gracioso* humor a popular sub-cultural identity. It thus becomes, to a large extent, a test of Maravall’s condemnation of *siglo de oro* theater as an

³⁹ See, for example, Maravall 151. Burke remarks, in semiotic terms, that “clothes, for example, form a symbolic system. In a given community, within which meanings are shared, there are certain rules governing what can be worn, by whom, on what occasions, so that clothes worn by an individual transmit various messages to members of the community” (81).

⁴⁰ In regards to the lack of stage directions Díez-Borque states “el teatro español del Siglo de Oro carece casi por completo de indicaciones escénicas sobre la actividad del actor, y la reconstrucción del conjunto de signos (paradigmas) de que disponía hemos de hacerla por medios indirectos y, en consecuencia, de forma incompleta” (Aproximación 65).

⁴¹ For the use of movements and gestures in popular/carnivalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 40.

uncontested imposition of hegemonic ideals.⁴² I believe my study will offer much to reinforce the positions taken *vis a vis* Maravall by such contemporary scholars as Burningham who states that “the continuing importance of the ‘vulgo,’ however, made its presence felt in plots played on two tiers, with servants functioning as foil and comic relief to the dilemmas of their masters, a structure that also provides space for critique of the established order, as did popular Elizabethan theater” (37). And Blue’s statement:

Thus, if on the one hand, theater may be a potential means for the power structure to ‘rewrite’ the audience, to propagandize, to insist on a given value system, on the other hand, the theater inevitably produces broader awareness of self, of situation, of inhabited cultural, political, social and economic matrices, a self-consciousness that the power structure can neither totally control nor totally turn to its advantage. Theater, like language, says more than it says. (*The Prince* 95)

Both scholars, as it is readily apparent, grant much more importance and influence to the popular comical dimension of Early Modern Theater than Maravall is willing to concede.

⁴² For a brief summary of the debated influence of the popular anti-hegemonic dimension of Renaissance Theater, see Cohen 26-27. Cohen would seem, naturally, to grant great importance to that dimension stating that “if the fundamental logic of Absolutism was to destroy the public stage, it cannot be maintained that the institution in its heyday unambiguously served the interests of the state” (279).

Chapter One

Comical Names and Mock Genealogies

The two spheres included in this first comical mode that I will analyze are closely related, but it would facilitate matters to focus upon them separately in this chapter. As in those of almost all his contemporaries, in Rojas Zorrilla's *comedias*, the humor associated with the stock comic figure's comical role usually begins with the name he is given. The fact is that writers of comedy since the days of Aristophanes, Plautus and Terence understood the comic effects flowing from the telling names given their servants and other comic characters.⁴³ Spanish Early Modern playwrights continued this onomastic tradition.

Lope de Vega, although using many comically suggestive names for his *graciosos*, more often employed saint names.⁴⁴ He took far less advantage than his immediate contemporaries (Tirso de Molina, Vélez de Guevara, Ruiz de Alarcón) of the comical possibilities of onomastics. But when Calderón de la Barca and his generation of playwrights came into their own, the use of comical names for *graciosos* had established itself to such an extent that relatively few *comedias* failed to employ them. Of the twenty-four *comedias* in Rojas Zorrilla's two *Partes* (1640 and

⁴³ Herrick indicates that the most prestigious literary theoreticians of Italy already then lent great importance to the adjudication of names for comic figures. (63)

⁴⁴ For the names of Lope de Vega's *graciosos*, See S. G. Morley and R. W. Tyler 580-82. Given the popularity of Lope de Vega's theater, the saint names he assigned his *graciosos* became standardized for theatrical servants. See, for example, Juana de José Prades 59-60.

1645, respectively), twenty-one contain a *gracioso* with a comically suggestive name and in another two the name given the *gracioso* comically echoes that of a literary or historical personage.⁴⁵ In *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, Sancho boasts the name of Don Quijote's squire, echoing his difficulties with his master;⁴⁶ and in *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza*, Cosme and Damián have the names of the inseparable brothers, patron saints of Florence, whose intimacy they parody. After an initial dispute, the two take an oath, rather crudely expressed, of eternal friendship:⁴⁷

Y pues Cosme y Damián somos
desde hoy amigos tan grandes,
júntenos un orinal
a los dos de aquí adelante. (*BAE*, 54, 171b)

What is interesting about the comical names of many of Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* is that his characters comply with what Bakhtin details, "the formation of proper names from abusive terms" (460). Some of Rojas Zorrilla's *gracioso* names include Bofetón, Mojicón, Coscorrón, etc. It should be noted, as well, that comical *gracioso* names probably had a cumulative echo effect, recurring each time that the name appeared in dialogue.

⁴⁵ For a more extensive impression of Rojas Zorrilla's use of significant names for his *graciosos*, see Appendix I, where Rojas Zorrilla's known *graciosos* are listed.

⁴⁶ The difficulties arise, for the most part, from a plot that requires that master and servant exchange roles, which echoes a traditional procedure of popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 9-10, 81, 411.

⁴⁷ It should be noted that in the following quote the humor is grounded in a scatological crudity which echoes popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 21, 145-47, 175, 336.

The recurring comical effect of the ‘funny’ *gracioso* name speaks to its usefulness in contributing to the comical density of the play, and its linkage to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor suggests its popular sub-cultural anti-hegemonic intent. It is obvious that names, particularly family names or surnames, have always been markers of socio-political status in nobility-dominant societies. They have always been, thus, objects of comical degradation in such societies. It is no great stretch, therefore, to see the outlandishly funny, one-name baptism of *graciosos* as a self-mocking mockery of the social status that names serve to underscore and highlight. This must be borne in mind when this mode of *gracioso* humor is analyzed. Occasionally, as in the case of Cuatrín from *Casarse por vengarse*, the *gracioso* himself plays comically on his name. Cuatrín comments:

Que aunque me llamen Cuatrín,
que es moneda de estos reinos,
con ser moneda mi nombre
ni un solo mi nombre tengo. (BAE, 54, 107b)

Sometimes, as in *La traición busca el castigo*, it is his master who implements the verbal play on his servant’s name, threatening him. Don Andres states “Que te doy un nombre tuyo / si no callas, Mojicón” (BAE, 54, 243b). Like Ruiz de Alarcón and Vélez de Guevara, Rojas Zorrilla likes to have his *gracioso* explain the origin of his name. Thus, in *No hay ser padre siendo rey*, Coscorrón seeks an explanation for his, in the swelling that don Rodrigo produced in la Cava as a consequence of his seduction. Coscorrón states:

Yo, Jaime de Coscorrón,
el descendiente de aquel
Coscorrón que dio Rodrigo

a la Cava, porque fue
hermosa; que a las hermosas
no hay otra cosa que hacer. (*BAE*, 54, 405b)

Coscorrón cannot claim, however, to be the first *gracioso* whose name derives from the coital act,⁴⁸ for Ruiz Alarcón's Chichón offers, in *El tejedor de Segovia*, the following etymology of his name in a conversation with the count:

CONDE. ¿De dónde eres?

CHICHON. Yo, señor,
soy natural de Barriga.

CONDE. Pues, ¿hay lugar de ese nombre?

CHICHON. Que ignorante de ello estás

me admira. Barriga es
la primera patria del hombre.

Della se etimologiza
mi nombre, y el caso fue
que Mencia (en gloria esté),

siendo doncella castiza,
dio un tropezón, y fue tal

la caída, que aunque dio
sobre un colchón, le quedó
en el vientre un cardenal.

Creció después la hinchazón

⁴⁸ The sexual allusion, and particularly the resulting bulky pregnancy, echoes the grotesque-generative element of popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 91, 204.

y a quien saber pretendía
 la ocasión, le respondía
 Mencia que era un chichón.
 En efecto, me parió;
 y la vecindad con esto,
 viéndola sana tan presto,
 y que el chichón era yo,
 con risa y murmuración,
 apuntándome, decía:
 “Hélo el chichón de Mencia;”
 y quedóseme Chichón. (BAE, 20, 403a-b)

On occasion, someone asks the *gracioso* to explain his suggestive name. Such is the case of *Guardainfante*, the comic figure of an act that Rojas Zorrilla contributed to the collaborative play *Los tres blasones de España*, who answers the king’s petition with the following salacious definition. *Guardainfante* states:

Un enredo
 para ajustar a las gordas,
 un molde de engordar cuerpos;
 es una plaza redonda
 adonde pueden los diestros
 entrar a jugar las armas
 por lo grande y por lo extenso;
 es un encubre preñadas,
 estorbo de los aprietos

arillo de las barrigas,
 disfraz de los ornamentos;
 y es, en fin, el guardainfante
 un enjugador perpetuo
 que está secando la ropa
 sobre el natural brasero.⁴⁹ (BAE, 54, 558a-b)

With the comical definition of the *Guardainfante*, Rojas Zorrilla brought to the stage the scandal that the feminine garment created in his day, intensifying its laughter-producing intent. As Dr. MacCurdy has observed,⁵⁰ throughout the 1630's the *guardainfante* was under constant attack from moralists. They alleged, among other things, that it was a health hazard, that it hid pregnancy, thus promoting promiscuity, that it consumed an enormous amount of starch, and that women who wore them occupied too much space on the streets and in the theater. Phillip IV finally accepted the views of his counselors and signed the Royal Decree of 1639 that prohibited the use of the much criticized piece of clothing. Rojas Zorrilla repeatedly ridiculed the *guardainfante*, reflecting the intense controversy of his day, and there are comical references to it in more than a dozen of his *comedias*. Still, in only one other of his plays did he give the *gracioso* that name. In *Los bandos de Verona* (first played at the inauguration of the *Coliseo del Buen Retiro* on February 4, 1640, but probably written in 1639, on the occasion of the cited decree) the *gracioso* Guardainfante plays comically on his name, commenting: “. . . Alguna niña

⁴⁹ It should be noted that the humor here proceeds from the sexual allusion, thus echoing popular/carnavalesque humor.

⁵⁰ See MacCurdy, “A Note on Rojas Zorrilla’s ‘gracioso’ *Guardainfante*,” whose bibliography refers to other satirical and moralistic writings on that feminine wear.

/ enseñan a hablar, que hoy / antes que el mamá y el taita / es el guardainfante . . .” (BAE, 54, 375c). Given the date on which the *comedia* was first performed, it is pretty safe to interpret Guardainfante’s reference to the *guardainfante* as an index of Spanish women’s discontent with the royal prohibition of it, whose use was only approved for their fallen sisters.

This comical criticism of the farthingale, in step with its official prohibition, appears to represent a defense of the hegemonic establishment. The fact remains, however, that the farthingale, given its expense, was most identified precisely with the hegemonic segment of society. Its comical presentation could thus represent, certainly in the popular eyes and ears of the *patio* and the *cazuela* of the *corral*, and especially when spouted by a comic figure identified with these, a typically comical degradation of the hegemonic in the sub-cultural tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor. Rojas Zorrilla, keenly sensitive to all that would arouse his public to laughter rarely let escape the opportunity to exploit the humor inherent in the very name of the *gracioso*. More so, as noted above, if it could be tied to a hot contemporary subject. The playwright exploits to the maximum the humorous possibilities afforded by the *gracioso*’s name, often moving well beyond the puns and word-play of the examples already cited. In *Entre bobos anda el juego*, for example, he holds back on exploiting the comical play on Cabellera, the name of the *gracioso*, which the public, since first hearing it, would have been anxiously anticipating. Instead, he surprises the audience (surprise always being an intensifier of the comical) by first offering the novelty of a dialogued commentary, in which the *gracioso* participates, on the name of the play’s protagonist:

DONA ISABEL. ¿Quién ese don Lucas es

CABELLERA. quien ser tu esposo previene.

DONA ISABEL. ¡Excelente nombre tiene

para galán de entremés

¿Vos le servís?

CABELLERA. No quisiera,
 más sírvole.

DONA ISABEL. ¿Buen humor?

CABALLERA. Nunca le tengo peor.

DONA ISABEL. ¿Cómo os llamáis?

CABELLERA. Cabellera.

DONA ISABEL. ¡Qué mal nombre!

CABELLERA. Pues yo sé

que a todo calvo aficiona. (*BAE*, 54, 18b)

The novelty indicated turns out to be most appropriate in *Entre bobos anda el juego*. This play is one of the earliest versions of what would come to be designated ‘*comedia de figurón*.’ The novel characteristic of the latter was precisely that the protagonist, due to his behavior and mannerisms, and not his social status, occupies much of the comical space usually allotted the *gracioso*.⁵¹ Rojas Zorrilla appears to announce this revolutionary turn of the *comedia* of his day precisely by underscoring

⁵¹ Although beyond the parameters of this study, Rojas Zorrilla’s use of protagonists as primary instruments of humor transcends the *comedia de figurón* theatrical format. Notable, in this respect, are his *Lo que son mujeres* and *Abre el ojo*. For objections to the classification of ‘*comedia de figurón*,’ see, for example, Place (412-21); and for its critical acceptance, see Lanot 131-51.

some comical references to the protagonist's name, something always reserved for that of the *gracioso*. He thus assimilates the two in revolutionary fashion, stressing it by ending the dialogue with the anticipated verbal play on Cabellera.

It should be noted that this modality of *comedia* affords a laughable degradation of a model of the socially and officially hegemonic. This degradation echoes an important goal and practice of popular/carnavalesque humor.⁵² The popularity of this type of *comedia*, that Moreto would perfect, suggests the proximity of the comical dimension of *siglo de oro* theater to that traditional humor.

In *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, Rojas Zorrilla comically confronts, by means of the *gracioso* Caimán, the question of the humorous names/nicknames that people acquire. In this instance the name of the *gracioso*, which so obviously lends itself to comical commentary, is not involved. Instead, what is humorously commented on is the nickname, Saltamontes, with which his sergeant refers to him for his flighty cowardice in battle. Caiman states:

Bueno está;
 este mi nombre será
 para mientras yo viviere;
 con muy honrado renombre
 desta batalla he quedado.
 ¡Desdichado del soldado
 a quien le ponen un nombre!
 Pan un soldado pidió,
 y a un amigo muy seguro

⁵² See, for example, Bakhtin 198. Also see Cohen 286-87.

le dijo: ¿Tenéis pan duro?
 Y *pan duro* se quedó;
 dio con un chuzo un soldado
 a otro un golpe, y otro habló,
 ¿con la punta? Y dijo él, no,
 con la porra le he pegado,
 y fue tan grande la zorra que
 todos con él tomaron,
 que desde allí le llamaron
 a una voz, *daca la porra*. (BAE, 54, 437c)

In this example, the playwright, basing himself on the popular social phenomenon of nicknames, incorporates a comical speech that his popular audience could readily understand.⁵³

Caimán is one of the few Rojas Zorrilla *graciosos* whose comical name he does not exploit with humorous commentary. Since such an abstention from fully exploiting the comical possibilities of a *gracioso* name will occur on other rare occasions,⁵⁴ it merits some commentary. A simple explanation for such an abstention is that the playwright deemed the outrageously comical name sufficient in itself to produce laughter in the audience every time he appeared on stage and with every mention of his name in dialogue. In this regard, several significant comical aspects of the name Caimán

⁵³ For this process in popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 461.

⁵⁴ Other examples would be Bofetón, the *gracioso* of *Peligrar en los remedios* and Zambapalo of *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena*.

come to mind. Animalized dehumanization, especially in the guise of a concrete animal, is invariably laughter-inducing.⁵⁵ And after the discovery of the New World, the specific animal in question had acquired in Spain a comical niche in the folklore of the times, as in the legendary ‘lagarto de Jaén’ that exists into our own day.⁵⁶ There also exists the possibility that Rojas Zorrilla consciously delegated its comical development to his public’s fertile imagination.⁵⁷

In a dialogue of *Sin honra no hay amistad*, Sabañón, plays on his name in order to introduce a context of student ‘poverty.’ That context always seemed to touch his popular

⁵⁵ Animal masks and disguises form part of the popular/carnavalesque tradition (Bakhtin 39) that has come down to our own day in contemporary carnival festivals. Its laughter-inciting potential is still effective, as well, in the disguised human mascots, for example, that make their comical appearances in sports events.

⁵⁶ This possibility is strengthened by Cervantes’ use of the crocodile in a comic vein. See, for example, Fernandez and A. Rodríguez 287-91.

⁵⁷ In those rare cases in which the comical name given the *gracioso* is not exploited humorously by Rojas Zorrilla via textual commentary, there exists the possibility that the name was conceived with the specific physical characteristics of a given actor in mind. In the case at hand, perhaps, an inordinate toothiness in the actor for whom the part is written. The documented example of a dramatist writing for a performer’s special physical traits that most readily comes to mind, although not involving a comical characterization, is that of Vélez de Guevara’s *La serrana de la Vera*. See, Luis Vélez de Guevara 17.

audience's funny bone via the temporary and therefore comical hunger of the gentlemen student protagonists.⁵⁸ The dialogue follows:

DON MELCHOR. Sabañón, ¿Quieres callar?

DON ANTONIO. ¿No callarás, Sabañón

SABANON. Con menos resoluciones

es justo que me tratéis;

mil remedios hallaréis

para atajar sabañones;

usar desa indignación,

por comer no es menester

no os comerá el Sabañón,

pues no tiene qué comer.⁵⁹ (BAE, 54, 295c)

The laughter invariably induced by the stage projection of student 'poverty,' that Rojas Zorrilla employed several times in his theater and that continues into our own day, may perhaps originate as a humorous popular/carnavalesque degradation of the socially dominant.⁶⁰ It is possible, as well, that Rojas Zorrilla might have sought

⁵⁸ For the comical side of human affliction in popular/carnavalesque humor, see Bakhtin 187, 194-95, 328, 458

⁵⁹ In Spanish popular lore, to this day, the bunion is perceived as eating its host-victim's flesh.

⁶⁰ For a broad presentation of the *gracioso/gorrón* or university student, see, for example, Miguel Herrero 46-78, 51-63. For the laughable degradation of the dominant social structure via gentlemen-students in carnivalesque humor, see Bakhtin 155.

another, semantic level of that same type of popular/carnavalesque humor by insisting, in the cited passage and much that precedes it in the text, on the verb ‘callar,’ for there exists a popular association between *callos* (corns) and *sabañones* (bunions).

In any case, once the comically suggestive name of the *gracioso* has been broadcast, Rojas Zorrilla will usually avail himself of its inherent funniness in order to induce laughter on multiple occasions throughout the *comedia*. *Sin honra no hay amistad* is a good example of this procedure, for in it Sabañón does so several times, “Está abierto / el sabañón y no puede / pisar agora tan recio” (*BAE*, 54, 298a), and “Ya le pica el sabañón” (*BAE*, 54, 308a).

This procedure, in which the *gracioso* redundantly uses his own comically outrageous name to make jokes in the most varying circumstances, is often employed by Rojas Zorrilla. Its repeated use suggests the playwright’s willful intent to bring laughter to the fore in the most varied and sometimes unexpected situations. This may be exemplified in its fully developed employment via Guardainfante, the *gracioso* of *Los bandos de Verona*. His outrageously comical name represents an item of feminine apparel.⁶¹ This allows such varied situational humor that, on the one hand, it is used to project the characters’s cowardice in refusing to enter a tomb, “¿Quieres tú que quepa / un Guardainfante tan ancho / por entrada tan estrecha?” (*BAE*, 54, 381a). And, on the other hand, his name is employed as a brave insult directed to his assaulting enemies. Guardainfante states:

Estoy hecho un perro:
puesto que soy Guardainfante,

⁶¹ The androgynous allusion of the name appears to echo the gender changes associated with popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 321-23.

mi nombre pienso ponerlos;
 porque sois unos maricas
 tendréis buenas faldas presto.⁶² (BAE, 54, 386c)

In *Primero es la honra que el gusto*, the two *graciosos*, Flora y Pepino, employ their names, a botanical distinction between flower and fruit, in courting scenes. These, as was common in Early Modern Theater, comically parallel the love scene of the protagonists. Their dialogue follows:

FLORA. ¿Pues no sabe
 que un pepino y una flor
 nunca traban maridaje?

PEPINO. Anda, que eres una necia;
 no en flores el tiempo gastes,
 que aunque el Papa no dispense,
 podrán en aqueste lance
 el pepino enflorecerse
 y la flor empepinarse. (BAE, 54, 433b)

If Flora was a common feminine name, Pepino, never a commonly used masculine name, is decidedly both humorously outrageous and suggestive of other dimensions of the comical. It

⁶² Sexual allusions are very much a part of popular/carnavalesque humor, but it is worth noting here, where the reference is to homosexuality, that such gender ambivalence is readily tied to the aspect of popular/carnavalesque humor cited in the previous note.

may well allude to a sexual humor that in *siglo de oro* theater could only be evoked in an indirect manner. The cucumber, given its phallic form, has always projected sexual symbolism in Spanish culture, with well known examples that run from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century.

In *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, Limonada, the *gracioso* of a religiously propagandistic *comedia*, employs his comically exotic name to proclaim a calumny that circulated widely in Early Modern Spain against the Moslem enemy: the drunkenness of the prophet of Islam. Although extravagant names like Limonada automatically moved theatrical audiences to laughter, Rojas Zorrilla appears to have thought it up, in this case, in order to interpolate that propagandistic calumny into the anti-Islamic context of the *comedia*.⁶³ Limonada states:

Mahoma era un gran borracho,
non alzando lo presente;
e non caté estar al paso
llamándome Limonada,

⁶³ The assigning of vices or caricaturesque physical traits to recognized enemies, political or national, invariably elicits laughter as anyone who has lived through a war can readily confirm. Although to be commented upon in the following pages, it is well to note here that joking allusions to drink and drinking have a prominent place in popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 79-80, 281.

que me consumiera a tragos. (BAE, 54, 486a)⁶⁴

In Rojas Zorrilla *comedias* like *Morir pensando matar*, where a cumulative succession of deaths produces a highly tragic, Senecan dramatic context,⁶⁵ the indispensable comical dimension would be difficult to insert. In such plays, the comically suggestive name given the *gracioso*, often repeated on stage, is usually the only outlet for the incorporation of humor. Thus Polo, the *gracioso*, plays on his name, arousing the laughter elicited by its dehumanizing ‘mechanization’⁶⁶ in offering to ameliorate, with his humor, the protagonist’s sorrow. He states:

Déjame—pues Polo soy
de aqueste cielo que estoy—
ser Atlante comedido.
Verás, si no lo rehusas,
juntas en aqueste Polo,
las garambainas de Apolo

⁶⁴ The use of archaic language can be a laughter-inducing device. It is probably so in this context. Another laughter-eliciting element of Limonada’s words here is his ‘*non alzando lo presente*’ which would be humorous if the popular audience, as intended, felt itself alluded to.

⁶⁵ For Rojas Zorrilla as tragedian, see MacCurdy, *Tragedy*.

⁶⁶ The term ‘mechanization’ is that employed by Bergson for one of the sources of human laughter who states that “we laugh every time a person gives us the impression of being a thing” (97). The name Polo, colloquially employed with the meaning of ‘extreme’ or ‘end,’ could be symbolically suggestive here of a bodily extreme, which would be readily connected, then, to popular/carnavalesque humor’s fixation on the lower body. See, for example, Bakhtin 18, 39-41, 89, 370.

y el buen humor de las musas. (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 12)

It is worth noting that in a later appearance this *gracioso* interpolates another measure of humor with the simple ruse of offering the diminutive of his name, “Polo, Polilla. / ¿No me conoces? (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 66).⁶⁷ The humor involved in transforming the name of an adult into its puerile diminutive, confounding life’s stages of maturation, also has echoes of popular/carnavalesque humor.⁶⁸ It is a variant of onomastic humor that Rojas Zorrilla employs several times in his dramatic works. Occasionally the name given the *gracioso* is already in diminutive form, such being the case, for example, of Crispinillo of *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*, Cuatrín of *Casarse por vengarse*, Cartilla of *Abre el ojo*, and Tarabilla of *Santa Isabel, reina de Portugal*. In other *comedias*, as noted above, the diminutive form is acquired within the work, as, for example, Cosme/Cosmillo of *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza* (BAE, 54, 179c), Camacho/Camachuelo of *El Caín de Cataluña* (BAE, 54, 280a) or Flora/Florilla of *Primero es la honra que el gusto* (BAE, 54, 443b).

In *La vida en el ataúd*, a ‘*comedia de santo*’ set in Roman times, Rojas Zorrilla introduces a *gracioso* whose name is clearly ‘*culterano*’ and who dutifully delivers comical attacks on that literary aesthetic.⁶⁹ Patent anachronism was never an obstacle to

⁶⁷ In not holding to the proper gender in the diminutive, which would have given us ‘*Polillo*,’ Rojas Zorrilla induces laughter via the character’s dehumanized animalization. The insect thus invoked *polilla* is itself humorous, and comically employed so on a colloquial level, for its destructive effects. *Polilla* is the comic figure, for example, of Moreto’s *El desdén con el desdén*.

⁶⁸ See, for example, Bakhtin 21, 90, 434.

the necessary insertion of the comical in Early Modern theater.⁷⁰ In some cases, as in *La vida en el ataúd*, the anachronism may even have intensified the humorous effect.⁷¹ But the comical play on Candor itself is prepared by Rojas Zorrilla for a prolonged effect. When Candor early on affirms, “Que soy Candor, y el candor / jamás tinieblas permite” (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 157), there is already humor in the suggestive name.⁷² But its maximum comical impact for the audience comes much later in the *comedia* when Candor, echoing his earlier affirmation, proclaims, “Tiniebla dirás mejor; / porque tiniebla soy ya” (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 188).⁷³

The humorous possibilities prepared by the naming of the *gracioso* does not extend, as a rule, to the *graciosa*, usually a servant as well. Still, it occurs enough times in

⁶⁹ Such attacks, reflecting contemporary literary controversies, usually employ parody, a device of humor that, as already indicated, will be focused on as a separate mode of gracioso humor.

⁷⁰ Of anachronism itself, so much a feature of Early Modern Theater, Aubrun, perhaps suggesting a comical dimension to its employment, indicates that “el anacronismo es, pues, a la vez una ley del género y una convención establecida entre el autor y el auditorio” (247).

⁷¹ The anachronistic setting in this case, Roman times, perhaps serves to reinforce the Latinized vocabulary identified with the ‘*culteranos*.’

⁷² Most ‘culterano’ words, strange to the popular ear, would have appeared, as such, comical. The laughter produced could be considered degrading of their hegemonic users, recalling carnivalesque humor.

⁷³ It is well to note, for the full comical impact of Candor’s words, that lack of clarity, obscurity (*tinieblas*) in linguistic terms, constituted the main line of attack against ‘*culteranismo*.’

Rojas Zorrilla's theater to warrant at least a passing mention. One example would be the name given Marichispa, the servant-*graciosa* of *Abre el ojo*. Her name permits, if the aggregate 'chispa' refers to her physical appearance, as it often does in Spanish usage, a dimension of visible humor, dwarfness in this case, which the name would serve to highlight.⁷⁴ If 'chispa' refers to a mental quality, a usage which it also has in the language and which appears to be that offered in *Abre el ojo*, it would underscore, with each mention in the play, the character's comical slyness.⁷⁵ Another example is the name given the *graciosa* of *Cada cual lo que le toca*, an adulteress whose oxymoronic name, Angela, must surely have excited the audience's laughter.⁷⁶ A final example is that of the *graciosa* of *El desafío de Carlos V*, whose extravagant name, Mari-Bernardo, underscores, each time mentioned, the hermaphroditic androgyny that underlies her comicality and clearly echoes, as noted, the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.

The other related comical device to be commented on in this chapter, also already popularized by Lope de Vega and his contemporaries, was the presentation of the *gracioso*'s

⁷⁴ The Spanish Baroque's affinity for the grotesquely deformed, so patent in the art of the period, and which is, not suprisingly, expressed in its very name, appears to tie it to a similar affinity in medieval carnivalesque humor, so often grounded in the grotesque body.

⁷⁵ Slyness, its operation in the world, is a universal and enduring source of laughter. For its comical categorization (*picardía*) in López Pinciano's *Philosophia antigua poética* and see Robert Jammes 5.

⁷⁶ For cuckoldry itself in carnivalesque humor, see Bakhtin 241.

mock genealogy. This device is found, as well, in English Elizabethan Theater,⁷⁷ which suggests its widespread and therefore traditional origins. Hapsburg Spain was, however, a most propitious place for that traditional mode of humor to resurface. The stress on nobility that afflicted Spanish society under its Hapsburg rulers had become ‘*una enfermedad nacional*,’⁷⁸ and was probably intensified by the peculiarly Spanish process of ‘*limpieza de sangre*.’ Cohen indicates that ‘*limpieza de sangre*’ “could also work against hierarchical principles, becoming a vehicle for an egalitarian notion of honor of sorts and as such a mystified ideological weapon of the poor against the rich” (312).

In his *auto*, *El gran patio de palacio*, Rojas Zorrilla seriously satirized those who boasted of a theoretical nobility: “unos hay que hazen antojos / de ser Cavalleros, y andan / sembrando genealogías.” (Fol. 47v) Rojas Zorrilla may have primarily sought his popular audience’s laughter in presenting the mock genealogies of his *graciosos*.⁷⁹ Still, those to be found in his

⁷⁷ Cob, in Ben Johnson’s *Every Man in His humour*, for example, proudly works his descent from Adam and Eve.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Altamira y Crevea who states that “la vanidad de los blasones . . . se agiganta en los siglos 16 y 17, hasta convertirse en una enfermedad nacional” (193). It is noteworthy, in this sense, that in *Don Gil de la Mancha*, a ‘*comedia de figurón*,’ erroneously attributed to Rojas Zorrilla, the protagonist not only traces his lineage to Adam and Eve, but has an image of God on his coat of arms to indicate the antiquity of that lineage.

⁷⁹ Curiously enough, Rojas Zorrilla himself, in aspiring to membership in the Order of Santiago, was accused of being a ‘new’ Christian and of having falsified his family’s credentials. See Cotarelo y Mori, *Don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 82-83.

theater, which are self-mockingly funny in themselves, can be said to carry a heavy dose of anti-hegemonic satire regarding a central determinant of nobility. This satirical intent, beyond its critical attitude in the face of the contemporary craze, projects a comical derision of nobility itself that unequivocally relates it to popular/carnavalesque humor.⁸⁰ It is, thus, a validly popular sub-cultural expression of what Burningham, defying Maravall's generalizing monolithic dictum, has referred to as an example of a cultural 'interchange,' stating that "the picture he paints is too monolithic and too 'top-down' in its characterization of cultural interchange" (33). Cultural interchange can be described as a self-mocking comical projection of another and even opposed popular view upon a stage that reflects the views and values of the hegemonic noble class. Perhaps Burningham chose the term, avoiding the more familiar 'exchange' in order to stress the fact that, as in the popular/carnavalesque tradition, no real, revolutionary change is intended or remotely possible. What is intended is a proclaimed presence, a manner of helpless, 'Hey, I'm here too, with my own evaluation of the world!' As Professor Blue has expressed it:

While one may be able to say that, in general terms, carnival celebrates misrule over rule, holiday over mundane, workaday existence, personal freedom over social law, over state and religious hierarchical governance or control, one notes

⁸⁰ Bakhtin 19-20. An aspect of the mock genealogy that transcends a merely burlesque critique of the nobility mania of that historical period and converges, on the other hand, with the ridiculing degradation of hegemonic society associated with popular/carnavalesque humor is the long tradition in the latter of a genealogical recitation, as parody, of the Old Testament. See, for example, Bakhtin 379.

immediately that carnival activity is a turning over of, as it were, from the inside, not a total separation from order's hierarchies. (*Spanish Comedies* 89)

A good example of a mock genealogy by a *gracioso* is found in the third act of *La trompeta del juicio*. It is one of the longest in *siglo de oro* theater. Written by Rojas Zorrilla in collaboration with Gabriel del Corral, the third act is attributed to Rojas Zorrilla. In it, the servants, Coturno and Florela follow a theatrical convention in mirroring their respective masters' mutual attraction. Before she accepts his courtship, however, Florela demands to know something about his family. Coturno, whose name is itself comical because it is the word for classical footwear, is more than happy to inform her of the following. He states:

Has tocado
un punto de gran sustancia,
y por si matrimoniamos,
algo de mi alcurnia vaya,
Florela, porque no pienses
Que he nacido en las pajas. (289)⁸¹

The matter is so substantial, in fact, that Coturno requires some ninety verses to mention all of his illustrious ancestors. He not only descends directly, as his name implies, from the half-boot worn by the gods of the classical world, but is directly related to the most powerful foot-covering families of Spain and beyond: the Albarcas, Zapatas, Chinelas, Chapín Vitelos, Don Pantuflos, Don Borceguí, Sandalias, Choclos, Madreñas, Escarpines, Alpargatas, etc.⁸² Florela is very favorably impressed by his genealogical recital and accepts the possibility of marrying him: “Pues flor de harina eres, / y yo de tan buena masa, / juntémonos en enxerto nupcial” (Act III,

⁸² For the use of lists of synonyms in popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 177.

289). The humor that the *mosqueteros* found in Coturno's long genealogical discourse and in Florela's provocative remark seems to mock what their superiors in that highly hierarchical society would actually do and say, resulting in the latter's comical degradation.⁸³

One must suspect that the playwright's intention was to extend and intensify the name's comic effect by employing a genealogy that underscores the 'divine' footwear's humble ancestors. All this, much to the pleasure of the *mosquetería*, laughingly undid the word's 'culterano' pretentiousness while taking a swipe, in passing, at its societal parallel. The frequent comic attacks on 'culteranismo' may well echo, on the level of language, the characteristic derision of everything pertinent to hegemonic society carried out by popular/carnavalesque humor.⁸⁴ These attacks, usually via the *gracioso*, represent a phenomenon to be analyzed as a separate mode of *gracioso* humor.

The suggestive name given the *gracioso* often serves as the launching pad for a genealogical presentation. Such is the case, for example, of Testuz, the *gracioso* of Rojas

⁸³ In the case of the nobility mania being parodied, the comical degradation could only be directed, in Bakhtin's words, to the 'upper stratum' (88). Along these lines Burke states that "taking over the forms of official culture did not necessarily involve taking over the meanings usually associated with them. The subversive possibilities of imitation did not go unappreciated; in some cases the forms themselves were mocked, the official world turned upside down" (123).

⁸⁴ As demonstrated by Ashcom, the fashion in shoes and particularly that of the *chapín*, were frequently satirized in *siglo de oro* theater 17-27. Ashcom indicates that "the female foot and the female shoe are and have always been objects of attraction for the male" (26). This suggests another level of humor, sexual in character, that the cited genealogy projects. In this latter sense, see Freud statement that "shoes and slippers are female genitals" (158).

Zorrilla's *El profeta falso Mahoma*. Testúz, a Christian posing as a Moslem, offers an extended account of his lineage in order to justify his exaggerated consumption of wine and pork, items forbidden in the Islamic world. It begins as follows:

Yo, señor Mahoma, soy
 como usted sabe, Testúz,
 el más lindo prueba-vinos
 que hay desde el norte hasta el sur.
 Lechón se llamó mi padre,
 de las ollas el *non plus*;
 otros le llaman Marrano,
 Puerco la gente común.
 Tocino le llaman muchos,
 y todos le hacen el buz,
 porque en cualquier combite
 es el que dice *ego sum* (262)⁸⁵

Even when the dramatic context required that Testúz choose an alcoholic beverage (wine) and a specific meat (pork), the exaggerated praise of eating and drinking itself echoes popular/carnivalesque humor, which is to a great extent centered on those corporal functions.⁸⁶

Rojas Zorrilla also employs mock genealogy in order to comically justify the origins of some of the moral vices that invariably characterize the *gracioso*. It is so, for example, when in *Sin honra no hay amistad* Sabañón explains his natural cowardice in the following manner: “Ya sabéis que soy gallina, / pues mi antigua línea recta / del gallo de la pasión / deciente de cresta en cresta” (*BAE*, 54, 305b).

⁸⁵For the synonymic use, see footnote 85 above.

⁸⁶For the association of the *gracioso* with gluttony and drunkenness, see, for example, Ley 82, 99, 119-120.

There is nothing original in the almost universal animal identification of cowardice with the chicken. However, there is some novelty, I believe, in Rojas Zorrilla's ingenious reference to the female of the species via the male of the same (*gallo*), which is popularly identified with the opposite, bravery. He does so just in order to refer to the crowing rooster associated with Saint Peter's thrice expressed human cowardice. The gambit indicated appears purposely intended to tie the laughter to a serious and spiritual religious context, much in the deriding manner of popular carnivalesque humor.⁸⁷ Sabañón's description of the action that leads up to the mock genealogical exposition is comical in this same sense. He comments:

Pues apenas el hermano
de esa dama, que es tan vuestra
que no ha de ser de ninguno,
yo (sic) el golpe recio a su puerta,
cuando al ruido fraternal
me entré debajo (ten cuenta),
de un bufete provincial
que con mucha reverencia
hasta el suelo le llegaban
las faldas de sobremesa. (*BAE*, 54, 305b)

The comically deriding reference to priests' garb *sotanas*,⁸⁸ is worthy of note here as related to the comments concerning Saint Peter's rooster.

⁸⁷ See, for example, Bakhtin 11, 19, 83.

⁸⁸ The interpretation based on the term '*reverencia*' may seem somewhat stretched, but it must be kept in mind that Rojas Zorrilla, as did all the playwrights of his day, had to get such popular/carnivalesque swipes at the serious and spiritual by Counter-Reformation censors.

In *Peligrar en los remedios*, Rojas Zorrilla employs the same genealogical device as a comical insult. Bofetón, the *gracioso*, opens fire, genealogically, against another servant who has branded him a go-between (*alcahuete*) in order to certify the latter's lying character. He states:

Miente el mal casamentero
mi enojo le respondió,
que al bisabuelo casó,
y bisabuela primero;
los que a su abuela engendraron,
y a los que a su abuelo hicieron;
las niñas que los mecieron,
las amas que los criaron;
miente tu padre y tu madre,
miente todo lo que hiciste,
miente el día en que naciste,
tu compadre y tu comadre;
el vientre que fue tu horno,
y a tus deudos y parientes
le echo quinientos mientes
de linajes en contorno. (*BAE*, 54, 364b)

It is worth noting that the genealogical insult limits itself to the generation of the great-grandparents of the subject. This may represent an indirect reference to the investigative procedure involved in the determination of '*limpieza de sangre*.' It would thus have a deriding comical intent that would not have been lost on Rojas Zorrilla's audience. It is also clear that a

large part of the humor derived from the genealogical presentation proceeds from illogical exaggeration, reaching those with no blood relation to the subject: ‘*casamentero*,’ ‘*compadres*,’ etc.⁸⁹

Finally, Rojas Zorrilla’s *Numancia cercada* offers us, via its *gracioso* Tronco, who refers to himself in the following quote, a mock genealogy of his drunkenness: “El dios Baco... / y me parió en un desierto / una moza de Alemania / hija de la diosa Venus” (118). Although the text that has reached us is, as can be seen, incomplete, it is clear that the playwright avails himself, as in other texts, of classical mythology, comically mixing it with what was at that time a very popular identification of drunkenness with the German people. Besides the panegyric of drinking that the passage incorporates, with roots, as already indicated, in popular/carnavalesque humor, the generalized identification of drinking with Germans also brings echoes of that medieval manifestation of comicality with its association of bodily excesses with specific ethnic, national or regional groups.⁹⁰ Rojas Zorrilla employs this comical device on numerous occasions, as the following examples document: against Germans ‘*tudescos*,’ see, for example, *Entre bobos anda el juego* (BAE, 54, 18c); against Frenchmen ‘*gabachos*,’ see, for example, *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena* (BAE, 54, 319b); and against ‘*gallegos*,’ Rojas Zorrilla’s preferred target, see *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena* (BAE, 54, 319b), *El desafío de Carlos V* (BAE, 54, 415b) and *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* (BAE, 54, 484a).⁹¹

⁸⁹ Bakhtin comments that “exaggeration, hyperbolism, excessiveness, are generally considered fundamental attributes of the grotesque style” (303).

⁹⁰ See, for example, Bakhtin 428-30. For the device in the comical repertoire of the *siglo de oro gracioso* in general, see, for example, Ley 52.

⁹¹ For the most extensive presentation of national and regional ‘defects’ in Rojas Zorrilla’s

Summary

The two related spheres analyzed in this first mode of *gracioso* humor, deriving from the extravagant name usually given the gracioso and the latter's use of genealogy as a laughter-eliciting device, respectively, lend themselves well to the staging of cultural interchanges. Name and genealogy are the mainstays of the hierarchical, nobility-dominated societies that prevailed in Europe for a thousand years. The self-mocking laughter elicited at the expense of these two pillars of the *status quo* clearly parallels that associated with a millennial popular/carnavalesque tradition, lending the interchanges noted a popular sub-cultural identification. As Professor Blue indicates, in regard to laughter, "laughter, coming from the masses, or from one of their representatives, is a kind of social guerrilla warfare" (*Spanish comedies* 90).

In the case of onomastic humor, it is important to stress what cannot be readily transmitted by discrete examples. That is, the inertial or echo effect of the comical possibility inherent in the name given to the *gracioso*. It is pretty clear that once the humorous name is broadcast each and every mention of the *gracioso* within the play's dialogue has some comical impact. The character's ubiquitous presence in the *comedia* thus provides a kind of continuous comicality. One can presume that such an effect would lessen as the *comedia* continued, but can speculate, as well, that it would never totally disappear. The *siglo de oro* norm of introducing the *gracioso* very early in the *comedia*, as in Rojas Zorrilla's *Entre bobos anda el juego*, *Santa*

theater, see *Los celos de Rodamonte*, where the *gracioso*, Baraúnda, after a funny identification of the French with knife-sharpeners (177Rb-178Aa), offers a long list of similar identifications.

Isabel, reina de Portugal, and *Sin honra no hay amistad*, may reflect the playwright's desire to maximally exploit the impact of the comic figure's mere mention or appearance with as prolonged a stage presence as possible. It undoubtedly reflects, as well, the popular audience's demand that elements of hilarity become manifest early in the theatrical presentation. It is possible to speculate, then, that each and every appearance of the *gracioso* upon the stage would have had a humorous impact even when the name itself was not mentioned in the dialogue.

It should be stressed, too, that although my analysis focuses almost exclusively on the written text, the literary genre studied possesses a basic visual dimension.⁹² This requires that one never fail to consider the laughter produced by the physical presence of the *gracioso* despite an almost total absence of detailed stage directions in Early Modern Theater. This lack of stage directions gave the *autor* a freer hand in the production.⁹³ Thus, given the popularity of the *Commedia dell'arte* at the time,⁹⁴ the *gracioso* may have been presented with visually laughter-inducing elements, such as dress, tied to and intensifying the impact of his comical name.

⁹² For a summary of modern, essentially semiotic perceptions of the theatrical, see, for example, the studies gathered in *Teoría del teatro*. For perceptions of *siglo de oro* theater from modern, meta-textual points of view, see, for example, *Semiología del teatro* and *Actor y técnica de representación del teatro clásico español*.

⁹³ In this regard Veltrusky states that “depende sobre todo de la importancia y el número de las acotaciones del drama, o dicho en otras palabras, de la magnitud de los blancos que surgen por la eliminación de las acotaciones, puesto que cuanto más amplios sean los blancos en el conjunto semántico, tanto más se fragmenta el drama en los diferentes papeles de los que disponen como meros componentes de los personajes que crean” (39).

⁹⁴ See, for example, Arróniz 208. See also Forbes 78-83.

With regard to the stock comic figure's use of mock genealogies, it is perhaps significant how often that comical device leads to a humorous self-mocking degradation of the seriously official Church. Just as the self-mockingly humorous genealogical device may itself be interpreted as a derision of the nobility, this textual targeting of the Church, however diluted by the Counter-Reformation ambience, echoes a constant of the jocund world-view of popular/carnavalesque humor.

Chapter Two

The Social Medium and Social Satire

This mode of *gracioso* humor focuses on the stock comic figure's critical perception of society. In general, it contains little that is original, with most of the humor echoing that of Rojas Zorrilla's immediate predecessors and contemporaries. Our laughter-seeking playwright, like his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, availed himself of a trove of comical social criticisms accumulated over centuries in the popular subculture. Its elements, the social targets involved, the comical criticisms of these, the images employed, generate laughter, in great part, precisely from their redundant familiarity. Not surprisingly, then, this entire avenue of humor offers strong links, as I will indicate in concrete terms when appropriate, to the popular/carnavalesque tradition.⁹⁵

As in the previous chapter, I have divided this very broad societal avenue of *gracioso* humor into two sections, the social medium and social satire. The first will focus on the broad areas of society that the *gracioso* is able to observe. The second will analyze the stock comic figure's comical appraisal of specific societal elements, from concrete trades/professions and social customs to broad abstract societal norms. This will hopefully facilitate the presentation and analysis, in all its diversity, of this very rich mode of *gracioso* humor.

This first part of my study will document the stock comic figure's access to broad sections of society, most of which, as will be pointed out, are directly related to the hegemonic establishment. Most of Rojas Zorrilla's *comedias* either take place at court, at the university or in

⁹⁵ See Burke 161.

Madrid. These are the social media in which the noble protagonist usually moves. So they are inevitably the social areas that the accompanying stock comic figure, usually his servant, inhabits. Talón, in the act of a collaborative play *El villano gran señor y gran Timorlán de Persia* attributed to Rojas Zorrilla, comically states as much: “Si soy Talón / ¿no he de seguir mi zapato?”⁹⁶ Therefore, most of the comic figure’s humor will be formulated at the expense of the hegemonic social media that he frequents. The popular *gracioso* is, thus, often placed in the position of comically depicting, in popular/carnavalesque fashion, the dominant layers of society.

It is so, for example, that Polo, of *Morir pensando matar*, comically informs the popular audience that the Court of Lombardy, representing all royal courts, is a rumor mill in which gossipers thrive. He states:

que da gran autoridad
decir allá en la ciudad:
“Esto he sabido en palacio.”
Grande introducción promete
cuando uno dice muy vano:
“Esto me dijo un enano;
aquello oí en el retrete;
ayer hablé a un consejero,
hoy a una dueña de honor;
aquello de un gran señor
supe, y esto de un portero.” (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 92)

The approving laughter of Rojas Zorrilla’s popular audience at such a deriding perception of the serious world of high-born palace dwellers can well be imagined.

⁹⁶ See Ewing 11.

A personal observation of what life was like for servants working at the royal palace is offered by Rojas Zorrilla in the act that he wrote of *También la afrenta es veneno*, written with Luis Vélez de Guevara and Antonio Coello. Guiomar, who had left her position as a domestic servant in order to seek a similar position at the Court of Portugal, complains comically of her disillusioning experience. She states:

Hermano, vengo cansada
de servir y trabajar,
y más lo vengo de estar
toda la vida encerrada.
Libéranos, Dominé,
¿Palacio? Guarda: ¡Jesús!...
Aquella eterna pensión
del estar siempre esperando;
aquel estarme tasando
con una escasa ración;
aquel sisar la mitad
el que va por comida,
la reverencia cumplida,
la fingida gravedad;
servir mucho y medrar poco,
y ver que en aqueste encanto,
el portero era mi espanto,
el guarda-damas mi coco...

Y si desto no te enfadas,
 vengo, y libertad me llamo:
 más quiero servir a un amo
 que servir tantas criadas. (BAE, 54, 599c)

This deriding of the ‘superior’ world, here represented at its very apex via the royal court, clearly echoes the popular/carnavalesque procedure of comical inversion. The servant projects the high-born court functionaries as themselves no more than servants.

Another hegemonic institution subversively penetrated by the *gracioso* is the university. This, too, brings to the popular audience echoes of popular/carnavalesque humor.⁹⁷ Three Rojas Zorrilla *graciosos* are, in effect, university students, the servants of noble students called ‘*gorrones*’: Zambapalo of *Lo que quería ver el Marques de Villena*, Sabañón of *Sin honra no hay amistad*, and Crispinillo of *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*. These *graciosos* go about dressed as university students, sometimes go to classes and often express themselves in Latin. What they mostly do, however, is describe in vivid comical detail student life in Salamanca. Crispinillo, interrogated by Don Luis regarding his son’s living quarters and duties at the university, minutely describes his master’s room, its furniture, his possessions and the details of his daily life. His description includes the youth’s constant guitar-playing, his roommates, both masculine and feminine, and the jokes that these play on each other. It is a

⁹⁷ See Bakhtin 155-56, 216, 258. This is particularly so in *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena*, in which he manages to introduce, besides the carnivalesque and laughter-centered vital attitude of that social segment, such other elements rooted in popular/carnavalesque humor as comical elections. See Bakhtin 5, 81 and, via a magical dramatic dimension suggested by the play’s title, for comical prophetic and infernal elements see Bakhtin 231, 383.

description that projects a student existence centered on a full dedication to the ‘good life,’ totally devoid of serious conduct. It is a life-style that clearly echoes the ‘eat, drink and be merry/for tomorrow we die’ slogan of the popular/carnivalsesque tradition. The following is part of Crispinillo’s report:

Que me place;
 pero habéis de estarme atento
 a mi labia prevenida,
 pues de paso con su vida
 os pintaré su aposento....
 No hay más pintura y retrato
 En su aposento infiel
 Que una espada y un broquel
 y un candil de garabato;
 hay, por si comer previene
 (porque hay días que se trae)
 una mesa que se cae
 y una silla que se tiene

 Tan vieja guitarra en ser
 toca, en muchas ocasiones,
 que a no ser por los bordones
 no se pudiera tener;
 tiene un arca infame luego

pegada a la cama,
 muy maldita para dama
 porque se abre a cada ruego.

.....

Para limpiar la persona,
 servirse con opinión,
 cada uno tiene un gorrón,
 y todos una gorrón;
 y no pienses que es delito
 cometido al pundonor,
 porque su amor no es amor,
 que es meramente apetito.

De noche va al mercado,
 si no hay otro mal que hacer,
 en otro traje, a correr
 asadores de adobado.

Rezar, aun no sabe tanto:

reñir es cosa precisa;
 estudiar, cosa de risa;

hacer mal, cosa de llanto. . . . (BAE, 54, 64c)

The lack of religious wall-hangings and the absence of praying or church-going clearly stress, given the highly ostentatious religiosity of that time, an irreverent anti-establishment life-style akin to that expressed in popular/carnavalesque humor (Bakhtin 155-56). Related to that

medieval humor, as well, would be the multiple sexual allusions (*arca, gorróna*) and the jokes interspersed in his description

Although Rojas Zorrilla's *gracioso* can inhabit town and country, university and royal court, he is essentially an urban figure and his natural habitat, his vital center, is Madrid.⁹⁸ While in the Spanish capital, where he most frequently dwells, the *gracioso* never tires of criticizing the Madrid scene. This includes its odors, its noises, its muddy streets. However, when removed from his vital urban center he abounds in nostalgic complaints.⁹⁹ In *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, Limonada is a medieval captive of the Moors who nostalgically thinks, with anachronistic humor, of his Madrid, “¡Ay mi calle de Santiago, / donde hay todo el año lodo! / ¡Quién vos paseara en un coche!¹⁰⁰ / Los mis ojos allá os id...” (*BAE*, 54, 472a). And like so many other expatriate *madrileños* who return home, Limonada, having escaped from the Moors, approaches

⁹⁸ The city is, according to Bakhtin 146, 154, 219 the germinating axis of popular/carnavalesque humor. With respect to Madrid, see, for example, José Deleito y Piñuela's work. For a listing of Rojas Zorrilla's specific uses of a Madrid landscape in his theater, see, for example, Miguel Herrero García 444.

⁹⁹ For the connection between this comical ambivalence, of mocking criticism of what is, in reality, well appreciated, and traditional popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 140-41.

¹⁰⁰ As already indicated anachronism, the characteristically Baroque disdain for historical accuracy, can often be, in cases such as the present, in which the chronological disparity is extreme, the touchstone of laughter.

the *villa y corte* yearning to again frequent its inns and taverns. But even then the *gracioso* comically harbors no illusions regarding the quality of their wines or their meals. He states:

¡Ay mi patria deseada!
 Donde hay en cada rincón
 para hacer la sinrazón,
 tabernas de agua envinada.
 Hay uno e otro figón,
 donde venden sin trabajo
 tan disimulado un grajo,
 que le yantan por pichón.
 ¡Ay mis ollas extrañas
 donde el menudo yanté
 que son ollas de Noé,
 donde hay todas alimañas! (*BAE*, 54, 483b)

There is nothing truly original in the comical love-hate that Limonada expresses in his nostalgic memories of his residence in Madrid. Limonada follows an established theatrical tradition of *gracioso* humor possibly initiated by the Tristán of Lope de Vega's *La francesilla*, considered the birth-*comedia* of the *gracioso* as such.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Lope's *gracioso* salutes his birthplace upon returning from exile in France:

¿Posible es, santo Madrid,
 que ya mis ojos te ven?...
 ¿Que os vuelvo a ver, taberneros?
 ¿Que ya siento vuestro olor,
 ¡Vive Cribas, que estoy loco
 de ver que me acerco a veros,
 brindis vestido y en cueros! (*Obras* 691a.)

Following that tradition, Rojas Zorrilla's *gracioso* servants continue the familiar patterns of comical reactions to life in Madrid. But it is noteworthy that both in Lope de Vega and in Rojas Zorrilla the comic figure's nostalgias are humorously centered on food and drink, invariably stressed in the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.¹⁰² It is significant, however, that although formulaic in its comical set-up the passage cited above can serve as an example of Rojas Zorrilla's capacity to ingeniously innovate within the traditional comical pattern. Instead of the trite reference to watered-down wine, Rojas Zorrilla humorously exaggerates with wine-down water; instead of the usual '*gato por liebre*' image, he surprisingly uses ornithological elements. And his use of '*ollas de Noé*,' replacing '*arca de Noé*,' is genial.

Talón, as already indicated, comically affirms that the social world in which the *gracioso* moves is determined by his master. But there are so many exceptions to the master/servant formula in *siglo de oro* theater, as well as in that of Rojas Zorrilla, that it merits some comment. In effect, characters recognized as *graciosos* in the latter's *comedias* also appear as students, soldiers, peasants, and, to round out the list, as marriage broker and picaresque beggar. This allows the *gracioso* access to further areas of society and from vantage-points that transcend that of the traditional servant.

Rojas Zorrilla's student *graciosos* only partially break with the traditional formula of master/servant. They remain servants to their university student masters while actually taking classes alongside them. In such cases the *gracioso* contributes another humorous vein as students proper even while comically scanning the university ambience of their masters. This vein is projected, for example, in the use they make of Latin, which, whether legitimate or

¹⁰² Rojas Zorrilla's use of tripe, the eating of the digestive tract, is central to popular/carnavalesque food imagery.

macaronic, is always comical and clearly linked to popular/carnavalesque tradition. The following is a passage from *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*:

CRISPINILLO. ¿Señor?

DON LUIS. Salid acá fuera.

CRISPINILLO. *Adsum.*

DON LUIS. ¿Vos venís, en fin,
desde la Universidad?

CRISPINILLO. *Etiam Domine.*

DON LUIS. Callad.
picarón, no habléis latín.

CRISPINILLO. *Non possum.*

DON LUIS. No me engañéis,
muypreciado de estudiante,
con decirme a cada instante
tres latines que sabéis. . . . (BAE, 54, 64a)

The profession or social condition that competes favorably with that of student among Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* is that of soldier. Our playwright wrote five *comedias* in which the *gracioso* is presented, at some point, as a military figure: *El desafío de Carlos V*, *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, *Nuestra Señora de Atocha*, *Numancia cercada*, and *Morir pensando matar*. The perilous war context in which such comic figures move lends itself especially well to humor

based on the cowardice that usually characterizes them. In effect, four of the five are extremely fearful,¹⁰³ facilitating much play on excremental humor.¹⁰⁴

One of Rojas Zorrilla's most radical departures from the established casting of the *gracioso* as a servant to a noble master is that offered in *Lo que son mujeres*. The role of *gracioso* is there given to a marriage broker. Gibaja comically describes the exercise of his profession in a passage of more than two hundred verses, of which the following are a sample.

He states:

Primeramente yo tengo
 una memoria en que escribo
 cuantos en San Sebastián
 son de fiesta y de Domingo;
 los de la comedia nueva;¹⁰⁵
 los que sin pleito ni oficio
 en el patio de palacio
 suelen estar de continuo;
 los del Prado, los de Atocha;

¹⁰³ The only exception is Buscaruido of *El desafío de Carlos V*, whose comicality has another source, for he somewhat represents the comical tradition of *miles gloriosus*, see Boughner 241-46.

¹⁰⁴ This kind of humor is very closely tied, as already noted, to the popular/carnavalesque tradition.

¹⁰⁵ This appears to be a theatrical illusion-disturbing reference to the lower nobility, *hidalgo* class, that was represented in most *capa y espada* plays.

y cada cual en mi libro
 para entenderme con ellos
 les pongo por seña un signo.
 Al que es valiente. A la márgen
 del mismo nombre le pinto
 el signo León; y si es
 cobarde el Piscis le pinto;
 si es sufrido, el signo Tauro;
 y el de Aries, si es muy sufrido;¹⁰⁶
 si es de mala condición,
 el Escorpión; si es bienquisto,
 el Géminis; y al que no es
 para hombre, el signo Virgo. . . . (BAE, 54, 192a-b)¹⁰⁷

Gibaja's work is brought directly on stage because the plot of *Lo que son mujeres* is such that the *gracioso* is incidentally more central to it than are the play's protagonists. Since but a subtle line separates the marriage broker from the panderer (*alcahuete*), a great deal of the laughter generated by this *gracioso* is based on sexual matters, a cornerstone, like drinking and eating, of popular/carnavalesque humor.

¹⁰⁶ The cuckoldry, in two degrees, suggested here is a mainstay of popular humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 242-43.

¹⁰⁷ The comical reference to homosexuality, not infrequent in the *gracioso* repertoire, may be connected to the vein of gender ambivalence and androgeny in popular/carnavalesque humor.

Another extreme departure from the cited *gracioso*/servant tradition is Morrión of *Los trabajos de Tobías*, taken from the picaresque narrative of the period. He identifies himself comically at the outset via a soliloquy patently directed at the audience.¹⁰⁸ He states:

Dele a este pobre un remedio,
 Tobías, si en casa está,
 pues son las doce y no ha
 comídose pan y medio.
 Den su caridad y amor
 a este pobre en quien cruel
 dio un rayo dos leguas de él,
 (alabado sea el Señor).
 Acudan con su caudal
 a un pobre que Dios tulló,
 que tullidos los vea yo
 en el amor celestial.
 Nadie hay, así Dios me guarde,
 las salas están vacías,
 y ésta en la que Tobías

¹⁰⁸ The Spanish Baroque theater's common practice of having the *gracioso* speak directly to the audience is itself a comical recourse. See, for example, Burningham 154-55. As a norm itself laden with comicality, it will be dealt with as a separate mode of *gracioso* humor.

da limosna cada tarde.

Y pues que a nadie provoco,

aunque enternecerle quiera;

ahora bien, muletas fuera,

y discurremos un poco.

Sepan todos los que son

vagabundos y bufones

que de todos los bribones

yo soy el protobribón.

Pobre fui con amos dos,

mas porque todo me sobre,

me hallo pobre, y con ser pobre

soy rico (gracias a Dios).

Con mi cuita lastimera

enternece mi pasión

del más bravo faraón

la más dura faltriquera.

Si alguno con alma pía

a dar limosna le obligo,

de tal forma le persigo,

que me la da cada día.

Si alguno cuenta dinero

donde yo lo vea a mano,

y dice, perdone hermano,
hágome sordo, y no quiero.
Y de tal suerte porfío,
que aunque el dinero que asienta
no fuese del que lo cuenta,
hago yo cuenta que es mío.
Aunque pase un atambor,
digo (por sacarle el cobre)
dé una limosna a este pobre,
señora sargento mayor.
Luego con zalema igual,
Si engorrado y capillado
veo pasar a un letrado,
le llamo señor fiscal.
Si rufián pasa, le digo
(haciendo mil agasajos),
sáquelo Dios de trabajos
y libre de mal testigo.
Saco jugo de cualquiera
por más rebelde que esté;
la sopa yo la inventé,
y fui el que inventó la ortera;
su comodidad es tal,

y de tanta maravilla,
 que es plato y es escudilla,
 es taza y es orinal.¹⁰⁹

Traigo aquesta pierna en pena,
 que a esotra se desiguala
 (gracias al cielo) muy mala,
 mas (gracias a Dios) muy buena. . . . (137Ra-b)

Rojas Zorrilla closely follows the model that he imitates,¹¹⁰ presenting the picaresque conduct of the *gracioso* as the principal source of the laughter he provides. The *gracioso* will appear later in the *comedia* with a ‘blind’ eye (143Ra), offering a comical comparative summary, for the benefit of the audience, of his earnings as a cripple and a half-blind person (144Aa). In one of his most comical scenes, Morrión proclaims it a miracle when Tobías, in attempting to cure him, finds that his ‘injured’ leg is fine.¹¹¹

Rojas Zorrilla also avails himself of the peasant *gracioso*, an echo of the rustic bumpkins that predominated in Spanish theater before Lope de Vega. These, as in the latter’s

¹⁰⁹ The ‘*sopa*’ referred to is the ‘*sopa boba*’ that monasteries offered the poor; the ‘*ortera*’ was the receptacle in which beggars received it. The comical reference to the latter’s other uses, including as ‘*orinal*’ or piss-pot, echoes the popular/carnavalesque comical association of food with lower body functions.

¹¹⁰ See, for example, Quevedo’s *El buscón*, which focuses extensively on professional beggars as a social sub-group.

¹¹¹ It is possible to see in this ‘picaresque’ proclamation of a miracle, a comical thrust at the church establishment, thus tying it to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.

Fuenteovejuna, continued to appear, if infrequently, in *siglo de oro* theater. The fact is that the *gracioso* couple of *Numancia cercada* and *Numancia destruida* (Tronco and Olalla) project very little of their rural ambience. This is so because their socio-economic status is merely dictated by the special circumstances of the historical plot of those *comedias*. As a *gracioso* couple, their type of humor, which will be analyzed in several upcoming modes of *gracioso* humor, is mostly centered, as has been indicated with respect to Rojas Zorrilla's marriage broker *gracioso*, on marital and sexual themes with roots in popular/carnavalesque humor.

In general, it is clear that *siglo de oro* theater's *gracioso* is given access to sectors of society that range from the royal palace to the 'underworld' represented by the '*pícaro*.' It is a comical/critical perspective on society that is even more all-embracing than that of the picaresque novel. As noted in the theater of Rojas Zorrilla, comical/critical access to certain sectors of society required altering the usual *gracioso* role of servant. Our playwright does this to a minimum degree in his *gracioso*- '*gorrones*,' traditional student-servants, and to an almost unprecedented degree in his peasant, marriage-broker and '*pícaro*' *graciosos*.

The second section of this chapter will deal with social satire as a vehicle of *gracioso* humor. The social satire that the *siglo de oro* playwright carries out via his *gracioso* seems mostly ephemeral and superficial. It appears intended to elicit the immediate laughter of his theater audience rather than to promote any thought-out social amelioration. This may be so because the comical primary function of the *gracioso* inhibited the comic figure from projecting serious and pondered thoughts. This greatly restricted the quality and intensity of the social criticism contained in his dramatic role.¹¹² It appears to me that the social satire expressed via

¹¹² Maravall offers a sociological explanation of the phenomenon by stating that "esa crítica social, sin intención de cambiar las cosas, que ejerce con frecuencia el gracioso, tiene un valor

the *gracioso* does not seem intended to persist in the audience beyond the comical moment of its expression and does not seem to tackle weighty problems. Nevertheless, the laughter that it does elicit frequently reflects, as I will point out whenever possible, a connection to traditional popular/carnavalesque humor. This laughter itself may often transform seemingly insignificant *gracioso* social satire into a pertinent instrument for the comical derision of the socially high and dominant and the comical exaltation of the socially low and vulgar.¹¹³

Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos*, too, are assigned a very limited responsibility as social critics. In general, they are charged with making fun of a variety of social types representing trades, professions and nationalities. Other social targets of the *gracioso* could be categorized as follows: social conventions, such as greeting formulas or dueling; specific physical traits, such as baldness; women;¹¹⁴ and such norms of social interaction as love and marriage. Just about all of these categories of *gracioso* comical social criticism retain, as has been noted, links to the

estabilizador; al hacerla impersonal, al generalizarla, se niega que tenga razón de ser la discrepancia de algunos" (154-55). For a differing position on this matter, see, for example, Ruiz Ramón who states that criticism "introduce en la comedia el sentimiento cómico de la existencia, que no es necesariamente divertido, sino que tiene las más de las veces, sentido correctivo y crítico" (336).

¹¹³ Bakhtin states that "the essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (19-20).

¹¹⁴ Díez-Borque, asserts that what he refers to as 'medieval misogyny' is limited in the *comedia* to the *gracioso*, which is quite accurate. The scholar's linkage to the medieval is itself most telling for the thesis of this study. (*Sociologia* 92).

popular carnivalesque tradition that was still then reflected in the popular subculture. I will focus on these categories in the order listed.

Within the first and broadest of these categories, *graciosos* are expected to comically attack the series of familiar social types that also abound in the picaresque novel: bar owners who dilute their wine, deceptive innkeepers who serve up ‘*gato por liebre*,’ dishonest pharmacists and inefficient medical doctors, rowdy students, sly lawyers, informal tailors, musical barbers, crazy poets, odd foreigners. Almost all these types have already been linked to traditional popular/carnivalesque humor. These include those tied to corporal activities such as eating and drinking, those that identify specific vices with specific peoples, and those exalting a riotous student lifestyle.

The concrete object of *gracioso* satire appears to matter little. All that matters is that his critical words bring the audience to laughter. This is usually accomplished not on the basis of originality in the object targeted, but rather on the basis of its familiarity to a popular audience with cultural ties, still, to the tradition of popular/carnivalesque humor. An example of this could be a long speech that Baraúnda makes in *Los celos de Rodamonte*. Without any great novelty in terms of the targets themselves, Rojas Zorrilla manages a measure of freshness in his presentation by having Baraúnda explain how he behaves himself when encountering members of those traditional targets. He states:

Cuando encuentro a los Franceses,
me engabacho de sombrero,
y cuando encuentro a Españoles,
soy arrogante y sobervio.
Con Sicilianos como

mascarrón, con los Tudescos,
 por las plazas y las calles
 voy dando palo de ciego.¹¹⁵
 Si a los Ginoveses sirvo,
 hago asiento por momentos;¹¹⁶
 y si a los Italianos
 trato de guardar mi asiento.
 Soy bufón con los señores,
 con los plebeyos, plebeyo,
 mentiroso con los sastres,
 músico con los barberos,
 albéitar con los Doctores,
 historiador con los ciegos,
 tramposo con mercaderes,
 con los pleitantes, Gallego,
 soldado con mentirosos,
 aguador con taberneros.
 Y sólo con los Poetas
 no puedo ser lo que quiero. . . . (Act III 183r.)

¹¹⁵ ‘*Dar palo de ciego*’ is still used for ‘lurching drunkenly.’

¹¹⁶ ‘*Hacer asiento*’ ‘set up a banking operation.’ This prepares the word-play, ‘*asiento*’ ‘backside,’ for associating Italians with sodomy.

His list identifies arrogance, excessive drinking and sodomy with specific nationalities,¹¹⁷ thus echoing popular/carnavalesque humor. He targets inefficient medical doctors, whom Bakhtin and Burke both signal out as objects of deriding humor in the popular/carnavalesque tradition,¹¹⁸ by comparing them to veterinarians. With the ‘señores’ he plays the buffoon, a historical-traditional figure whose function involved the comical dressing down of the high-born and powerful.¹¹⁹ With the hyperbolizing military type, the ‘milus gloriosus’ assimilated into popular culture from Roman comedy,¹²⁰ he becomes a liar. In fact, just about all the others who appear on Baraúnda’s list, barbers, identified with popular music and connected to medicine, blind ballad singers, merchants, lawyers and poets, would be familiar faces moving through the urban marketplace in which Bakhtin (160, 165) locates the emergence of popular/carnavalesque humor.

It would be difficult to pinpoint the trade or profession that suffers most at the hands of the satirizing *gracioso* of *siglo de oro* theater. It is clear, however, that one of the most chastised was the medical profession, a favorite target of popular/carnavalesque humor. Rojas Zorrilla himself does not fall short of other playwrights in his attacks, via the *gracioso*, upon inefficient

¹¹⁷ The identification of drunkenness with Germans is widespread in *siglo de oro* literature, even finding its way into the *Quijote*. The identification of sodomy with Italians is perhaps less so, but besides Rojas Zorrilla, who also makes that identification in *Lucrecia y Tarquino* 349-52, it is found, for example, in Mateo Alemán, *Guzmán de Alfarache* 71. For homosexuality as a target of satirical humor in the *siglo de oro*, see, for example, Díez Fernández 119-43.

¹¹⁸ Bakhtin 179-80, 185-87, 258. Burke 161.

¹¹⁹ Bakhtin 8, 20. For the relation buffoon/*gracioso*, see, for example, Ley 33, 74.

¹²⁰ See, for example, Boughner 10-20.

doctors. These, again, offer very little originality in stressing the profession's lethal ignorance. In *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, for example, Caimán ponders what trade or profession he might enter when his military service ends: tailor, man of letters, pharmacist, 'alcahuete,' doctor. But he decides immediately that he will not be a doctor because: "Sé mucho, y no tengo mula" (BAE, 54, 425b).

In the act that Rojas Zorrilla contributed to *También la afrenta es veneno*, written in collaboration with Luis Vélez de Guevara and Antonio Coello, Barreto narrates the often repeated but invariably laughter-eliciting anecdote of the doctor's mule that cures a patient of an ailment while the doctor is detained outside the sick person's room. The following is the last part of his long narration, which, with but minor variations, must have kept popular audiences in stitches from its initial preparation to its anticipated conclusion. He states:

La mula con desenfado,
 con gualdrapa y ornamento,
 se fue entrando al aposento
 adonde estaba acostado
 el enfermo, que sintió
 herraduras, con dolor
 dijo: "Aqueste es el doctor";
 sacó el pulso y no miró:
 la mula, que miró al brazo
 sin saber sus accidentes,
 tomó el pulso con los dientes
 con grande desembarazo.

El volvió el rostro con tema
 y salió a echarla en camisa,
 pero diole tanta risa
 que reventó el postema.
 El médico que la vio,
 para que el mozo la agarre,
 le dijo a la mula: Arre;--
 y él le dijo al médico, “Jo,
 señor médico, yo he quedado
 absorto del caso, y mudo,
 la postema, que él no pudo,
 su mula me ha reventado;
 y si esto otra vez me pasa,
 aunque el caso me atribula,
 envíeme acá su mula
 y quédese usted en casa.” (BAE, 54, 600a)

In the final analysis, neither mules nor doctors can cure us, because doctors themselves are ‘*matasanos*,’ as Tarabilla of *Santa Isabel, reina de Portugal*, tells his theater audience:

Aqueste mundo, señores,
 todo es traza, todo es modos,
 y en él nos morimos todos
 de enfermedad de doctores. . . . (BAE, 54, 268c)

The mere repetition of traditional jocular references to specific professions/trades

were apparently enough to elicit the laughter of *siglo de oro* theater audiences. Still, it is logical to suppose that the laughter would have been greater and more intense when the playwright achieved a measure of surprising freshness in his presentation. Moved by this incentive, as all *siglo de oro* playwrights would have been, Rojas Zorrilla's theater offers numerous examples of his particular inventiveness in the transmission of traditional comical critiques in this area. The ensuing pages will highlight some of those examples, which, while not pretending to be exhaustive, will serve, as well, to offer a fuller picture of the comicality achieved by our playwright via social criticism.

In *Progne y Filomena*, for example, the brevity with which the *gracioso* admits to having lied, “hablé por boca de sastre (*BAE*, 54, 53b),¹²¹ perhaps had greater satirical impact than a long commentary, however humorous, on that profession's traditional lack of veracity.¹²² And in *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza*, Damián ingeniously transmits society's collective antipathy toward the public executioner, not a frequent subject of *gracioso* social criticism, by stipulating that not even criminals want the job. He states:

Dio en la cárcel un pregón,
que aquel que admitiese serlo,
le perdonaban cualquiera
delito, aunque fuese hecho

¹²¹ Terse brevity was a feature of ‘*conceptismo*,’ one of the Baroque stylistic modes of *siglo de oro* literature.

¹²² For the humorous criticism of tailors, see, for example, Rojas Zorrilla's *Primera parte* where the *gracioso* of *Persiles y Segismunda*, 131Ra, places them in a sort of Quevedesque hell.

contra la persona real.
 Por la cárcel discurrieron,
 y con haber tantos hombres
 por raros delitos presos,
 con saber que han de morir,
 no ha habido uno en todos ellos
 que admitiese ser verdugo;
 porque todos eligieron
 más muriendo, muerte honrosa,
 que vida infame viviendo. (*BAE*, 54, 187a)

This same *comedia* contains an example of an accusation against a teaching profession that had not escaped the critical attention of earlier satirists. The protagonist is incidentally comical in protesting against the noises that disturb his sleep, the sounds coming from a nearby school, but the *gracioso* Cosme has the final word:

Alejandro: No es menos que el herrador
 esto, Cosme; al maestro llama.

Cosme: El sale a hablar a una dama
 que allí le aguarda.

Alejandro: ¿Ha, señor
 maestro?

Maestro: ¿Qué me mandáis?

Alejandro: Escucha atento.

Maestro: Deci.

Alejandro: Ya sabrá que vivo aquí.

Maestro: Por muchos años viváis.

Alejandro: Yo vengo a dormir ahora

y una mosca me despierta,

cuanto más junto a mi puerta

tanto tiple.

Maestro: (ap) Me enamora

el Alejandro

.....

Maestro: (ap). Temblando estoy.

Digo, que obedeceré

todo cuanto me ordenáis.

Alejandro: Libre con eso quedáis

y yo a gusto dormiré.

Maestro: Y yo os soñaré de aquí

adelante.

Alejandro: No haráis mal.

Cosme: Un miedo lleva Pascual

como cirio. (*BAE*, 54, 172b-c)

The popular audience of that time would most probably have laughed heartily at the teacher's homosexual exhibition, and perhaps even more so at the phallic allusion of the *gracioso*.¹²³

¹²³ The large candle referred to, cirio pascual, is exaggeratedly phallic.

Baraúnda of *Los celos de Rodamonte* can also introduce the listed second target of *gracioso* social humor with his attack upon a greeting formula that was an often satirized Spanish social convention: the ‘besamanos’ or ‘besapiés.’ Baraúnda, as if wishing to exceed all preceding *graciosos* in this matter, receives his master as follows:

Déxame besar, señor,
 la suela de tus zapatos,
 la plantilla, el cordobán,
 los capillos, los retazos,
 las puntadas, el talon,
 el ponleví, y esos zancos,
 las orejas y las cintas,
 y luego a besar me passo,
 la soleta, el escarpín,
 la calceta, y en llegando
 al pie, te beso los callos,
 los tobillos, el empeyne,
 los dedos buenos, o malos,
 los juanetes, y los nervios,
 tropezones y embarazos,
 porque aqueste besapiés
 excedan los besamanos. (*Primera Parte* fol. 164v)¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Briefer, but with great comical impact via its genial substitution of ‘boca’ for ‘mano,’ is a

Since Bakhtin's clarifying study of popular/carnavalesque humor, Baraúnda's satirical play on the 'besapiés' can be perceived as a humorous deriding of the serious and dominant. It echoes popular/carnavalesque humor in its formal expression, an exhaustive accumulation of footwear and lower body elements, including laughable foot infirmities.¹²⁵ And it does so in its general comic effect because the custom involved, the 'besapié,' symbolically expressed the subordination of the people to those social betters that were targeted for ridicule in a carnival context.

The social convention that Rojas Zorrilla attacks most extensively through the humor of his *gracioso* is probably that of the duel over questions of honor. Dueling offers an ideal context for humorously highlighting the cowardice inherent in that comical role. This notwithstanding, the theater of Rojas Zorrilla represents what appears to be a concerted satirical-ridiculing effort to discredit/degrade that social convention so associated with the hegemonic nobility. Ridiculed are both the process and the execution involved in dueling as dramatized in *Entre bobos anda el juego* by the confrontation between the *figurón* Don Lucas and the comical Carranza (*BAE*, 54, 21b-c).¹²⁶ And perhaps even more so in the dialogue between the *gracioso*

phrase by Testuz, the *gracioso* of *El profeta falso Mahoma* who says "dame, señor, a besar / un juanete de tu pie, / el que más a boca esté" (261Ab).

¹²⁵ For the cumulative listing of synonymic elements in popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 177.

¹²⁶ The name of Carranza, the odd *gracioso* without a funny name, may have been intended to comically echo that of a well-known author on fencing, which would, of course, intensify the humor of this fencing comic figure: Jerónimo de Carranza, *De la filosofía de las armas y de su destreza y la agresión y defensa cristiana*, 1569.

Moscón and his master in *No hay amigo para amigo*, which details the dueling ritual while it is being verbally skewed by the *gracioso*. The dialogue attains comical absurdity by cumulative exaggeration:

Moscón: Con no menos de cinco dedos
me han dado en toda la cara.

Don Lope: ¿Eso sufriste? Oye, espera,
mas es lo que escucho;
¿Quién te dio, y como te dio?

Moscón: Señor, de aquesta manera.
(*Vale a dar a su amo una bofetada*)

Don Lope: Quita, pícaro, bufón,
¿y tan deshonrado estás
(cuando me ves enojar)
de chanza en esta ocasión?
¿No te corres de decirlo?

Moscón: Tiempo hay, ya me correré.¹²⁷

Don Lope: Pues dime, ¿sobre qué fue?

Moscón: ¿Sobre qué? Sobre un carrillo.

Don Lope: Oye, ¿Qué es lo que te dio,
fue puñada o bofetada?

Moscón: ¡Oh! Si me diera puñada,
no se la sufriera yo.

¹²⁷ Punning on ‘*correrse*,’ which can mean both ‘to be ashamed’ and ‘to defecate.’

Don Lope: Eso era menos.

Moscón: No sé

cual de las dos es mejor.

Don Lope: A mano abierta es peor.

Moscón: De esa manera fue.

Don Lope: ¿Que aqueso un hombre consiente?

Otra cosa hay que dudar:

¿sonó al llegártela a dar?

Moscón: Lo que es sonar, bravamente....

Don Lope: Cuando el bofetón te dio,

¿qué hiciste tú?

Moscón: Recibirle.

Don Lope: En fin, ¿no te satisfizo?

Cuando el bofetón te dio,

¿te hizo cara?

Moscón: Cara no,

porque antes me la deshizo. (*BAE*, 54, 95b-c)

In another satirical assault on dueling, this same *gracioso* enumerates, with self-mocking comical cowardice, all the parts of the body that can suffer harm from the dueling sword (*BAE*, 54, 99a).¹²⁸ But that social convention suffers its most withering ridicule in this play when

¹²⁸ This listing of body parts, above all the intestines, echo popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 162-63, 221-23.

Moscón, immediately after the last cited passage, performs on stage the comical pantomime of a duel.¹²⁹

In another *comedia*, *Abre el ojo*, Cartilla comically ridicules a necessary ritual of that social convention, the use of seconds. He states:

Vete solo, y que se vaya
 el padrino que él trujese;
 ¡lo que me pudre y me mata
 el que usen llevar padrinos!
 ¿Que se esté un hombre en su casa,
 con su quietud, con sus hijos
 y su mujer, y que haya
 quien diga: veníos conmigo
 que a reñir voy a campaña,
 que hago confianza de vos?
 Ladrón, haz de ti confianza,
 y riñe tú tu pendencia,
 pues eres tú quien la causa...
 pero que llamen padrino
 al que va de mala gana

¹²⁹ Such comical pantomimes, clearly for the audience's consumption, are not usually detailed in stage directions in *siglo de oro* theater, and would rely for maximum effect, of course, on the actor's projection of an extra-textual, (dance-like) artistry.

con la cólera del otro
 a irse matar a estocadas,
 es cosa que ha de pudrirme;
 pero lo que más me mata,
 no es que haya tontos que llamen,
 es que haya locos que vayan. (BAE, 54, 139c-140a)

And moments later the question of seconds is made part of the plot, in no less a ridiculing fashion than by incorporating the unusual comical *caballero*, Don Julián, a dueling maniac (BAE, 54, 140a-c).¹³⁰

But perhaps the most effective attack on dueling over honor, without ceasing to be comical in the examples invoked, is offered by Sancho of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, who has been forced to play the role of his master:

Yo me entro a ser más profundo,
 y yo me entro a discurrir,
 ¿Por qué a mí me ha de pudrir
 que se usa honra en el mundo?
 ¿Porque uno llegue a plantar
 (dejemos a un lado miedos)
 en mi cara cinco dedos,

¹³⁰ The monomaniac as a source of humor is generally associated, in modern literature, with Don Quijote, but for its presence in carnivalesque humor, see Bakhtin 14. Rojas Zorrilla, credited with co-creating the '*comedia de figurón*,' demeaning of the ruling nobility, also has several secondary noble comic figures like Don Julián who appear to have that same function.

le tengo yo de matar?
Pues respóndame ¿por qué?
si hay barbero que me pone,
cuando afeitarme dispone,
como a un San Bartolomé,
y llega en su navaja
que sabe Dios donde ha andado,
y, en fin, después de afeitado
me toma el rostro y me encaja
cuatro o cinco bofetones,
¿por qué en otras ocasiones
hay duelo e indignación?
¿No es mejor un bofetón
que quinientos bofetones?
¿Que aquestos duelos prosigan,
que sea el mentir afrenta,
que no importa que yo mienta
y importa que me lo digan,
que haya en el mundo este afán,
que este uso de los hombres haya?
Señor, aun los palos, vaya,
que duelen cuando se dan.
Duelista, que andas cargado

con el puntillo de honor,
 dime, tonto, ¿no es peor
 ser muerto que abofeteado?
 ¡Y que a la muerte tan ciertos
 vayan porque el duelo acaben!
 Bien parece que no saben
 Los vivos lo que es ser muertos. (BAE, 54, 163a)

Dueling was a privileged convention of the socially dominant establishment, a process intended to satisfy an individual's offended sense of honor. To the subordinate population at large, which the *gracioso* invariably represents, dueling over honor was not only an alien custom but one that, in Rojas Zorrilla's theater, the comic figure dedicates himself to deriding via self-mocking laughter. This use of laughter as the degrading instrument of codes and conventions that the hegemonic social establishment took seriously cannot help but recall both the *modus operandi* and the goal of popular/carnavalesque humor.¹³¹ The deriding of dueling that flows from Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* certainly reflects, in the laughter of a popular audience, the presence of a popular sub-cultural alternative.¹³²

¹³¹ In the case of dueling, the convention, although an important part of the code of nobility, was opposed by the church and, often, by the monarch. The ambivalent social status of dueling undoubtedly allowed the *gracioso*, the playwright, a good measure of critical leeway.

¹³² This concerted assault on dueling, which would seem to contradict the normatively whimsical, non-serious character of the stock comic figure's social satire, may have a personal explanation, at least in part, in the fact that Rojas Zorrilla was himself severely wounded in a duel. See MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 20.

A frequent target of Rojas Zorrilla's satirical *graciosos* is a physical type: the bald male, especially those who attempted to hide it with a wig. Although baldness has always been an object of humorous ridicule it is difficult to explain why our playwright dedicates so many comical verses to it. Perhaps it is because Rojas Zorrilla was himself bald and his wig had been the object of ridicule in court and literary circles.¹³³ Our playwright could be a good example of George Meredith's observation that the person endowed with a true sense of humor could laugh at himself. Beyond this biographical datum, what might explain the subject's persistence in the history of comedy could well be the bald head's visual similarity to a skull, since the conceptual fusion of life and death is central to popular/carnavalesque humor.¹³⁴

The satire that Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* direct against baldness takes on a variety of forms: puns, anecdotes, mock praise. In *Entre bobos anda el juego*, Cabellera refuses to admit that his name is negative, "*Pues yo sé / que a todo calvo aficiona.*" And when he is asked to identify himself, he responds, "*Cabellera, / al servicio de tu calva*" (BAE, 54, 27b). In *Casarse por vengarse*, the *gracioso* Cuatrín makes fun of his master's incipient baldness by explaining how and why monkeys have hairless bottoms. In his fable-like account this is attributed to the original 'mona' having been sentenced by Bacchus, for her sins, to baldness, but on appealing to Jupiter the sentence was reduced by permitting her to wear the hairless patch anywhere on her body. He states:

Mas ella, la sentencia confirmada,

¹³³ See Cotarelo y Mori, *Don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 49 and MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 19.

¹³⁴ Images of death, the seemingly laughing and happy skull, are among the most prominent figures of popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 248, 323, 408-409.

llamándose infeliz y desdichada,
 tanto en su mismo enojo se atropella,
 que iba buscando en sí donde ponella;
 y, en fin, por no ponérsela en la frente
 la puso en el lugar más indecente.
 Considera tú, pues, repara ahora,
 que el castigo en la mona se mejora,
 pues lo que el calvo trae en la mollera,
 la mona lo trae puesto en la trasera. (BAE, 54, 105c)¹³⁵

The mock praise of baldness can be as brief and direct as that expressed by Morrión in *Los trabajos de Tobías* upon noticing that the idiot in the cart with whom he must compete for alms is bald, “el primer calvo que es bobo” (138Aa-b).¹³⁶ Or, more frequently, as an extended passage following a traditional comic formula: Saint Peter was bald, while Judas had abundant hair; saints are generally depicted as hairless, whereas devils are most often hairy. It is the line followed by Crispinillo in *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca* when Beatriz laughs at his baldness. He states:

¿Pues qué hay en los calvos malo?
 Tu sinrazón se comida,
 y no los quieras culpar;
 dime, ¿habrás visto ahorcar

¹³⁵ The clear intention of the fable is to assimilate the bald head to the lower body, which is the vital center of carnivalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 18, 21.

¹³⁶ Morrión continues with a satire of baldness (138Rb).

a un hombre calvo en tu vida?...
 Que se arrepintió repara
 un calvo que a Dios negó;
 mas Judas que lo vendió
 tuvo un copete a vara;...
 Cuando a un santo que se salva
 pinta cualquier pintor,
 para darle más primor
 le pinta con tanta calva;
 y con cuidado y desvelo
 al contrario has de mirar,
 que si a un diablo han de pintar,
 le pintan con tanto pelo. (BAE, 54, 72a)

This traditional and formulaic mock praise of baldness very possibly echoes popular/carnavalesque humor in its deriding allusions to the hegemonic religion.¹³⁷

If it was difficult for Rojas Zorrilla to extract fresh humor from the satire of trades and professions, the objects of criticism for centuries, it was no less difficult to do so with respect to women, traditional targets of satirical humor. Despite his extraordinary sensitivity to women,¹³⁸

¹³⁷ See, for example, Bakhtin 84-86.

¹³⁸ Rojas Zorrilla has gained a reputation as a playwright especially sensitive to the feminine condition. This is due mainly to the independence of mind and spirit with which several of his female protagonists confronted a code of honor that was heavily weighted against them for example the sisters Progne and Filomena and Isabel of *Cada qual lo que le toca*. And also,

Rojas Zorrilla could not, in seeking to satisfy the high level of laughter required by the popular audiences of the *corrales*,¹³⁹ discard the familiar satirical vein directed at women. And, as expected, a great deal of what is comically expressed by his *graciosos* about women is composed of traditional satire and common everyday clichés: their exaggerated love of carriages (*Los bandos de Verona*), their deceptive use of cosmetics (*Los encantos de Medea*), their loquacity, their intrigues and tricks. Limonada's long comical attack on women (*BAE*, 54, 483a-c) in *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* might serve as a general example.

These assessments of women, almost always humorously negative, belong to a long European tradition, but are largely devoid of misogynistic intensity, as Bakhtin indicates, when reflecting popular/carnavalesque humor:

The popular tradition is in no way hostile to woman and does not approach her negatively. In this tradition woman is essentially related to the material bodily lower stratum; she is the incarnation of the stratum that degrades and regenerates simultaneously. She is ambivalent. She debases, brings down to earth, lends a bodily substance

because he frequently centered his *comedias*, as their titles indicate, on willful feminine figures from the history and mythology of the classical world *Lucrecia y Tarquino*, *Los encantos de Medea*, *Los áspides de Cleopatra* and *Progne y Filomena*. See for example Americo Castro's edition of *Cada qual lo que le toca y La viña de Nabot* 183-97; MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 137; and Alfred Rodríguez and S.E. Roll-Velez's edition of *Progne y Filomena* 7-8. For a general view of women in Rojas Zorrilla's theater, see, for example *Women in Twenty-five Plays of Rojas Zorrilla*.

¹³⁹ For the demands of a popular theatrical audience, see, for example, Ley 40-41, 73, 123.

to things, and destroys; but, first of all, she is the principle that gives birth (240).¹⁴⁰

It is perhaps pertinent for the modern reader to cite examples of satirical attitudes toward women that have practically ceased to be jocular material. Such would be the case, for example, of the masculine use of violence in reaction to feminine conduct. *Cartilla of Abre el ojo* touches on it with an ingenious arithmetic word-play that most likely intensified the laughter elicited by the subject itself while watering down its misogynistic message.¹⁴¹ *Cartilla* comments:

La que me pone dos huesos
 en la frente sin dolor,
 más abajo de la frente
 le pongo cinco por dos. (*BAE*, 54, 131b-c)

Or, for that matter, the extreme misogyny revealed by Caimán, *gracioso* of *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, by ingeniously subordinating his sexual appetite to his irrational hatred of women:¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Spanish *siglo de oro* theater is, in general, favorably inclined toward the feminine. See, for example, Díez-Borque, *Sociología* 358; and, attributing it to the existence of the *cazuela* in the *corral*, Aubrun 70. Also Cohen indicates that “just as an initial social distinction between classical and Renaissance literature depends on presence or absence of slavery, so in the comedy the first principle of differentiation is the relative liberation of women, a movement that in some ways has its roots in primitive Christianity and that has continued, with inevitable false starts and regressions, to the present” (187).

¹⁴¹ The self-mocking humor derives from the fact that *Cartilla*’s numerical victory, five for two, is a hilarious defeat in qualitative terms: a mere slap for being cuckolded.

Libia: Ruego al cielo que por él
no me saquen a quemar.

Caimán: ¿Quemar?

Libia: Es ley promulgada
contra el humano apetito.

Caimán: Si ello es después del delito,
quémente, no importa nada.
¿Y en el castigo se encierra
el hombre también?

Libia: No.

Caimán: Di,
¿sólo a las mujeres?

Libia: Sí.

Caimán: No me voy yo desta tierra.

Libia: Con pasiones tan erradas
¿Cómo a amarme te acomodas?
Respóndeme.

¹⁴² Upon recognizing the generally pro-feminine tenor of *siglo de oro* theater see Díez-Borque *Sociología* 92 where he refers to ‘medieval misogyny’ as relegated therein to the *gracioso*. As a subject of humor, as it invariably is even into our own politically correct day, it would naturally fall upon the comic figure in that theater; but it is significant to note how that entire subject of humor is, in his opinion, connected to the medieval.

Caimán: Porque a todas

las deseo ver quemadas.

Y el quererte ahora es

según de la ley confío...

Libia: Dime, ¿por qué? ¡Caimán mío!

Caimán: Porque te quemem después. (BAE, 54, 426a)

In this same vein of contrasting past and present attitudes, several examples can be cited of a negative appreciation of a number of aspects of the feminine which are today ‘normal’ but were then the objects of comical satire. One example would be the matter of the pre-marital loss of virginity, which today has little significance but which Gibaja of *Lo que son mujeres* takes a comical swipe at via an ingenious pun:

Serafina: ¿Cásanse agora mujeres?

Gibaja: Algunos casamientillos

hay de viudas.

Rafaela: ¿De doncellas

no hay también?

Gibaja: Halos habido;

pero hay poco, como hay pocas. (BAE, 54, 192a)

Also see, concerning feminine deceit (Rojas Zorrilla, *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado* BAE, 54, 150a), the character of maidens in love (*El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza*, BAE, 54, 170c), feminine anger (MacCurdy *Morir pensando matar* 38), feminine tears (Castro, *Cada qual lo que le toca* 54), and how women despise what they already possess (Castro, *Cada qual lo que le toca* 5).

Rojas Zorrilla achieved a measure of comical novelty in his satirical focus on women, I believe, by often introducing a feminine perspective via *graciosas*. It is a perspective often directed to and appreciated by a *cazuela* capable of severely inhibiting a play's success.¹⁴³ There is a good initial example in Libia, the amorous servant-*graciosa* of *Los áspides de Cleopatra*. She complains because Cleopatra has just decreed that all sins against chastity are to be punished by death in the case of the woman involved. Libia's problem as a woman, which places her destiny at odds with the new decree, is that she is drawn to love precisely by its prohibition. She states:

Justicia venga del cielo
sobre la reina Cleopatra.
Apelaré del rigor
con que al precepto me irrito,
¿Que haya mandado en Egipto
que no haya quien tenga amor?...
Desde que ha que todos ven
este precepto importuno,
no encuentro hombre ninguno
que no me parezca bien.
Con dos mil faltas escojo
a todos, tan torpe soy,

¹⁴³ Note Asension's observation that "la furia burlona de los mosqueteros y las llaves con que silbaban las hembras en la 'cazuela'" (130).

que tras un tuerto me voy
 porque me hace del ojo.
 Y cuando llegue a faltar
 un tuerto, que querré advierto
 a un calvo, con ser bien cierto
 que no le puedo pelar....¹⁴⁴ (BAE, 54, 425b)

Libia's soliloquy can be compared to a traditional ecclesiastical condemnation of the female as the personification of sinful flesh, which in fact Libia represents with her rather inordinate sexual appetite. But the targets of her lust reduce the misogynistic theological emblem that she represents, *carne*,¹⁴⁵ to carnivalesque laughter: her punning attraction to the one-eyed man because of the way he looks at her or to the bald man even if she can't get anything out of him.¹⁴⁶

Beatriz, of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, is, if unfortunate, much more selective. She is only attracted to strong masculine types who physically mistreat her, systematically rejecting effeminate males. That is why she is attracted to Don Juan, disguised as a servant. She states:

Este criado, este hombrón

¹⁴⁴ *Pelar* usually meaning to shear, also has the colloquial meaning of 'to strip' in an economic sense.

¹⁴⁵ *Mundo, demonio y carne*, with the latter generally identified with the female, are the traditional causes of sin.

¹⁴⁶ For baldness as a subject of laughter in Rojas Zorrilla's Spain, see, for example, Flores García 151. Laughter at the expense of deformed or grotesque bodily representations forms part of the repertoire of popular/carnivalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 342-43.

de linda presencia y talle,
 me aficiona por lo tosco
 y pica por lo arrogante.
 He dado en pensar que es
 desgarrado, y algo jaque,
 y los bravos solamente
 son los que me satisfacen.
 Lleve el diablo las mujeres
 que quieren lindos bergantes...
 pudiendo cualquiera dama
 tener, si quiere buscarle,
 no lindo que la requiebre,
 sino hombre que la maltrate;
 que si he de hablar la verdad,
 las bofetadas me saben
 (si son a tiempo), mejor
 que gallinas y faisanes. (*BAE*, 54, 165c-166a)

In this example, Beatriz projects a masochism that satirical writers often conveniently identified with women. But even this slanderous tradition is watered down considerably by the character's comical comparison of 'bofetadas' with the pleasure of gorging on food, a standard recourse of the popular/carnavalesque.

In general, a critical-comical focus on women conforms to the formula of degrading/regeneration that, as noted, Bakhtin identifies with popular/carnavalesque laughter. In

these terms, it becomes more understandable that so much comical criticism of the feminine should come from the most feminine-sensitive playwright of *siglo de oro* theater and form a significant part of the comical material of a theater considered to decidedly favor women in its overall presentation.

There are few married *graciosos* in *siglo de oro* theater, and these find little happiness in marriage. Listen to Tronco, who argues with his wife over who will speak to the senate:

Olalla: ¿Es posible que queráis
enseñar vuestra simpleza?

Tronco: ¿Más que os rompo la cabeza,

Olalla, si no calláis?

Yo soy bestia o soy marido,

y cuando nunca lo fuera,

por ser hombre ¿no pudiera

ser en todo preferido? (MacCurdy, *Numancia* 31)

But it is a happily single *gracioso* who best describes marriage as a sort of hell and husbands and wives as mortal enemies. Barreto of *También la afrenta es veneno* cannot understand why his Portuguese master “derrama lágrimas de sebo” (according to a Spanish satirical tradition the unctuous Portuguese would comically shed oily tears) over the loss of his woman, forcibly married to the king. He then directs himself to the men and women in the audience. He states:

Señores, hablemos claro

(esto quisiera saber)

¿hay quien quiera a su mujer?

Que será raro, y muy raro.
 Señoras, respuesta pido
 A todos los pareceres,
 Con haber tantas mujeres
 ¿hay quien quiera a su marido?
 El marido a (y) la mujer,
 bien que viven disfrazados,
 son dos bandos encontrados
 y que siempre están, infiero,
 aunque lo fingido obre,
 siempre peleando sobre
 cual mata al otro primero. (BAE, 54, 599b)

Unhappy marriages have always been comedic material, and when these lead to adultery, especially by the female, they form a significant part of the comical stock of the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.¹⁴⁷

The causes for unhappiness in marriage lend themselves, too, to comical commentary. Thus Mogenicón of *La traición busca el castigo* comically points out the risks of marrying beautiful women. He states:

Una ignominia muy rara
 me admiro que el mundo pase,
 ¡que haya hombre que se case
 con mujer de buena cara!

¹⁴⁷ See, Bakhtin 241, 244.

¡Que haya hombre tan menguado
 que aquello que en puridad
 debe ser comodidad,
 lo busque para cuidado! (BAE, 54, 243a)

And Tronco and Olalla, a childless couple, arguing over an infertility that is naturally attributed to the wife:

Tronco: Pues yo os juro que no os haga
 parir a vos el caballo
 de Troya.

Olalla: Soy desdichada.

Tronco: La carrasca, Olalla amiga,
 a porrazos y a varadas
 da algún fruto, pero vos
 no daréis fruto si os matan. (MacCurdy, *Numancia* 59)

The hallowed institution of marriage receives little respect from the satirical *gracioso* of Rojas Zorrilla's theater. A good example of its rejection as such, (granting preference to lovers over husbands,) is exceptionally put in the mouth of a feminine character for maximum comical effect upon the *cazuela*.¹⁴⁸ Andrea, the servant-*graciosa* of *Entre bobos anda el juego* side-steps

¹⁴⁸ The existence of the *cazuela*, a section of the *corral* reserved for women theater-goers, may well have originated as a means of achieving, as in church, the proper separation of the sexes in mass gatherings, but the theatrical effects emanating from the reality of a fully feminine section of the playhouse were probably not foreseen. For one thing, the *siglo de oro* playwright seeking to elicit the laughter of his popular audience, had in the *cazuela* an entire section, reacting in

the real social problem, her mistress having been married off by her father, to attack marriage itself:

Doña Isabel: ¡Qué perezoso el bien
y el mal; oh qué diligente!
¡Que mi padre inadvertido
darme tal marido intente!

Andrea: Marido tan de repente
no puede ser buen marido...

Doña Isabel: A obedecer me condeno
a mi padre, amiga Andrea.

Andrea: Puede ser que éste lo sea,
pero no hay marido bueno;
ver como se hacen temer
a los enojos menores,
y aquel hacerse señores
de su perpetua mujer;
aquella templanza rara
y aquella vida tan fría,

unison to comical feminine subjects. As Bergson has noted, “laughter appears to stand in need of an echo. . . . it is something which would fain be prolonged by reverberating from one to another, something beginning with a crash, to continue in successive rumblings, like thunder in a mountain” (64). If this be true, the *cazuela*’s reaction would have had a domino effect.

donde no hay un 'alma mía',
por un ojo de la cara;
aquella vida también
sin cuidados ni desvelos,
aquel amor tan sin celos,
los celos tan sin desdenes,
la seguridad prolija,
y las tibiezas tan grandes,
que pone un requiebro en Flandes
quien llama a su mujer 'hija'.
¡Ah bien haya un amador
destos que se usan ahora,
que está diciendo que adora
aunque nunca tenga amor!
Bien haya un galán, en fin,
que culto a todo vocablo,
aunque una mujer sea diablo,
dice que es un serafín;
luego que es mejor se infiera
(haya embuste o ademán)
aunque más finja un galán

que un marido, aunque más quiera. (BAE, 54, 17a)¹⁴⁹

Andrea clearly directs her degrading feminine perspective on the hallowed institution to the women in the audience. The married woman's complaints voiced by the comic figure would have found in the *cazuela* a most sympathetic reception.

The following examples offer an idea of satirical perceptions of marriage in the social satire of Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* that I believe reflect the playwright's ingenious twist on a trite subject: Limonada of *Nuestra Señora de Atocha* while dragging a bound prisoner, "¿E que sin ser yo su mujer / ande éste por mí arrastrado?" (BAE, 54, 490c); Galindo of *Cada qual lo que le toca* attempting to describe the hatred felt by his master for an ex-lover, "Dime a mí, ¿no me dijiste / que la aborrecías más / no siéndolo, que si fuera / tu mujer en propiedad?" (Castro, *Cada qual* 51); or Beltrán of this same *comedia* upon thinking about sleeping with his wife, "Para ser con mi mujer, / de aquí a una hora es muy temprano...." (Castro, *Cada qual* 69).

On the subject of love, one of the most repeated comical situations in *siglo de oro* theater is that in which *graciosos* counsel their masters on the matter. Within this traditional modality, the counsel given the protagonists usually consists of a comical recital of much-repeated and familiar maneuvers and procedures. It is thus worth citing examples offering exceptional

¹⁴⁹ As is often the case, the humor inseparable from the subject presented is greatly intensified and extended by the comical language and images involved in its presentation. In the present case, such would be, for example, the phrases '*Marido tan de repente*,' playing on '*comedia de repente*,' an unrehearsed theatrical performance, '*por un ojo de la cara*,' a funny exaggeration meaning 'at any price' in colloquial speech, and '*pone un requiebro en Flandes*,' a play upon '*poner una pica en Flandes*,' an expression reflecting the then contemporary war in the Low Countries and indicating an unusually difficult effort.

situations, such as the counsel-commentary of *criado-alcahuete* Coscarrón of *No hay ser padre siendo rey* upon fulfilling his unethical mission.¹⁵⁰ He states:

Yo cumplí con tus doblones,
 cumple tú con tu demanda,
 y encomiéndate a Tarquino,
 en prometer no haya falta,
 y si pudieres echar
 un lagrimón, será causa
 para conquistar mil Porcias;
 dile aquello de mi alma,
 lo de la ese y el clavo,
 que es una gran circunstancia;
 si pidiere celulita,
 dale tú un cedulazo;
 y si la mano de esposo,
 prométe las entrabas,
 y un obispado también,
 que con esto y buena maña,
 buen despejo y mal amor,
 gran promesa y corta paga,
 habremos cumplido entrambos

¹⁵⁰ *Siglo de oro* theater abounds in disloyal servants, both male and female, who sell access to their mistresses.

con todas las carabanas. . . . (BAE, 54, 397b)

Or, under similar circumstances, the words of Beatriz of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos y amo criado*:

Pero de tal modo sea
 que no sepa...pero ya
 sale a esta sala, y es fuerza
 que me vaya: yo te dejo
 donde aprovechar te puedas
 de tu prosa; dila aquello
 de mi ángel...mi bien...mi estrella,
 promete como persona
 que no ha de dar; mete arenga;
 dila que eres infelice,
 que tienes infausta estrella,
 que de piedad puede ser
 que te escuche y se enterezca;
 y si pudieres echar,
 aunque más por fuerza sea,
 un lagrimón, sea cosa
 para enternecer las peñas. (BAE, 54, 155c)

Noteworthy is the coincidence of comic figures of both sexes on the effectiveness of the male suitor crying crocodile tears. Apparently, women's supposed vulnerability to male tears is re-discovered by each successive generation.

Among the varied and humorous opinions/counsels concerning love that women, rather than men, receive from comic figures in Rojas Zorrilla's theater, one of the most memorable, for its brevity and its aggressively anti-male proposal, is that directed by Inesilla of *La traición busca el castigo* to the *cazuela*. She states:

(ap. Damas mías, escuchad,
damas de otros, advertid:
cuando seais yunques, sufrid;
cuando fuereis mazos, dad.) (BAE, 54, 245c)

Love is both comically attacked and no less comically defended by the *graciosos* of Rojas Zorrilla's theater. An example of the first is clearly directed by the mentioned Mógicón to the theater audience:

Señores, en puridad,
perdónenme lo atrevido,
yo a preguntar he salido
una gran dificultad;
yo he de parecer menguado
si no parezco importuno;
reyes míos, ¿hay alguno
que haya estado enamorado?
La honra apostaré aquí,
y aun la vida he de poner,
que no hay hombre ni mujer
que no me diga que sí.

¿Cómo se puede creer
ver a un amante decir,
que ni ha podido dormir
ni que ha podido comer?
Esto es cosa que me acaba
porque llega a ser creída;
no tuviera la comida,
viéramos si enamoraba.
Di, amante de Barrabás,
nombre debido a tu llama,
¿cómo en gozando a la dama
cenas mucho y duermes más?
Almibarado amador,
¿qué se hizo tu voluntad?
Ves como tu enfermedad
era tema y no era amor?
Señores míos, yo creo,
reviente aquesta postema,
que cualquier amor es tema
y cuando más es deseo;
jamás he visto querer
hombres que andan ocupados,
los que están enamorados

es que no tienen qué hacer;
y si a otra luz sus errores
quieren ver claros también,
¿cómo nunca quieren bien
poetas ni jugadores?
Que no hay quien ame contemplo
si no le va el pundonor,
y don Andrés, mi señor,
les sirva a todos de ejemplo;
por él solo he colegido
este discurso apretado,
pues que no admitió rogado
a la que ama aborrecido;
y el no poderla gozar
sirve de influjo a su estrella,
que no hiciera caso della
si la pudiera alcanzar.
Pues si apurado en rigor
el amor que activo quema,
no es amor, que sólo es tema,
luego es tema y no es amor.
Ah, bien haya yo, que quiero
amante a las damas grato

con prevenciones de gato
 por enero y por febrero;
 aunque tuviese a la mano
 bergantes de dos en dos,
 en mi vida, juro a Dios,
 dije requiebro en verano;
 en aqueste gusto fundo
 mi regalo y mi quietud,
 que primero es mi salud
 que todo el amor del mundo. (*BAE*, 54, 252a-b)

And in defense of love, curiously enough, the same *gracioso*, while limiting himself to his own gender:

Eso sí, cuerpo de tal,
 ama fino, quiere astuto,
 y no te precies de bruto
 que Dios te hizo racional;
 ahora quiero agradecerle
 ese intento a tu dolor,
 que es de hombres tener amor
 y de brutos no tenerle.
 Ama con resolución
 la dama que te admitiere,
 que es gallina quien no quiere,

o a lo menos es capón.¹⁵¹ (BAE, 54, 243b)

This running debate of Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* on the subject of love, both in favor and against it, is always comically expressed. Its goal is the laughter itself, often defiant of the establishment. A good example is the sexual encounter between Libia and Caimán of *Las áspides de Cleopatra*:

Caimán: Mujer es ésta, y deseo
 parecer hombre con ella.

Libia (ap): Yo me llego.

Caimán (ap): ¡Hay tal menguado!
 ¿Qué tardo? Quiero llegar.

Libia (ap): Aunque me hayan de quemar.

Caimán: Sea Júpiter alabado.

Libia: Por siempre, y pase adelante;
 pues ya en la ocasión me veo.

Caimán: ¿Habrá un poquito de empleo
 Para un amor vergonzante?

Libia: No faltará.

Caimán: ¡Que piedad!

Libia: Llegue y no tenga recelo;
 acérquese, hermano.

Caimán: El cielo
 le pague la caridad.

¹⁵¹ The word *capon* implies, even as carried over into English, a gelded male.

Libia: Tome (*dale la mano*).

Caimán: Páguesele Cupido;

de hambre sólo la tomo,

tres meses ha que no como

bocado de lo que pido;

ya que en amoroso lazo

tan piadosa os alargáis

que poco de mano dais,

dadme un bocado de un brazo. (*BAE*, 54, 425c)¹⁵²

This sampling of the comical presentations of love in Rojas Zorrilla's theater may be rounded out with some examples of satirical perceptions of amorous conduct. Such would be, for example, Mogicón's attack against philanderers, in this case directed at his master:

¿Por qué has de galantear

a cuantas mujeres ves?...

Que eres grandísimo bobo

o muy grande socarrón. (*BAE*, 54, 233b-c)

¹⁵² There is a fairly clear degrading of the spiritual, much in the tradition of carnivalesque humor, in the religious linguistic formulas the two employ. As Burke indicates, "any list of the genres of popular culture would be seriously incomplete if it omitted parody, notably parody of religious forms" (122).

Or that of Sancho of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos y amo criado*, against those who fall in love with a portrait:

¿Ha de pintarte el pintor
 Si es tu mujer presumida,
 Si es necia o es recatada;
 Advertiráte fiel
 Muy solícito el pincel
 Si es sucia o dealiñada? (BAE, 54, 147b)

Or that of Julia of *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena*, against the comically feigned lack of appetite of women in love:

Eso sí, cuerpo de tal,
 aunque amor tienes, me alegro
 que me confieses tu hambre,
 y no damas que vemos
 que de puro enamoradas
 dicen cuando están comiendo:
 “No puedo comer, amigas”;
 y dice la amiga luego:
 “Cómeme este pollo, hermana”;
 y ella dice: “Por ser tierno....”
 “Ay, cómete este gigote”;
 y vuelve a decir: “No puedo;
 aquel traidor...pero vaya

siquiera porque está bueno.” (BAE, 54, 334b)¹⁵³

Or Guardainfante, *gracioso* of *Los bandos de Verona*, on whether hating or forgetting is the preferred after-effect of love:

Pues si las damas del pido,
 como en mi ejemplo verás
 solicitan mucho más
 el odio que no el olvido,
 con fingir una pasión
 que a ser pasión no se asoma;
 ¿por qué las damas del toma
 no han de seguir su opinión? (BAE, 54, 370b-c)

Mogicón, *gracioso* of *La traición busca el castigo*, reveals that men’s love is not incremented by a woman’s easy submission, but has to be fed by her resistance and other obstacles. Mogicón scolds his master for the latter’s persistent chasing after easy love affairs, recognizing, from his own experience, that “*Los estorbos son pimientos / del amor.*” He states:

En mi vida quise hembra
 que me costase barata;
 cuando dos almas se estrechan
 y en lo mejor de los lazos
 hay una madre a quien teman:
 “Guarda no oiga la vecina,

¹⁵³ The fusion of food/eating and lower body functions such as sex (love) is a characteristic element of popular/carnavalesque humor. See, for example, Bakhtin 89, 280.

guarda mi hermano no venga,
 ay, si vendrá mi marido,”
 y deudos de esta ralea,
 este sí es amor que pica;
 pero cuando hay desvergüenza,
 --¿Quién es?—tu tía—no importa;
 tu hermano,--éste se halla fuera;
 tu madre, --no estará acá;
 tu vecino,--que me vea;
 tu marido,--que ya salgo:
 éste es amor con llaneza,
 y así no daré por él
 ni dos higos ni dos brevas. (*BAE*, 54, 236c)

Or, finally, the often cited Sancho, playing his master in the *comedia*, claiming, with scandalous humor, the carnal privileges of love. He states:

Si os dejáis comunicar,
 veréis más suave un alma
 que la holanda y el cambray;
 sabed que un marido en cierno
 bien puede ser manual. (*BAE*, 54, 158c)

For further examples see, *BAE*, 54, 24c, 63a, 126b and 155a.

It can be said, in general, that, as stipulated in introducing this analysis of the stock comic figures' social satire, Rojas Zorrilla followed a long established pattern. The targets satirized,

specific professions, societal customs, social institutions or specific social groups, are usually those targeted in a popular subculture that echoes the centuries-old popular/carnavalesque tradition. The stock comic figure's satirizing process, punning, materialized allusions to body functions, etc., are usually keyed, as well, to its popular origins. As such, they constitute, to one degree or another, the interpolation of a popular subculture onto a stage that projects the dominant noble-directed culture of the day.

Summary

The *gracioso* of *siglo de oro* theater is known to break with his traditional role as servant. This significantly broadens the social medium that *graciosos* project for comical ends. Rojas Zorrilla's designated *graciosos* break with that traditional role in almost a third of his plays. Much of the laughter generated by the social medium of the *gracioso* is directed, as has been underscored in my examples, against elements of the hegemonic establishment of the day. This comically derides the latter in the process and often ties such laughter-eliciting incidents to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ In dealing with the social medium as a source of the comic figure's humor, it is necessary to bear in mind a significant general condition, impossible to measure adequately given its omnipresence. In this sense Crespo states that "en general, puede decirse que en toda comedia con gracioso se da la existencia de algún rasgo paródico" (18). In effect, the mere presence of a *gracioso* constitutes, in some measure, a usually comical parody of his noble master. Parodic laughter, it must be remembered, is, according to Bakhtin 83, a primary instrument of popular/carnavalesque humor's degradation of the hegemonic establishment. This comical procedure, relative to the literary, will be analyzed in a separate mode of *gracioso* humor.

The social satire that *siglo de oro* playwrights concede their *graciosos* does not as a rule entail a pondered ameliorative analysis of societal problems. The laughter sought is readily elicited via the satire of traditional and familiar societal elements. However, this said, it is not difficult to perceive the connection that such a seemingly trite and pointless comical repetition establishes and maintains with the laughter-centered tradition of the popular/carnavalesque, with the popular subculture it represents.¹⁵⁵ This connection to European popular/carnavalesque humor tends to take the comical figure's social satire far beyond that of an exercise in insubstantial repetition.

¹⁵⁵ Cohen, who distinguishes Spanish and English theaters of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries on the basis of their fusion of the popular and the learned, indicates that “the play’s colloquial style, punning, improvisational quality, intimate and shifting relation between actor and audience and the evocation of both tavern and town-square also indicates its profound indebtedness to popular culture” (61).

Chapter 3

Literary Satire and Parody

The mode of *gracioso* humor that will be analyzed in this chapter is the stock comic figure's use of satire and parody involving specific literary categories. These will include literary genres and subgenres, specific literary styles and works, and, finally, the comical allusion to well-known literary characters. Literary satire involves comically critical comments made by the *gracioso* concerning those literary categories, while literary parody refers to the stock comic figure's humorous imitation of any of the indicated literary categories. These usually entail a critically satirical presentation of the object parodied. The stock comic figure's allusion to well-known literary characters is self-defining.

As in all the modes of *gracioso* humor the playwright's primary goal is to produce laughter, via the stock comic figure, in his predominantly popular audience. But as noted in those modes already analyzed, the stock comic figure's use of literature as a comical touchstone will often entail, as well, the airing of historically significant social and cultural tensions underlying early modern Spanish society. I will attempt to underscore and comment on such significant airings, thus hopefully uncovering elements for a fuller perception of *siglo de oro* theater's social and cultural function. In this sense, I will proceed in line with contemporary criticism's rejection of Maravall's influential description of the *comedia* as a unidirectional instrument of support for the hegemonic status quo. Maravall deemed the *comedia*'s significant comedic content as inconsequential to any cultural interchange, but as Burningham states "...we believe that the

picture he paints is too monolithic and too ‘top-down’ in its characterization of cultural interchange.” (33)¹⁵⁶

Literary satire and parody as sources of *gracioso* humor are not uncommon in Early Modern Spanish Theater. In Rojas Zorrilla’s plays these are manifest in a great variety of forms. I will focus first on the broadest literary categories involved, literary genres or subgenres. I will focus next on the more concrete object of a singular literary style or work, and, finally, on the stock comic figure’s references to specific literary characters. The manner in which these varied forms are presented in the plays, such things as the language or imagery involved, often reveal strong ties to the popular/carnavalesque tradition, and I will attempt to highlight those ties. The following four objects of the stock comic figure’s literature-based satire and parody involve literary genres and subgenres. These range in importance from the *comedia* itself and the *Romancero*, fully literary genres, to the subgenres of the *Romance de Ciego* and the *Epitafio*, a poetic form derived from classical epigrammatic literature. I will analyze these in the order of importance set forth above.

The literary genre most frequently satirized or parodied by the stock comic figure is the *comedia*. The *gracioso* openly mocks the conventional ways and means of the specific form acquired by the dramatic genre in Early Modern Spanish literature.¹⁵⁷ He does so even to the point of satirically commenting on his own theatrical role in the play. In almost all cases to be analyzed, there is, thus, a significant side-effect. This side-effect stems from the fact that satirico-comical comments about the *comedia* within a *comedia* cannot help but disrupt theatrical illusion

¹⁵⁶ Also see, in this regard, Madrigal 11; Blue, *Spanish Comedies* 37

¹⁵⁷ The term *comedia* which should be translated simply as play, includes all three-act theatrical works, comedies, tragicomedies and tragedies.

to one degree or another. Theatrical illusion is the consequence of an audience's momentary but necessary suspension of judgment in order to feel as real what is being acted out on stage. The stock comical figure's systematic disruption of theatrical illusion, even to the point of speaking personally to the audience, constitutes, itself, a mode of *gracioso* humor and will be further analyzed in a separate chapter.

I will analyze and underscore the two significant derivatives flowing from the stock comic figure's comical comments on the theatrical genre in which he is participating. In some of the following examples the *gracioso* can be interpreted to be acting as mere spokesperson for the playwright's personal, critical views on different aspects of the *comedia*. In other examples, particularly when he is commenting on his own role in the play, the *gracioso*, often taking an adversarial position before the playwright, appears to be the latter's alter ego. As F. William Forbes has indicated, "the *gracioso* figure as alter ego for the creative playwright is a concept deserving of such (sic) further study" (82). What these occasions allow, as Forbes suggests, are insights into the playwright's creative process with the *gracioso* representing one side of a creative debate taking place in the playwright's working mind.

In the following few examples I will underscore the stock comic figure's role as comical spokesperson for the playwright's views on certain conventional norms of the *comedia*. In *Lucrecia y Tarquino*, for example, the *gracioso* Fabio is commissioned to put on a '*comedia de repente*' for a court festival. The playwright uses this opportunity, via Fabio, to critique the *comedia* actor's tendency to stress the rhyme of his poetic text instead of keeping the latter's grammatical fluidity. He states:

Vamos, pero airosamente
a fuer de comedia grande,

que va partiendo entre dientes

los versos. (MacCurdy, *Lucrecia y Tarquino* 74)

Rojas Zorrilla's critical assessment of the manner in which professional actors delivered his text has his *gracioso* employ a graphically hilarious biting image. The critical intensity thus achieved offers us an insight, within the comical text itself, of the playwright's displeasure before the dramatic genre's basic problem: the bridge between the playwright's creativity and the actor's performance.¹⁵⁸ In general, modern dramatic theory has tended to resolve such tensions between a fixed dramatic text and its performance by gradually granting more and more importance to the extra-textual elements of staging, acting, lighting, scenery, etc.

The next example involves a common plot device of countless 'capa y espada' plays. It has a *dama* hiding her lover before her father or brother find him in their home. The handy device lent itself especially well to the kind of comical intrigue that characterizes that theatrical form. This familiar situation is given a fresh twist in Rojas Zorrilla's *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza* when Diana, from a Guelph family, receives the visit of her lover's father, a member of the hated Ghibellines. Believing that her brother is approaching, Diana, fearing the encounter between members of the two warring factions, asks her servant to hide the old gentleman in a nearby room. Laura, the *graciosa*, then comically comments on the novel situation: "El primer viejo ha sido / que hasta hoy en la comedia se ha escondido" (*BAE*, 54, 178a).

Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos* will comically point out such laughter-eliciting departures from a much repeated standard dramatic situation. In the above example, one can also detect a reproach directed at the hackneyed standard dramatic situation itself. Although originality was

¹⁵⁸ See, for example, Burningham 182-190.

not an important goal of *siglo de oro* theater, one can readily imagine playwrights of that or any epoch feeling coerced by the creative restraints imposed by plot elements that become standardized and customary.

An example of an established custom of Early Modern Spanish Theater occurred at the end of the play when the gracioso, in a farewell speech, normatively asked the audience for its applause.¹⁵⁹ This self-serving farewell was usually made comical by the stock comic figure's unabashed coddling of the audience for a positive response to the play. On occasion, however, the playwright's patent displeasure with an established theatrical custom that had him begging, via his stock comic figure, for audience approval comes clearly across. A good example of playwright displeasure with the custom is Tarimón's farewell speech in *Persiles y Segismunda*, which defies the audience to write its own play if it doesn't approve of the one just presented.

Tarimón states:

Y aquí da fin el Poeta
 A la Historia de Persiles
 Sus trabajos, y tragedias,
 Y ruega a todo el Senado,
 Que le den a buena cuenta,
 No más de un vitor prestado
 A pagarle quando sea
 El oyente, y vuesarcedes,
 Quien escrivan la Comedia, (149 Ab).

¹⁵⁹ This custom underscores the high degree of permeable contact across the theatrical fourth wall between the gracioso and the attending public, to be dealt with in a separate chapter.

Tarimón renders his customary petition refreshingly comical by converting it into a manner of economic transaction with the audience, ‘*a buena cuenta.*’ It is a deal in which the audience’s applause would be a loan, ‘*prestado,*’ to be paid back by the playwright when he, as audience, ‘*el oyente,*’ attends a play written by them. It is not difficult to envision Rojas Zorrilla, behind Tarimón, defying the audience and, more importantly, the very custom of the stock comic figure’s farewell petition.

This ending can lend itself, however, to another interpretation. Rojas Zorrilla, a companion of Calderón de la Barca, the official court playwright, had some of his *comedias* first staged at the court of Phillip IV. This makes it possible that the quoted ending was initially directed at his fellow playwrights in the court audience. In that case, it would offer some insight into the apparently friendly competition between the group of ‘court’ poets that came to dominate the second generation of *siglo de oro* playwrights.¹⁶⁰ It is quite possible, as well, that Rojas Zorrilla deemed this ending as appropriate to both venues, the fellow playwrights in a court audience and the popular public of *the corrales*. It is significant, in this sense, that our playwright uses this same play-ending speech in another *comedia* (BAE, 54, 566c).

The following examples identify the *gracioso* as the playwright’s alter ego. The stock comic figure who comically comments on his own role is not an uncommon phenomenon in Early Modern Spanish Theater. In doing so, he on occasion appears to become something more than a spokesperson for the playwright’s views on the theatrical genre. When the *gracioso* berates the playwright for some aspect of his role he brings out an inner debate within the author himself. This confrontation establishes him as the latter’s alter ego in the ongoing creative

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 18-19.

process. Tarimón scolds the playwright, for example, about his own delayed appearance in the *comedia*. He states:

“Gracias a Dios que ha llegado
mi papel en la comedia,
que me tuvo con cuidado
la tardanza del Poeta” (130Rb).

The early appearance of the *gracioso*, often in the very first scene of a play, was a distinctive norm of the *comedia*. The need for humor in a theatrical product directed at a predominantly popular audience guaranteed the stock comic figure’s early and persistent presence on stage. Its postponement in the case of Rojas Zorrilla’s tragic rendition of Cervantes’s Byzantine novel could be explained as a purposeful reduction of humor in an attempt at tragedy.¹⁶¹ Behind Tarimón’s vocal protest over his delayed appearance one can perceive the playwright’s reluctant surrender, confronting his popular *gracioso*, to the imposed demands of a popular theater. This reluctant submission to the demands of a popular audience, *vulgo*, would be much in the manner repeatedly confessed to by Lope de Vega in his *Nuevo arte de hacer comedias*.¹⁶²

As just noted, in some of the comic figure’s comments on his role in the dramatic action developing on stage, he becomes the dramatist’s critical alter ego, reflecting a conflicted state within the creative process. Bofetón, of *Peligrar en los remedios*, offers another example of a

¹⁶¹ Rojas Zorrilla is noted for having exceptionally sought a form of tragedy in many of his plays. See MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla and the Tragedy*.

¹⁶² For a detailed analysis of Lope de Vega’s procedure, see, for example, Burningham 192-214.

gracioso unhappy with the playwright's creative decision. He indignantly explains the latter's reasoning for bringing an end to his comical role in the *comedia*. Bofetón states:

Quédese vusté con Dios;
ya no salgo a la comedia
y ya me voy a mi casa,
porque no quiere el poeta
que le haga estorbo el gracioso
cuando hay un paso de veras. (*Vase*) (*BAE*, 54, 364c)

Openly opposed to the playwright, '*el poeta*,' the stock comic figure speaks as if having 'discussed' it with him. To wit, that the playwright does not want a *gracioso* around, '*que le haga estorbo*,' when preparing to introduce a serious dramatic situation, '*un paso de versa*.' The *gracioso* speaks with comical indignation over his early dismissal, '*y ya me voy a mi casa*,' but the playwright's stated reasons for doing so reflect his creative dilemma. It is a dilemma that must have faced all playwrights of that time. With only 300 odd verses of the drama-resolving scene remaining in the play, the presence of the *gracioso* could very well dilute the dramatic intensity of the ending. The playwright's dilemma was created, then, by the established custom of having the stock comic figure present at the play's end to deliver the mandatory plea for an ovation from the audience. One has to bear in mind at this point the kind of audience reaction that the mere physical presence of the *gracioso* on stage could effect. Laughter would be forthcoming from his funnily distinctive dress and, almost assuredly, from his funnily peculiar physiognomic projection.

On this occasion, besides, Rojas Zorrilla appears to purposely stress his custom-defying attitude. *Peligro en los remedios*, as do a fair percentage of *siglo de oro* plays, sports a *graciosa*,

Celia, to comically complement the invariably present *gracioso*. In Bofetón's absence Celia would be very properly next in line for the customary *gracioso* farewell speech.¹⁶³ However, Rojas Zorrilla, apparently intent on making his custom-rejecting point, has her, too, comically bow out prematurely. Celia states:

Ello es fuerza,
 Que el gracioso y la graciosa
 Sigam una misma tema;
 Y pues él no ha de salir,
 Denme vustedes licencia,
 Que voy a pedir un vitor
 Si sale bien la comedia. (Vase) (BAE, 54, 364c)

Celia personally takes the protagonist's order to leave the scene as an order from the playwright to leave the play. She does so by adducing a comically unheard of requirement that the *graciosa* follow in the footsteps of the *gracioso*, 'que el gracioso y la graciosa / sigan un mismo tema.' But she does not leave before comically claiming, in the absence of the *gracioso*, 'y pues él no ha de salir,' the stock comic figure's 'right' to offer the usual play-ending farewell plea for applause. Then, directing herself to the audience, 'Denme vustedes licencia,' she asks its permission to plea for applause, 'vitor,' if the play turns out well, 'si sale bien la comedia.' The customary end-of-the play plea she carries out is prematurely out of place and requires, thus, an unusual projection into the future.

¹⁶³ The *graciosa* of Early Modern Spanish theater shares all the 'special' privileges of her male counterpart, including, as can be noted in the following quote, that of speaking directly to the audience.

In the successive interventions of the play's two *graciosos* cited above, it is interesting to perceive a veritable tug-of-war between the stock comic figures, holding to their customary roles as comical play-enders, and the playwright, set on altering that custom. In the end, this particular expression of Rojas Zorrilla's inner creative tension, holding to the accepted *comedia* norm or breaking its fixed creative restraints, offers an enlightening stalemate. The *graciosos* get their way, at least in part, but the playwright only succumbs grudgingly to traditional custom by altering it significantly. He does so, first, by dislocating the time and place of the stock comic figure's customary end-of-the-play speech, and, secondly, when the play actually ends, by having two main characters, not the discarded *graciosos*, offer the expected play-ending, applause-seeking speech.¹⁶⁴

One final example of the stock comic figure's protest revealing his function as the playwright's alter-ego and thus accessing the latter's creative dilemma is that of Baraúnda in *Los celos de Rodamante*. He states:

Desde que se hacen comedias
 De los sucesos del tiempo,
 No se habrá visto gracioso
 Que sirva en el mundo menos.
 Yo, criado Guadiana,
 A ustedes me confieso,
 Que aún no tengo un amo, cuando
 Seis leguas de él aparezco. (*Primera Parte*, 196 Rb)

¹⁶⁴ For Rojas Zorrilla's particularly innovative revolt in the face of customary play-ending pleas, see Burningham 156-57.

Baraúnda's complaint is that the playwright does not allow him to perform his normal activity as a servant, "No se habrá visto gracioso / que sirva en el mundo menos." The indispensable humorous element in his discourse is the geographic comparison he makes of himself, 'Yo, criado Guadiana,' to the Spanish river that notoriously disappears for long distances before resurfacing. And the justification for the humorous comparison and the reason why he cannot fulfill his normal theatrical activity, 'Que aún no tengo un amo, cuando / seis leguas de él aparezco,' is what allows us to delve somewhat into Rojas Zorrilla's creative difficulties. The playwright, addressing the audience through the stock comic figure, 'a ustedes me confieso,' vents his rather practical creative problem: having a single *gracioso* in a plot that required much movement between the camps of chivalric adversaries. This spatial relocation was not unusual, and was never questioned, in an Early Modern Spanish theater that never heeded the classical unities.

On another level of *gracioso* humor involving the *comedia* itself there were terms in the stock comic figure's vocabulary that directly alluded to theatrical matters. As such, they had a special impact when voiced within the play's dialogue. They were words like '*tramoya*,' which referred to the mechanical apparatus that made possible such things as ascending ghosts or descending angels.¹⁶⁵ Perhaps the most frequently used theater-related term was '*silbar*,' which referred to the manner in which a *corral* audience expressed its disapproval. These words would have comically reminded the audience that it was attending a play. But beyond the disturbance of theatrical illusion involved, such theatrical terms allowed the audience, as well as the modern reader, some insight into the playwright's creative stance.

¹⁶⁵ This mechanization of the stage was imported, with Phillip IV's recruitment from Italy of Cosme Lotti in the early 17th century. See, for example, Burningham 146.

The following examples record both the verbal and adjectival uses of ‘*silbar*’ by the *gracioso* Crispinillo of *Obligados y ofendidos, y gorrón de Salamanca*, who states, “Tu padre, Señora, / quedó de poeta / cuando le han silbado / su amada comedia,” (BAE, 54, 76a); and Coscorrón, the *gracioso* of *No hay ser padre siendo rey*, who indicates, “El Rugero se ha quedado / como poeta silbado,” (BAE, 54, 402a). Other examples can be found in BAE, 54, 83b, 150c, 262b. As expected, all the examples project the downtrodden, dejected state, ‘como poeta silbado,’ of the rejected playwright. It was a situation that Rojas Zorrilla suffered, to our knowledge, at least once.¹⁶⁶

If the stock comic figure’s comments offer a spontaneous expression of the playwright’s alter-ego, his allusions to the ‘*poeta silbado*’ could well reflect a stage of Rojas Zorrilla’s creative process. This would be his conscious or subconscious anxiety, during the very creative process, over offering his ‘*amada comedia*’ to the less than tender mercies of a popular *corral* audience. On the other hand, if the *gracioso* is thought to be functioning as just a spokesman of the playwright, simply conveying the playwright’s thoughts and/or feelings to his audience, a different conclusion may be reached. The stock comic figure’s allusion to the audience’s possible rejection of the playwright’s work could then be interpreted as an open challenge of the playwright to his popular audience.

These two possible interpretations of the stock comic figure’s interpolation of a reminder of the performance’s possible rejection are not mutually exclusive. Both offer important insights into the thoughts and feelings of Rojas Zorrilla, even as he writes, concerning the fortunes of his creation before the bar of a boisterous *mosquetería* and a key-whistle-packing *cazuela*.¹⁶⁷ What

¹⁶⁶ See MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 71.

our playwright, via the *gracioso*, reveals about himself during the creative process could very well apply to just about all *siglo de oro* playwrights facing the same popular judgment. It was a tribunal, as indicated by Burningham, consisting of “those members of the public who voted with their feet, voices, whistles and sometimes more solid projectiles” (37).

Finally, the projection of the *gracioso* as a humorous alter ego of the playwright himself occurs on those multiple occasions in which our playwright mocks poet/playwrights via his stock comic figure. In this self-mockery, so reminiscent of the popular/carnavalesque tradition,¹⁶⁸ Rojas Zorrilla ridicules the poet/playwright, as in all epochs, by associating his creative efforts with agitated demented states. A good example is offered by Pepino of *Primero es la honra que el gusto*:

¿Que tienes?
 ¿Que es esto? Sosiégate.
 ¿Estás pensando en arbitrios,
 O versificas? Pues bien;
 ¿No me respondes? (BAE, 54, 442c)

The *gracioso* equates the mentally agitated state he addresses, ‘*Sosiégate*,’ to an ‘*arbitrista*,’ a utopian ‘solver’ of national problems popularly considered demented, and a poet, ‘*versificas*.’

Rojas Zorrilla touches very close to home in ridiculing playwriting when, in *Sin honra no hay amistad* (BAE, 54, 295b), his *gracioso* attributes the abnormal conduct of his student masters to the fact that they are collaborating on a *comedia*. Rojas Zorrilla, a frequent collaborator in playwriting with one or more of his friends, appears to mockingly reveal the peculiar

¹⁶⁷ See Asensio 130.

¹⁶⁸ See Bakhtin 11-12.

psychological consequences of a joint creative process very much associated with *siglo de oro* theater. This self-mockery touches closest to Rojas Zorrilla when he projects laughable characters in his theater as authors of *comedias*.¹⁶⁹ In concluding, our playwright attains an unheard of identification with the laughable playwright when Gibaja, the marriage-broker/*gracioso* of *Lo que son mujeres* openly states that he is in the process of writing a *comedia* bearing the title of “*Lo que son mujeres*” (BAE, 54, 207b-208a).¹⁷⁰

The following pages will deal with Rojas Zorrilla’s parody of Spain’s rich balladry. The first printed *Romancero General* appeared in 1600, made up of twelve published collections of anonymous ballads sung and/or recited over many centuries by the Spanish people. Given the popular, largely illiterate character of his *corral* audiences, Rojas Zorrilla best exploited the comedic vein of literary parody via the use of an oral literature with which that audience was most likely to have been familiar. Our playwright was not the first *siglo de oro* dramatist to use ‘*romances*’ for comedic purposes. Like those who preceded him, Rojas Zorrilla, via his *gracioso*, inserts verses from well-known ballads in order to comically modify the reaction of the audience to what was occurring on stage.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Don Lucas, the laughable ‘*figurón*’ of *Entre bobos anda el juego*, is comically prepared to recite his ‘*comedia*’ at the drop of a hat (BAE, 54, 28a).

¹⁷⁰ This Baroque play on ‘theater within theater’ may be unique in *siglo de oro* theater. See, for example, Ley 228-29.

¹⁷¹ For Rojas Zorrilla’s use of the *Romancero*, see MacCurdy, *Two Instances* 367-70. For the comical use of *romances* in the Golden Age, see, for example, Hannah E. Bergman’s *Luis Quinones de Benavente*.

An example of this can be seen in the third act of *Lucrecia y Tarquino*. The *gracioso* Fabio accompanies Sextus Tarquinius to the home of Lucrecia when the aroused prince tries to overcome the latter's resistance to his advances. Fabio then comments, for the benefit of the audience:

Por esto dijo, imagino,
el que de decir se precia:
“Dándose estaba Lucrecia
de las astas con Tarquino”.¹⁷² (MacCurdy, *Lucrecia* 102)

The humor, which dilutes the tragic scene with its stunningly crude animal imagery, ‘*astas*,’ stems from the patent anachronism involved. The popular audience, transported to classical Rome by the play, would have recognized the verses sung or recited in the marketplace or at home. In this case, besides, the humorous verses appeared in a period in which the emblematic Lucrecia's extreme, suicidal conjugal chastity was being openly questioned. The easy rhyme ‘Lucrecia/necia,’¹⁷³ readily lent itself to an anti-hegemonic attitude very reminiscent of the irreverent popular/carnavalesque tradition.

What may constitute an exceptional or even a genuinely original aspect of Rojas Zorrilla's parodying of the *Romancero* is his use of popular ballads to produce entire comical scenes and even comical sub-plots. In both cases, we are dealing with unusually long textual interpolations. The fact that *graciosos* were invariably involved in these interpolations undoubtedly raised the level of laughter achieved in those long parodied re-enactments. The following are examples, first of the comic scene and then of the comic secondary plot.

¹⁷² The verses quoted are found in *Romancero general II* 564.

¹⁷³ See, for example, Gillet 120-136.

El profeta falso Mahoma is a decidedly propagandistic demeaning of Islam and its prophet. The constant menace of the Turkish fleet in the Mediterranean and the almost daily predations of Spain's coastal cities and towns by the Barbary pirates of North Africa gave *siglo de oro* playwrights a ready-made, popularly patriotic subject. In Rojas Zorrilla's work, the *gracioso* Testúz feigns being Mohammedan while comically exposing his true religious identity by declaring that he is "el más lindo prueba-vinos / que hay desde el Norte hasta el Sur." Popular *siglo de oro* audiences, not likely to have much theological knowledge, probably distinguished their own religión from Islam by those Mohammedan practices that radically differentiated the two. As it does even to this day, the Islamic prohibition of alcohol stood out in this sense. So Testúz proceeds to prove his avowed drinking prowess by means of a comic parody of the ballad "Las cabezas de los siete infantes de Lara".¹⁷⁴ The *gracioso* 'kills' seven 'botas' of famous Spanish wines, and then, in an inebriated state, pronounces eulogies, paralleling those of the paternally sorrowing Gonzalo Gustioz, over the empty 'botas' of the seven 'brothers': Esquivias, Valdemoro, Toro, Abadejos, Buguillos, Ajofrín and Membrilla. (*Primera Parte* 272-273)

The grotesque humor of this parody is intensified by its association with the sorrowful tones of one of the most tragic legends of Spanish history.¹⁷⁵ And the grotesquely humorous substitution of wineskins for the martyred *infante* heads cannot help but recall the consoling, renewing role that wine plays in the popular/carnavalesque tradition. But certain facts might well further explaining Rojas Zorrilla's willingness to so parody a well-known tragic ballad and, for that matter, his predominantly popular audience's laughing acceptance of it. It should be noted

¹⁷⁴ *Romancero General I* 450-52.

¹⁷⁵ For the fusion of the comical and the tragic in the 'grotesque realism' of popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 52-53.

that the ballad cycle of the Infantes de Lara included many other orally transmitted *romances*. These, as popularly well-known as the one parodied here, clearly indicate that, despite the death of the infantes at the hands of Moors, the cycle is based on the rivalry between the Christian nobility of Leon and Castile. Its deadly conflict occurs between Spanish nobles, whose comical parodying, welcomed by the popular audience of the *corrales*, would constitute an example of significant cultural interchange.

The most extensive comic parody of the *Romancero* by Rojas Zorrilla occurs in the second act of his *Numancia cercada*. This play, together with *Numancia destruida*, dramatizes the heroic fall of the legendary Celt-Iberian city. Its comical secondary plot is based on the ballad “*Las señas del marido*,” also known as “*La vuelta del marido*” and “*La recién casada*.”¹⁷⁶ In the various versions of the ballad a husband-soldier, long absent during a war, returns home either physically transformed by the passage of time or in disguise. When his wife fails to recognize him, he decides to test her faithfulness. He assures her that her husband is dead while he attempts to woo her. When the wife resists him, proving her faithfulness, the husband identifies himself.

In *Numancia cercada*, Tronco and Olalla, the *graciosos*, is a bitterly mismatched peasant couple who have throughout the play brought laughter to the stage with their incessant brutal bickering. When Tronco returns from killing ‘*romanillos*,’ he disguises himself in order to test his wife’s fidelity. Much of the dialogue’s comical impact flows from the contrast between the characters already familiar to the audience and the ballad characters they assume for the parody: peasants/nobles, taunting wife/loving wife.

Olalla: Digádesme el caballero,

¹⁷⁶ See *Romancero General I* 175.

que de la guerra venís,
si habéis visto por allá
a mi marido gentil.
Las señas que tiene, yo
bien os las sabré decir
El mirar tiene suave,
como amoroso el reír,
aunque mil veces, ¡ay, triste!,
me ha hecho llorar a mí.
Tronco se llama mi esposo,
y ¡qué tronco! Nunca fui
rama de tronco tan bueno;
que era tronco de un abril.
Muy bien sé yo que habrá andado
valientemente en la lid,
pero no sé si le han muerto,
porque ya tarda en venir.
Todos han vuelto a Numancia,
y él solo falta, ¡ay de mí!;
mas si acaso le mató
algún romano ruín,
venga la muerte, venga sólo a mí,
que no es para desdichadas el vivir.

Tronco: Ese soldado, señora,
 por las señas que decís,
 que bien conozco, por cierto
 que es ya llegado su fin.
 Yo le encontré peleando
 y vi que mató seis mil
 romanos; mas fueron tantos
 los que se hallaron allí
 que cayó de una estocada
 que le pasó la cerviz
 (Poco disgusto ha mostrado.) (*Aparte*)
 Si ya es muerto, ¿os servís
 de que los dos nos casemos?
 Brevemente lo decid.

Olalla: En verdad que me agradáis,
 y que para divertir
 las penas que he recibido,
 haré lo que me decís. (MacCurdy, *Numancia* 78-80)

Olalla, once ‘seduced,’ begins speaking poorly of her ‘deceased’ husband, ‘que era ese Tronco a mis ojos/feo, tonto, torpe y vil.’ Tronco, however, forgets about his stained honor when he hears that a victory feast is being prepared in the city. This victory of the vital, gluttony (food and drink) and sexuality, over the hegemonic, societal values of morality and conjugal honor may

well constitute a significant cultural interchange. It is humorously (food, drink and adultery) very much in line, as well, with popular/carnavalesque tradition.

As indicated, Rojas Zorrilla's also parodies two subgenres, which reveals the range of his parodying ability. These run, in effect, from one end of the literary spectrum to the other, from the simplest jonglueresque theatricality, the *romance de ciego*,¹⁷⁷ to the epitafio, a popularly parodied classical poetic form.¹⁷⁸ The range involved, along with the *tour de force* juxtaposition of polarized literary forms that it can occasionally bring about, will be underscored in the examples that follow.

At one extreme, the *romance de ciego* represents one of the oldest and simplest forms of popular poetry. Its typical spatial designators (*hele, hétele*) verbally transmit the image of the blind narrator pointing to the crude drawings of the narrated actions that traditionally illustrated the street-corner spectacle. Rojas Zorrilla's parody, via those spatial designators, elicited the laughter of popular audiences that recognized the echoes of a popular art form that was part of their life experience. An example of this is offered us by the *gracioso* of *Primero es la honrra que el gusto*: "Héle, hele por do viene / don Felix por la calzada" (*BAE*, 54, 447b). There is patent irony in the stock comic figure's indication of his noble master's approach via the popular echo of the primitive street spectacle. There is also a suggestion of an inside joke between popular *gracioso* and popular audience regarding noble posture, manner of walking, dress, etc. There is, thus, much here to suggest a noteworthy cultural interchange in the scene.

¹⁷⁷ For its ancient presence in Spain, see, for example, Burningham 36

¹⁷⁸ For the parody of the epitaph in popular carnivalesque humor, see Bakhtin, 85 For an example of the popularly parodied *epitafio* in Rojas Zorrilla's time, see, for example, Blue, *Spanish Comedies* 29-30.

Crispinillo, *gracioso* of *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*, offers another use of the parody of the ‘*romance de ciego*,’ “Hételo por do va entrando” (BAE, 54, 79b). In this instance, the parodied echo of the popular *romance de ciego* is humorously juxtaposed to verses intended to comically parody the intricate difficulty of *culterano* poetry:

El sol debajo de un manto,
la luz disfrazada, en sombras,
envuelto en nieblas un rayo
viene a verte.... (BAE, 54, 78c)

Although expressed in octosyllabic verse, the poetic format most proper to the popular *gracioso*, there is little question that the cited verses, with their hyperbatons and surprising metaphor, constitute a parody of Gongorine poetry,

Finally, the range and variety of poetic forms parodied by Rojas Zorrilla’s stock comic figures is exemplified by the following parody of the classical epitaph. Cartilla, *gracioso* of *Abre el ojo*, states:

Tente, no pases de ahí.
Considera; ¡oh pasajero!
lo que somos los amantes;
párate aquí, toma ejemplo
en el infeliz Julián. (BAE, 54, 136a)

In order to understand the full scope of the quoted parody of the classical epitaph, one has to understand the role that the Julián’ referred to plays in *Abre el ojo*. He is the foppish gentleman, with the ridiculous name of Don Julián de la Nata, who is so reminiscent of the

'*petimetres*' of 18th Century '*sainetes*.'¹⁷⁹ There is demeaning irony in the use of that particular classical form in the stock comic figure's allusion to the noble character.

In summary, the satire and parody directed at the *comedia* itself by the *gracioso*, often indicates that the playwright, even as he puts pen to paper, consciously uses the latter as his spokesperson for critical judgments of aspects of that very genre. In some of the examples analyzed, Rojas Zorrilla, via the stock comic figure, offers critical judgments concerning a number of *comedia* givens: ridiculing the manner in which actors delivered their verses in the performance of plays, making jest of the hackneyed character of certain kinds of scenes customarily incorporated into a specific type of play, and appearing to object, rather forcefully, to the fixed *siglo de oro* theatrical custom of having the *gracioso* end the play with a plea, on behalf of the playwright, for the audience's applause.

Other examples of the stock comic figure's satire of the established norms of the *comedia* could only be explained, beyond their immediate laughter-inducing intent, with a criterion other than his function as spokesperson for the playwright. Such a criterion would have to incorporate the psychological connection between playwright and *gracioso*, with the latter as alter ego of the former, intuited by Forbes for Spain's Early Modern Theater. The examples in question, those in which the *gracioso* comments on his own performance in the play, are usually adversarial, with the creature scolding his creator. They allow us a unique window into Rojas Zorrilla's creative process, into moments in which doubt and tension flowed from his pen into the stock comic figure's dialogue. It should be noted that Forbes intuited this special relation between playwright and *gracioso* for all of *siglo de oro* theater, in which the indispensable stock comic figure

¹⁷⁹ MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 127-129.

proliferates. So that what may be fruitful as applied to Rojas Zorrilla awaits a much more extensive application.

The Romancero, orally transmitted from generation to generation, was familiar to Rojas Zorrilla's mostly illiterate popular audiences. It thus represented a treasure of laughter-inducing material that our playwright exploited to an unusually lengthy degree. This is manifest in the full scenes and secondary plots given over in some of his plays to the parody of well-known ballads. In the example of the scene-long parody analyzed, Rojas Zorrilla has his funnily drunk *gracioso* ludicrously debase the decapitated heads of seven legendary noble brothers by re-enacting the ballad with seven emptied wineskins. In the analyzed example of the subplot-long parody, a humorously ever-bickering peasant *gracioso* couple boorishly re-enact, comically inverting its conventional message, "*Las señas del marido*," a ballad underscoring wifely fidelity.

Both parodies can be said to comically deride standard hegemonic ideals of 17th century Spanish society: tragic death with heroic patriotic trimmings, in one case, and marital fidelity in the other. In this sense, both parodies, used by a popular *gracioso* to bring predominantly popular audiences to laughter, would represent the kind of bottom to top cultural interchange that Burningham suggests. The fact that the derision is achieved by an irreverent laughter and that the parodies themselves utilize such laughingly scandalous elements as drinking and cuckoldry, tie well into a surviving popular/carnavalesque tradition.

The parody of subgenres, specifically of the lowly *Romance de ciego* and the classical epitaph, allows us to perceive Rojas Zorrilla's broad range in employing literary sources to induce laughter. In one of the examples of the *romance de ciego* analyzed, the popular street-theater form appears to be employed by the *gracioso* to mock his approaching master, probably as related to noble demeanor in general. This certainly would have tickled his popular audience.

The analyzed example of the parodied epitaph underscores, '*infeliz*,' a demeaning image of the hegemonic nobility. It is an image that would only become truly current in the following century, when a decadent aristocracy was historically on the way out. In both cases, the popular *gracioso* targeting the hegemonic class, the bottom-to-top cultural interchange involved seems rather patent.

In this section I will deal with the satire and parody of a specific literary style or work. I will first analyze examples of the stock comic figure's humorous attacks on 'culteranismo' and then proceed to our playwright's parody of an interlude from Cervantes's *Numancia*.

Culteranismo gave rise to a drawn-out polemic, which suggests a significant contingent defending its innovations.¹⁸⁰ These approving commentators of the new poetic style would not be immune from critical barbs. *Culteranismo* is undoubtedly the literary phenomenon most ridiculed by satire and parody in 17th century Spain. It is so by far, as well, in the dramatic works of Rojas Zorrilla. It is the poetic style associated with Gongora and his followers. Gongora's abundant use of Latinisms, his hyperbaton-based syntax and extravagant metaphors produced a purposely difficult, sophisticated poetic text that readily lent itself to comical satire and parody. There is little originality in Rojas Zorrilla's comical attacks on Gongorine poetry because Lope de Vega, Quevedo and their contemporaries, frequently employing parody as an instrument, had by then been waging war on '*culteranismo*' for decades.¹⁸¹ It is noteworthy that Rojas Zorrilla, a member of the Góngora-influenced Calderonian generation of Spanish playwrights, has often been classified as a *culterano* poet. This did not prompt our playwright to abstain from reaping laughter in such a fertile field of humor.

¹⁸⁰ For contemporary commentaries of Gongora's poetry, see, for example, Beverley.

¹⁸¹ See, for example, Castañeda 25-36.

It appears clear that humor at the expense of Gongorine poetry had its origin in the rivalry between poetic styles, particularly Quevedo's own 'conceptismo,' that occurred at that time. But its exploitation with comedic intent in a theater that was fundamentally popular, its acknowledged capacity to elicit laughter from the *mosquetería* and the *cazuela*, cannot reasonably be justified in those limited aesthetic terms. As invariably expressed via the popular *gracioso*, the comical attack on 'culteranismo' likely reflects an ongoing cultural conflict between the hegemonic elite and the popular masses. There is no doubt that the Latinizing semantic and syntactic renovations carried out by 'culteranismo' represent the laughter-eliciting elements most exploited in *siglo de oro* theater. These renovations involved a radical distancing of the higher, learned and serious echelons of society from popular language and usage. The comical satire and parody of such renovations probably reflect, thus, a popular rejection, via laughter, of its segregating distinctions. It represents, in this sense, the kind of cultural interchange, bottom-to-top, underscored by contemporary criticism. In the very same sense, the stock comic figure's theatrical satire and parody of 'culteranismo' also suggests a strong link to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor.¹⁸²

There is much mocking of 'culterano' semantics in Rojas Zorrilla's theater, much of it leaving little doubt as to intent. Cuatrín, *gracioso* of *Casarse por vengarse* for example, states:

De peña en peña, y no de rama en rama,
por mi vestido¹⁸³, más que por mi fama,

¹⁸² For linguistic parody of the hegemonic language as a key formula of popular/carnavalesque humor, see, for example, Bakhtin 13, 83.

¹⁸³ This *gracioso's* words suggest that those playing the role may have, at least optionally, worn distinctive clothing, and whatever the latter consisted of was logically intended to elicit laughter.

lo que hay de aquí a Palermo he sincopado,
que esto es hablar de culto o de menguado. (BAE, 54, 120b)

After using a Latinism, ‘he sincopado,’ that would have left his popular audience up in the air as to its meaning, he proceeds to identify its ‘*culterano*’ source, ‘que esto es hablar de culto,’ and then comically equate it with stupidity, ‘*menguado*.’ The stock comic figure’s speaking in hendecasyllables, parodying the verse form of Gongora’s major poems, leaves little doubt regarding his target.

Rojas Zorrilla’s search for something original to present in dealing comically with ‘*culterano*’ vocabulary led him to baptize a number of his *graciosos* with clearly identifiable ‘*culterano*’ words. Due to the comic figure’s repeated appearances in a play, this procedure allowed the playwright to often repeat the laughter-inciting word. It served as a laughable addition, as well, to the humor that, as we have noted, Rojas Zorrilla extracted from comically playing upon the unusual names of his *graciosos*.

If one were to judge by the number of times that the word *candor* appears in the satires of Gongorine poetry, one would have to conclude that it attracted special attention. According to Pinzón, the *gracioso* of Tirso de Molina’s *La fingida arcadia*, that word heads the list of the sinful words that suffer in Purgatory:

Este es Candor,
aquél se llama Brillante,
Emulo aquél, y Coturno
el otro; aquél es Celaje,

Cristal animado el otro.... (II 1421b)¹⁸⁴

So it is not surprising that a *gracioso*, Candor, appears in Rojas Zorrilla's *La vida en el ataúd*. There is irony, probably directed at the literate segment of his audience, in Rojas Zorrilla's introduction of a '*culto*' *gracioso* and a discussion of *culteranismo* in a play set in classical Rome. When Candor is introduced to Aglaes, she exclaims, "¡Apellido notable!" He responds:

Y extraordinario;

Porque soy hijo de un culto

y de un aborto o mal parto.

Salieron conmigo al mundo

Superior, Emulo y Azimo,

Nafragante, Errante y otros,

que en plumas de herejes—vamos,

dichos críticos y cultos.... (MacCurdy *Morir pensando* 163)

The lead word of his response, the latinized '*extraordinario*,' confirms that his '*culto*' name is no accident. And from that point on, Rojas Zorrilla's attack on '*culteranismo*' is ingeniously comical. Our playwright laughingly ties Gongorine semantic creativity to flawed human reproduction, 'porque soy hijo de un culto / y de un aborto o mal parto.' The multiple birth involved produces a list of other well-known '*culterano*' Latinisms. The indicated list of the strange terms would itself have induced the laughter of the *mosquetería* and *cazuela*. And then Rojas Zorrilla, abandoning the metaphorical birthing parallels, continues with a direct accusation: the creators of the offending words are heretical pens, '*plumas de herejes*,' that he

¹⁸⁴ Castañeda, 30-31, indicates that catalogues of '*culto*' words are not found in the theater of Lope de Vega, but are found in five of Tirso de Molina's plays.

The title of Tarabilla's how-to book is comical in itself. It is, to begin with, inordinately wordy, one of the many criticisms of the *culterano* text. It begins with two of the offensive words, 'disparatorio' / 'cultinantes,' the first of which, at least, sounds funnily like 'disparate.' The rest of it, 'que enfade a toda Lisboa / y a treinta mil mundos canse,' is blatantly and humorously self-incriminating. What it does, as well, merely by being reading material, but also explicitly, 'remedio para hablar culto / cualquier mujer de partes,' ('a way to teach any upstanding lady how to speak in that manner') is to identify the 'evil' with the upper, hegemonic social class. In so doing the quoted verses take on the character of a pointedly cultural interchange.

The popular stock comic figure's incessant mocking of *culto* language in Spain's early modern popular theater, as documented in Rojas Zorrilla's plays, reflects a popular rejection of an elitist, hegemonic spoken language. It echoes, too, the contrastive underscoring of vulgar language in popular/carnavalesque humor.¹⁸⁶ But the same can probably not be said of the parallel attack carried out in that theater, via satire and parody, upon the hyperbaton-bound and metaphor-ridden 'culto' text. This comically critical exercise would probably have been directed at the literate segment of the *corral* audience. When the *corrales* were built, a few decades after Madrid was designated capital the audiences would have been more predominantly popular than sixty years later, when Rojas Zorrilla's works were played there.¹⁸⁷ In any case, many Rojas

¹⁸⁶ Bakhtin dedicates a significant segment of his work 145-95 to the graphic language (bathgate) proper to popular/carnavalesque humor. As could have been expected in an epoch in which plays, with prior ecclesiastical censorship, required the sanction of that hegemonic segment of society, this crude language is little evident in *siglo de oro* theatrical texts. It may not be far-fetched, however, to imagine the *gracioso*, once on stage, going beyond the text in this respect.

¹⁸⁷ For the economic reasons behind the 'vulgo' still then constituting the bulk of *corral*

Zorrilla *gracioso* mocked the incomprehensible obscurity of the ‘*culto*’ text. This is comically expressed, for example, by the Candor of *La vida en el ataúd*, whose very name, as already noted, represents a mocking affront to *culteranismo*. He states:

He afilado
 en unos versos la lengua,
 más claudicantes y oscuros
 que la boca de un vieja. (MacCurdy, *Morir pensado* 170)

In three short verses, the *gracioso* manages to comically attribute two negative qualities to the ‘*culto*’ text he has written. The initial ‘He afilado / en unos versos la lengua’ clearly suggests that his text reflects the sharp tongue that is traditionally employed, both in Spanish and English, for disparaging or slandering. Then, showing his colors via the ‘*culto*’ neologism ‘*claudicante*,’ which reinforces the text’s malevolent intent, Candor proceeds to comically declares his text as illegibly obscure as a hag’s toothless mouth.

At times, as is the case of Sabañón of *Sin honra no hay amistad*, mocking the obscurity of the ‘*culto*’ text was carried out completely out of context and without sparing Góngora himself. The *gracioso*, merely in the process of describing a dark night sky, states:

Acaban de dar las dos
 del reloj de los Basilio.
 Está hecho un Góngora el cielo,
 más oscuro que su libro. . . .(BAE, 54, 311a)

The comical equation of ‘Góngora,’ his work, with obscure illegibility, ‘Está hecho un Góngora el cielo, más oscuro que su libro,’ suggests how intensely *ad hominem* the literary polemic

became. That this occurs in a context in which there is no allusion at all to ‘*culteranismo*,’ suggests just how common, and even off-handed, such comical criticism became in *siglo de oro* theater.

This broad attack on *culteranismo* includes the largely admiring commentators of Góngora’s poetry, those who fed and enlivened the great literary polemic of that time. So it is not surprising to note that they are not exempt from the satirical barbs of Rojas Zorrilla. An example of this is seen in the comical language used by Agueda, *graciosa* of *Sin honra no hay amistad*, shortly after Sabañón’s remark quoted above. She states:

Y si la noche ha salido
tan oscura, que no habrá
quien la comente en un siglo,
con haber comentadores
en Madrid más que vecinos. . . . (BAE, 54, 312a)

There were relatively few published comentators of Góngora’s poetry, so the humor in the quoted verses relies on exaggeration involving the depreciative principle of ‘everybody and his brother.’

Rojas Zorrilla’s parody of a scene from Cervantes’s *Numancia* takes place in *Numancia destruida*, the second part of a work on the destruction of that emblematic Celtiberian city. Although Numancia was not historically a Spanish city, its suicidal resistance was appropriated into modern Spain’s legendary past. Rojas Zorrilla chose to parody the most tragic scene in Cervantes’s play on that subject. It is that in which Marandro is mortally wounded while penetrating the enemy camp to get food for the starving Lira, dying at her feet. Tronco, the

gracioso of *Numancia destruida*, obtains a little bread, without Marandro's heroics, but he refuses to share it with his starving wife. Their dialogue follows:

Olalla: Si es que me tienes amor,
dame, Tronco, de este pan.

Tronco: ¿Hay disparate mayor?

Hambre y amor mal cabrán
en el pecho de un pastor...

Olalla: Dame siquiera un bocado,
que estoy preñada y aquí
malpariré.

Tronco: Reventad

luego. ¿Qué se me da a mí? (MacCurdy, *Numancia* 212-213)

The wily Olalla's claimed pregnancy, itself understood to be comically false, lends itself to her husband's comically brutal response, 'Go ahead, burst. What do I care?' Tronco only gives in when others approaching might steal his bread and the ever-nagging Olalla promises, in a final comic twist, to remain absolutely silent.

Rojas Zorrilla's parody of that particular scene from Cervantes's *Numancia* comically demeans the tragic heroism that both Cervantes and Rojas Zorrilla sought to underscore in the patriotic subject of their plays. In doing so, it might well serve as an example of the extremes to which *siglo de oro* playwrights were willing to go in eliciting the popular audience's laughter. But it also reveals, assuming the laughter achieved from the popular audience, how removed a popular subculture could be from the ideals of the hegemonic social classes. The parodic

mocking of hegemonic icons, whether religious or political was a hallmark of popular/carnavalesque humor with its asnal masses and its crowning of fools.

Not surprisingly, Cervantes's *Quijote* is the work most parodied by Rojas Zorrilla. See, for example *Entre bobos anda el juego*, BAE, 54, 21b, with an allusion to Don Quijote and Dulcinea; *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*, BAE, 54, 77a-b, echoing Don Quijote's adventure with the transported criminals; and *Los encantos de Medea, Parte II*, 167Aa-157Ra, in which Mosquete comically fights, with patent echoes of the *Quijote*, a lengthy battle with an imaginary giant.

In summarizing, *Culteranismo* was the manifestation of an early 17th Century European-wide poetic revolution identified as Mannerism.¹⁸⁸ In Spain, with its predominantly popular theater, it became the touchstone for a great deal of critical *gracioso* humor. In the examples analyzed of this widespread theatrical practice, Rojas Zorrilla proves extremely ingenious, particularly so with respect to the semantic renovation brought about by culteranismo. The Latinisms invented by Góngora and his followers obviously struck the popular ear of his audiences as unfamiliar gibberish, lending themselves to instant and automatic laughter. The comical degradation of the hegemonic language associated with the popular-carnavalesque tradition found a means of expression in Early Modern Spanish Theater. It did so, as noted in the examples analyzed, by a comical criticism of *culteranismo*, the poetic school of the day that pointedly distanced itself linguistically from popular speech.

Rojas Zorrilla's parody of the most tragic scene of Cervantes's *Numancia* would certainly jar modern sensibilities, but does reveal significant data. Interpolated into the dramatization of

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Denzler.

Spain's icon of heroic suicidal patriotism, it expresses how far playwright and popular audience would go in mocking a hegemonic icon.

This final section will deal with brief references by the *gracioso* to well known characters from famous literary texts. The playwright often incites the audience's laughter from the radical contrast between the comical character reciting on stage and the literary image he purposely evokes. The latter is usually an exemplar of chivalric noble bearing and conduct, funnily demeaned by the identification established. An example of this contrast would be the self-comparison of Pepino in *Primero es la honra que el gusto*. He states:

¿Cosa que entrase el tal hombre,
que muy contingente es,
a reñir conmigo el caso,
por qué me he metido a ser
don Pepino de Niquea,
pues defiendo a esta mujer? (BAE, 54, 443a)

The comical reference, ingeniously tied to the stock comic figure's already funny name by the genitive in the titular tradition of the Romance of Chivalry, is to a well-known example of that novelistic subgenre, *Florisel de Niquea*.¹⁸⁹

Another example along similar lines is that of Cosme in *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza*, where the *gracioso* comically compares himself to a noble and heroic figure from Lope de Vega's Moorish *romances*:

Sea muy enhorabuena,
que eso dijeron a Zaide,

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, Eisenberg 112.

y no era tan obediente
 como yo, con mil quilates. (BAE, 54, 170b)

Many of Lope de Vega ballads were sung and recited, along with traditional *romances*, by the general public. Particularly popular were those, with an epic slant, in which the Moor Zaide appeared.¹⁹⁰ As in the previous example, here, too, the self-identification established by the *gracioso* is demeaning of the nobility associated with literary character invoked.

In the following example the laughter is elicited by having the *gracioso* employ well-known literary figures to characterize someone else. It illustrates how Rojas Zorrilla's ingenuity could redouble the laughter he sought. In *La traición busca el castigo*, Mogenicón identifies his employer with literary paradigms of treachery in characterizing the latter's supposed conduct with respect to himself. Mogenicón states:

¿Qué hará mi amo allá dentro
 pero saber qué no hará
 es más difícil en esto:
 ¡Ah, don Andrés de Olfos vil!
 ¡Oh vil Galalón moderno,
 que en Roncesvalles de amor
 vendiste a tu compañero! (BAE, 54, 246b)

The very situation posed by the *gracioso* would have incited the audience's laughter, because, as I will underscore in a subsequent chapter, it is invariably the *gracioso* who betrays his master. It is comical, as well, because the master's supposed betrayal is love-induced, 'en Roncesvalles de

¹⁹⁰ For the then contemporary literary interest in Moorish Spain, see, for example Deferrari Harry.

amor.’ The first traitor alluded to represents a funny word-play, substituting his master’s name, Andrés, for Bellido, on Bellido Dolfos, the traitorous assassin of King Sancho of Castile. To this day he is the Spanish equivalent of our Benedict Arnold and appears often in the *Romancero*. The second example offered by Mogenicón, Galalón, is the traitor *par excellence* of the many Carolingian ballads that derive from the French epic poem. The popular stock comic figure’s characterization of his noble master via an allusion to famous literary traitors, themselves nobles, comically demeaned, ‘*burla burlando*,’ the hegemonic class.

In summary, the popular audience’s recognition of the literary characters alluded to above was of course required for the inducement of its sought-after laughter. All of the literary names alluded to in the preceding examples,¹⁹¹ would surely have been familiar to Rojas Zorrilla’s mostly illiterate audiences. Most would have reached the masses via the orally transmitted *Romancero*, which, as reflected in the published *Romancero General*, already included a number of Lope de Vega’s *romances*. The examples analyzed have the *gracioso* laughingly identifying himself with noble chivalric heroes or characterizing his noble master in negative terms. In all three cases, then, there is cause to suggest the incidence of a valid cultural interchange. It is noteworthy that both the self-mockery involved in the stock comic figure’s heroic identification and his self-aggrandizement in characterizing his noble master are readily tied to the popular/carnavalesque tradition.

Summary

The analyzed examples from the three broad categories into which, for the sake of convenience and clarity, I divided the large amount of matter available in this mode of *gracioso*

¹⁹¹ Also see, *BAE*, 54, 172a, 185b, 205c, 295c, 305b, 321b and 383a-b.

humor offer significant information. First and foremost, in keeping with the announced intent of this dissertation, is the wealth of opportunities that this mode offers the stock comic figure to effect his primary task of bringing the audience to laughter. Literary satire and parody provide Rojas Zorrilla, especially via the *comedia* itself and the *Romancero*, with a great reservoir of literary matter that, in being accessible to his generally illiterate *corral* audiences, promoted his laughter-inducing ingenuity.

Góngora's *culteranismo*. a source of theatrical humor since Lope de Vega and Tirso de Molina, continued to incite laughter in Rojas Zorrilla's plays. It is a humor largely based on 'culto' vocabulary, its unfamiliar, alien sounds laughingly funny to predominantly popular *corral* audiences. The satirical references to the obscurity of the 'culterano' poetic text were possibly directed, perhaps even tongue in cheek, to his fellow court poets. Something is known, via extant references to the customary *vejámenes* in which they participated, of the friendly joshing among the group of court playwrights to which Rojas Zorrilla belonged.¹⁹² Next to nothing is known, however, about the bantering among them concerning their own individual absorption of *culteranismo*. Perhaps a close and contrasted reading of such comical references to the *culterano* poetic text may one day lead to a clearer perception of a stance that is best described, with respect to *culteranismo*, by the Spanish expression: *No quiero, no quiero; / pero échamelo en el sombrero*.

The analyzed examples of the satire and parody of the *comedia* would seem to indicate that it is more than just a plentiful source of laughter. When the *gracioso* can be identified as the spokesperson of the playwright, his comical comments can offer us Rojas Zorrilla's views on specific aspects of the theater of his day. And much more subtle findings are possible when the

¹⁹² See for example, MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 18-19.

gracioso confronts the playwright and this, following Forbes, is interpreted to signal his projection as the latter's alter ego. The one-sided dialogue between the two clearly reflects, at times, the playwright's tense and doubt-filled ongoing creative process. In both cases, the analyzed examples would seem to suggest an added usefulness of the *gracioso* in discovering and/or uncovering unknown critical and creative dimensions of the working *siglo de oro* playwright.

The analysis of Rojas Zorrilla's parodies of *Romancero* ballads, extended to mini-*entremés* dimensions, undoubtedly produced lengthy periods of audience laughter. The playwright's choice of subjects in the parodies analyzed, patriotic martyrdom and wifely fidelity, do not appear random, setting up, as they do, societal, hegemonic ideals for lengthy derision. The extended laughter to which these were submitted would probably have fed, bringing it to the surface in the popular *corrales*, a significant cultural interchange. Noteworthy, as well, is that the elements involved in the parodies, substituting wineskins for severed heads in a drunken presentation and adultery as an inverted 'ideal,' tie into the carnivalesque tradition of the popular subculture.

The analyzed examples of the two parodied subgenres, the *romance de ciego* and classical *epitafio*, would most likely have been recognized, as such, by Rojas Zorrilla's popular *corral* audiences. Their laughter-inducing intent would thus have been fulfilled. In the case of the *romance de ciego*, it is difficult, besides, not to see an irreverent attitude and subsequent cultural interchange in having the popular *gracioso* apply its identifying formula to the approach of his noble master. In the case of the *epitafio*, with its focus on a patently 'decadent' Don Julián de la Nata, there seems little doubt of an intended cultural interchange. In both subgenres studied,

strong antecedents in the popular/carnavalesque tradition may well have retained anti-establishment echoes.

The stock comic figure's satire of *culteranismo*, particularly of its Latinized vocabulary of neologisms, undoubtedly satisfied the goal of enticing the audience to laughter. Funnily sounding unfamiliar words always have that effect. What should be noted in this regard is the cultural interchange taking place when the predominantly popular audiences of the *corrales* laughingly rejected the alien language it identified with the educated hegemonic classes. In this laughing proscription of the unintelligible language associated with their social superiors, the popular audiences of *siglo de oro* plays continued, as I have noted, the secular carnivalesque tradition of their own subculture.

Rojas Zorrilla's parody of a singularly tragic scene from Cervantes's *Numancia* in his own dramatization of that historical event would probably have gone undetected, as such, by his mostly illiterate *corral* audience. Nevertheless, the latter's laughter at Tronco's comically anti-heroic stance rings out as popular irreverence before what had become a hegemonic icon of 'Spanish' heroism. The laughter involved cannot but recall, as well, a traditional popular/carnavalesque substrata in which nothing tied to the hegemonic establishment was sacredly beyond irreverent derision.

Two of the analyzed examples of the *gracioso* alluding to famous literary figures are comical because the *gracioso* identifies with heroic noble figures. Such laughable identifications tend to demean the nobility that those literary characters represent. In the other example analyzed, the *gracioso* uses famous literary figures to comically underscore his noble master's betrayal. What is publicly aired, however comically, appears demeaning of his master. In all the examples analyzed in the section, then, there are elements suggestive of a cultural interchange.

Chapter 4

The Rejection of Honor

Scholarly interpreters of Early Modern Spanish Theater point to honor as a primary *leitmotif* of the *comedia*.¹⁹³ As such, it has received much critical attention since Américo Castro's seminal study. A great deal of this critical material is centered on *siglo de oro* plays catalogued as 'honor *comedias*,' in which conjugal honor, with its tragic, 'Calderonian' consequences is spotlighted. But personal honor, in a much lower key, as an ideal code of everyday conduct, is its much more prominent manifestation in Early Modern Theater. It is a code based on upholding the idealized innate character of nobility and stresses three basic personal traits: valor, loyalty and liberal altruism.

This code of honorable behavior is central to the hundreds of '*capa y espada*' plays in Early Modern Spanish Theater and is invariably upheld by the playwright. There is no doubt that this honorable behavior was singularly attached to the ethos of the aristocratic medium of such plays, and was, as such, exclusively espoused by the hegemonic social strata of that day. I believe it was, in terms of everyday behavior, a nuclear part of what Correa refers to as 'vertical honor,' which excluded the lower social classes from its privileges and behavioral requirements:

La honra vertical implica una estratificación de la sociedad que en tiempos de Lope de Vega continuaba básicamente la establecida en el suelo español desde los tiempos medievales. En el pináculo de la organización social se hallaba el rey con dominio consagrado sobre los demás grupos. En seguida, la clase de los nobles,

¹⁹³ See, for example, Reichenberger 308-309.

caballeros e hidalgos que constituían el mundo refinado de la cortesanía y tradición caballeresca. Bajo ésta la esfera de los labradores excluidos de los privilegios de las clases altas y reducidos a una condición de dependencia. (99)

Mckendrick , while agreeing with the omnipresence of the honor motif, aptly includes in its function within the *comedia* both its complex and far-reaching connections and its much more mundane everyday presence:

The overarching preoccupations of the seventeenth-century Spanish theater as a whole—honor with its related issues of class and power, kingship, and what one may call proto-feminism—all present problems of reception and interpretation. Honor is a problem for students because they consider it an outdated concept with no application in the modern world.... Distracted by terminology, they have not made the right connections. **They have not looked beyond the label ‘honor’ and recognized that as a dramatic motif it encompasses a complex set of interrelated concerns and values... self-worth, self-respect, self-image and public image, good name and reputation.** ... (30-31)

For the most part, the stock comic figure’s comical rejections of honor are directed at aspects of his noble master’s personal conduct. These usually pertain to the more mundane concerns and values that I have highlighted in Mckendrick’s quoted definition.

A normative trait of the popular *gracioso* is the rejection of an idealized noble code of honorable conduct that impinges upon his pragmatic earthy existence. He comically, self-mockingly, defends his anti-idealistic, material perception of life by identifying his own conduct

with the popular adage that states “*Honra y provecho no caben en un mismo saco*”.¹⁹⁴ So when given the opportunity to choose between *honra* or *provecho*, his choice of *provecho* is a foregone conclusion.

Montesinos attributes this systematic rejection of the essentially noble code of conduct to the stock comic figure’s humble birth and plebeian blood. In other words, the *gracioso* lacks those innate qualities of character and spirit that nobility then presupposed. Montesinos states:

Debemos tener en cuenta los aspectos nacidos de su condición no noble, que con inflexible determinismo le circunscriben en una concreta esfera de acción e imprimen a sus actos una involuntaria comicidad. (22)¹⁹⁵

Montesinos’s sociological justification for the stock comic figure’s rejection of honorable conduct may satisfy the modern reader’s post-Marxist sensibilities regarding the class divisions of society and their consequences. It does not explain, however, why the *gracioso* does not simply reject the then socially idealized code of behavior, but usually goes about it with a comical cynicism that is anything but involuntary. Nor can it explain why such a self-mocking, irreverent rejection of noble behavior, when projected before mostly popular audiences, converts serious hegemonic ideals into a primary source of *comedia* humor.

These facts would best be explained, I believe, by acknowledging that the popular *gracioso*, addressing a predominantly popular audience, is self-mockingly expressing a popular, materialized sub-cultural rejection of idealized hegemonic values. This rejection reflects a *modus vivendi* shared with his popular audience and tied to the popular/carnavalesque tradition. It is a

¹⁹⁴ The term ‘provecho’ would include one’s physical well-being as well as one’s economic benefit.

¹⁹⁵ See, also, Ley 246-47.

modus vivendi that, centered on self-mocking laughter, was for centuries the only outlet for the powerless mass of the population. I will continue, thus, to single out, in the analysis of the stock comic figure's comical comments, those elements that suggest links to the aforementioned popular/carnavalesque tradition.

Beyond the essential laughter achieved via the popular stock comic figure's vocal, direct and comical rejection of the hegemonic honor code, there functions, I believe, a significant positing of cultural interchanges. In analyzing the examples to follow, I will underscore this intentional exposure of the noble code of behavior to the irreverent derision of the popular *gracioso* and the approving laughter of the popular audience.

In the following pages, I will analyze examples of the different aspects of the hegemonic code of honorable conduct that the *gracioso* comically rejects. The examples are divided into three forms of *gracioso* behavior that constitute, in each case, the rejection of a corresponding component of noble honorable behavior. The betrayal of his master or mistress openly flaunts the idealized noble characteristic of absolute loyalty. The invariable predominance of the stock comic figure's self interest consistently flies in the face of the liberal magnanimity that ideally characterizes noble behavior. And the life-preserving cowardice that characterizes *gracioso* conduct very directly contradicts the valor ideally identified with noble, honor-preserving behavior. As noted, loyalty, magnanimity and valor are the core virtues of an idealized noble character.¹⁹⁶

The first form of *gracioso* behavior that will be analyzed is that of betrayal. His treachery was a form of humor that lent itself well to the role of servants that most of them

¹⁹⁶ I will deal separately with one case in which the complicated matter of 'conjugal honor' is comically focused upon.

traditionally performed on stage. With situational opportunities readily at hand, it is not surprising that playwrights exploited the servant's economically-motivated betrayal of his master as a prime vehicle of humor. It didn't hurt, of course, that many of such betrayals facilitated the necessary plot entanglements of the '*capa y espada*' subgenre. In this often repeated comical betrayal of his master, a pattern of *gracioso* action is set that seeks to extract as much laughter as possible from a popular audience. It was an audience that was probably made up, to a significant extent at least, precisely of members of the servant class that abounded in Madrid.¹⁹⁷

In more than 100 verses of dialogue, mostly with his mistress's hopeful '*pretendiente*,' Coscorrón, *gracioso* of *No hay ser padre siendo rey*, offers a good example of the patterned process usually involved. He states:

Vuestra alteza se reprima
y deje prometimientos;
que puesto que soy criado
y pues me precio de serlo,
para vender a mi ama
no son menester dineros
porque este es oficio mío. (BAE, 54, 396a)

First appears his hypocritical refusal, '*deje prometimientos*,' of the bribe offered for giving his client unethical access to his mistress. He then comically gives credence to his refusal of money by explaining that the betrayal of their masters is a natural function of servants, '*para vender a mi ama / no son menester dineros / porque este es oficio mío*.' In proclaiming his betrayal a natural form of *gracioso* conduct, Coscorrón underscores that his honor-rejecting behavior reflects a

¹⁹⁷ For the theoretical composition of the *corral* audience, see, for example, Burningham 36-37.

pervasive adversarial relation between servants and noble masters. This attitude itself, fixed in the traditional definition of servants as ‘*enemigos pagados*’ (paid enemies), constitutes a basis for significant cultural interchange.

Once the bribing transaction is complete Coscorrón’s soliloquy offers the final aspect of the pattern comically enacted. He does this, employing his prerogative as *gracioso*, by speaking directly to the audience. The *gracioso* defends his conduct, hilariously doing so by praising his enterprise as economically more successful than that of the three standard betrayers of popular lore. Coscorrón states:

No hay más Flandes, caballeros:
 por treinta dineros solos
 vendió Judas a su dueño;
 mas no me espanto de Júdas,
 que en efecto era bermejo;
 Galalón vendió a los doce
 y los vendió sin provecho;
 Bellido mató a su rey
 Sin tocar un cuarto dello;
 pues si por precio tan poco
 Júdas vendió a su Maestro,
 Galalón vendió a sus pares
 y Bellido a su rey mesmo;
 yo que ni a aquel que me enseña
 ni a mis doce amigos niego,

ni a mi rey quiero dar muerte,
 sino que a mi dueño vendo,
 que el nombre de dueño basta
 para ser traidor un ciego,
 ¿qué mucho que por los mil
 que en este bolsillo llevo
 la venda y torne a comprarla? (BAE, 54, 396a)

With a measure of irony in referring to his mostly popular audience as ‘*caballeros*,’ Coscorrón proclaims an end to honorable loyalty, ‘*No hay más Flandes*.’ Anachronistically disregarding the play’s timeframe, he refers to the then contemporary and ongoing fact that the Protestant Low Countries had disloyally broken their allegiance to the Spanish crown. Although there would be an occasional victory in what was then generally called ‘*Flandes*,’ the successful rebellion of the Dutch was practically a given fact after the twelve-year truce of 1609.¹⁹⁸ The Spanish defeat by the French at the battle of Rocroy (1643) brought the *de facto* independence of the Protestant Low countries, sealed officially in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) that ended the Thirty-years War. The *gracioso* then compares himself favorably to three emblematic traitors, who all figured, for little or no money, in more dastardly betrayals. Coscorrón indicates that, unlike his examples, he merely betrayed his master, ‘*sino que a mi dueño vendo*.’ The following two verses, ‘*que el nombre de dueño basta / para ser traidor un ciego*,’ (‘for the very name of master is enough / to make a traitor out of even a blind man’) again explain his dishonorable behavior as the natural consequence of a deeply rooted cultural divide between the hegemonic nobility and

¹⁹⁸ An example of an occasional victory would be the successful siege of Breda (1625), immortalized by Velázquez.

the subservient popular masses. The pattern then comes full circle with the unrepentant *gracioso* indicating, ‘¿qué mucho que por los mil / que en este bolsillo llevo / la venda y torne a comprarla?,’ that for the money involved he’d buy and sell out his mistress as many times as possible.

As the play is ending, Rojas Zorrilla, interpolates a long comical soliloquy by his *gracioso*. Significantly, the humor involved is based on Coscorrón’s laughter-inciting dilemma: whether or not to adopt a sense of loyalty in accompanying his new master to the scaffold to which he has been condemned. His theoretical preparation for such an unheard of transformation, from disloyal to loyal unto death, follows:

Yo, Jaime de Coscorrón,
 el descendiente de aquel
 Coscorrón que dio Rodrigo
 a la Cava

 Yo, pues, natural de Palos,
 que es cierto lugar de bien,
 que los coscorrones cría. . . . (BAE, 54, 405b)

The new name, with its ennobling genitive, and the pseudo-genealogy that follows clearly indicate that the *gracioso* feels that he cannot acquire that virtue without transforming himself from plebeian to noble. His largely tongue-in-cheek attempt to become ‘*noble*’ only elicits more laughter because the popular audience foresees that this transformation will never take place. But Coscorrón’s futile effort highlights a difference that transcends economic class and touches on disparate cultures. His lineage, although properly based on his name, is a hilarious word-play

on ‘*coscorrón*’ (swollen contusion). It has its noble beginning in the pregnant belly of Florinda, the raped daughter of Count Julián, and its ancestral seat in famous Palos (beatings), the logically funny origin of all ‘*coscorrones*.’ Coscorrón’s disloyalty provides, throughout the entire play, a comical twist to an ordinarily serious offense against the honorable code of behavior

In the following example, Rojas Zorrilla had two *gracioso* servants, male and female, compete in carrying out the betrayal of their common mistress. In a comical passage of over 100 verses, Celia and Bofetón, *graciosos* of *Peligrar en los remedios*, play for time, hoping the other will retire to bed, in order to effect their individual betrayals. They pass the time gossiping about their mistress. Gossiping (*murmurar*) about their masters is a minor form of betrayal and is a common *gracioso*-servant pass-time in the *comedia*. When neither of them budges, each expresses in an aside their treacherous intent. Their asides follows:

Celia (ap): Mil escudos me promete

(tanto el amor lo sujeta)
 porque esta noche le meta
 de mi ama en el retrete,
 Federico, que la adora,
 y esperándome ha de estar,
 y si éste se va a acostar
 le pienso meter agora.

Bofetón (ap): El Marqués Roberto es

galantísimo señor,
 con mi ama soy traidor,
 pero es mucho el interés...

Si ésta se va a acostar,
 sin que le valga disculpa,
 le han de echar toda la culpa. . . . (BAE, 54, 358b)

In each case, the stock comic figure's client is praised as a suitor, thus diluting their moral qualms, '*Federico, que la adora*' and '*El Marqués Roberto es / galantísimo señor.*' Still, the basic incentive of the two *graciosos* is clear: '*Mil escudos me promete*' and '*con mi ama soy traidor, / pero es mucho el interés.*' Bofeton's final four verses suggest the cutthroat character of their competition, indicating that Celia, his mistress's personal maid, will receive all the blame. Rojas Zorrilla takes this redoubling, competing-servants formula to an extreme in *Cada qual lo que le toca* by casting the competing servant-*graciosos* as husband and wife, thus creating even more comical situations.

The inclination toward disloyal betrayal of his master is so much a part of the popular stock comic figure's character that Rojas Zorrilla can elicit the laughter of his audience by merely alluding to it. Such is the case, for example, in *Los celos de Rodamante*, a *comedia* with a Carolingian chivalric setting reminiscent of Ariosto. The *comedia*'s *gracioso* Baraúnda is a squire who pledges his allegiance to his lord. Baraúnda states:

Baraúnda va contigo
 cristiano con los cristianos,
 con los franceses francés,
 con los moros africano:
 y agora que estoy contigo,
 en tu valor ensayado,
 hago juramento sobre,

no quiero, sobre debajo
 de la palabra que debo
 de ser entre pares tantos,
 el non mejor de los nones,
 non plus ultra de los bravos,
 y un criado que te venda
 cuando importe ser criado. (178Aa-b)

He begins by comically announcing his voluble loyalty, '*Baraúnda va contigo, / cristiano con los cristianos, / con los franceses francés, / con los moros africano.*' The following verses, an example of the punning that is always a *gracioso* standby (*sobre/debajo, pares/nones, non/non plus ultra*),¹⁹⁹ lead to '*y un criado que te venda / cuando importe ser criado,*' 'and a servant who will betray you, / if he is going to be a proper servant.' We again hear the repeated pronouncement of the irreconcilable conflict between the value systems governing the conduct of hegemonic masters and popular *gracioso*-servants. This comical presentation of that conflict constitutes a significant cultural interchange, and is later voiced again by Baraúnda: '*Por Júpiter, que es un necio, / el criado que es leal,*' (187Ra-b). In this latter case, a loyal servant is unhesitatingly declared to be a fool.

The noble master's betrayal at the hands of his popular *gracioso*-servant, is so exploited in *siglo de oro* theater that one has to assume that it invariably elicited the popular audience's laughter. If it had not, it would not have been a comedic theme so frequently used by the playwrights of the time. In general, self-mocking derision of the hegemonic ethos is clearly

¹⁹⁹ For punning and word-play as basic characteristics of popular theater, see Cohen 36, 178.

linked to the popular/carnavalesque tradition, in which merry laughter is an only recourse within a serious hierarchical establishment.²⁰⁰

The following examples will highlight the materialistic self-interest of the *gracioso*, a second form of the stock comic figure's rejection of idealized noble conduct. His materialistic self-interest contrasts with the magnanimous, selfless attitude identified with noble behavior. As noted in the examples analyzed above, self-interest is the recurring motivation for the stock comic figure's ignoble betrayal of his master. Rojas Zorrilla is masterful at presenting *gracioso* self-interest in very humorously calculating terms. Beltrán of *Cada qual lo que le toca* calculates like a banker on what he is to receive for his betrayal. He states:

Trocarle intento
 mis ciento en esta ocasión;
 pero a pagarme en bellón,
 toma cincuenta por ciento. (Castro, *Cada qual* 89)

Beltrán's calculations reflect the devaluation of Spanish coinage that was ongoing in the Seventeenth Century. He is pondering that if paid in 'vellón,' coins in which copper had been substituted for silver, he would lose fifty percent of his bribe.²⁰¹ One can only assume that the public of that day would have found humor in the play's *gracioso* going through a monetary exercise that at that time would have become a generalized ritual. Moreover, in a very real sense, the stock comic figure's foregrounding of Spain's endemic financial crisis crystalized a

²⁰⁰ See, for example, Bakhtin 66, 133.

²⁰¹ The precise coinage involved is not indicated, but, '*doblones*,' '*escudos*' and '*reales*' are the most mentioned by *graciosos* in such transactions.

de mi afecto; y dame, Flora,
 ese tesoro, en que está
 cifrada de mi deseo
 la mayor felicidad.

Flora: Admito el trueque (ap.) Si medio
 pliego de papel no más
 paga así un amante, ¿a cómo
 cada resmo le saldrá? (BAE, 54, 446a)

The always generous gentleman/suitor offers Flora a gold chain in exchange for the awaited letter. The gold chain as reward for the ‘*alcahueta*’ in such transactions had been standardized by the popularity of Fernando de Rojas’s *Celestina* and its sequels. Flora accepts, ‘*Admito el trueque,*’ and then comically speculates in an aside on her future economic possibilities: If a lover will give a gold chain for half a sheet of paper, how much more would he give for an entire ream?

Rojas Zorrilla fully exploits the comical effect of the stock comic figure’s greedy self-interest by prolonging its laughter-eliciting impact. This is usually achieved by having the *gracioso* reject a bribe at first only to end up accepting it. It is something that the theatrical audience, given the invariable character of the *gracioso*, would certainly anticipate. It is this audience anticipation that invariably intensified and extended the hilarity. An example of this is in the following scene of Beatriz, *graciosa* of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, conversing with her briber. Their dialogue follows:

Don Lope: Este bolsillo.

Beatriz: Eso fuera,

por pagarme la amistad,
 querer hacerme alcahueta.

Don Lope: Mira que llega tu ama.

Beatriz: Pues venga el bolsillo: llega,
 y creeme que lo tomo
 por no parecer grosera. (BAE, 54, 156a)

When the noble client offers her a purse with money, *'bolsillo,'* Beatriz rejects it because it would transform her from a friend into a mercenary go-between, *'eso fuera, / por pagarme la amistad, / querer hacerme alcahueta.'* When interrupted by the approach of her mistress, however, Beatriz cannot prolong her feigned refusal of the money, and emphatically asks for the purse, *'Pues venga el bolsillo: llega.'* She does so, however, hilariously insisting, *'y creeme que lo tomo / por no parecer grosera,'* that she only takes it in order not to seem impolite.

Another laughter-extending tactic in the presentation of the stock comic figure's self-interest is offered by having the *gracioso* defend his greedy conduct. Coscorrón, for example, ends up the betrayal already analyzed with a broad 'philosophical' proposition that he comically defends with a down-to-earth, culinary recipe as proof that a popular audience would have appreciated. Coscorrón states:

No hay más honra que el provecho,
 y si no écheme alguno
 en su olla o su puchero
 la honra en lugar de vaca,
 y el pundonor por carnero,
 y comerá ejecutorias. . . . (BAE, 54, 396a)

The lead-in proposition, already recognized as the basic guideline for *gracioso* behavior, essentially states that the only honor he recognizes is profitable self-interest. The culinary proof that follows, familiar from the first pages of the *Quijote*, describes the diet of the lower nobility, ‘*hidalgos*,’ but with ‘*honra*’ (honor) and ‘*pundonor*’ (pride) instead of ‘*vaca*’ (beef) and ‘*carnero*’ (mutton). The resulting meal would consist of inedible ‘*ejecutorias*’ (patents of nobility). ‘*Hidalgos*,’ ruined by the inflationary pressures of incoming New World precious metals were the butt of much humor for placing honor and pride over vital self-interest. This was clearly seen in the *Lazarillo de Tormes* or the *Quijote* itself.

This laughter-accompanied presentation of the *honor/provecho* dichotomy, with its self-mocking *gracioso* performance,²⁰³ suggests a connection to a popular/carnavalesque subculture still alive and well, according to Bakhtin, in Early Modern Spain. This connection is detectable in Coscorrón’s culinary presentation. Food/eating is a material body function through which the popular/carnavalesque tradition comically challenged a spiritualized, devitalized aristocratic stance.²⁰⁴

There is little doubt, based on the meal resulting from Coscorrón’s comical recipe (‘*ejecutorias*’), that the ‘foolish’ selflessness that he counters with ‘*provecho*’ was identified with the noble, hegemonic segment of society. *Gracioso* self-interest as comical counterpoint to socially idealized noble magnanimity, together with the irreverent laughter it produced in the popular audience, reflect more than a simple economic class difference. They appear to

²⁰³ The stock comic figure’s direct address to the audience, disregarding the separating fourth wall, cannot help but recall Burningham’s many references to ‘pre-theatrical’ performers and performances.

²⁰⁴ See, for example, Bakhtin 89, 281.

underscore deeper, cultural values, enough to constitute a cultural interchange on stage, the only medium where it could then publicly take place. General illiteracy made the theater for a very long period, up and into the nineteenth century, the only medium accessible to the masses. Spain's basically popular theater, catering in large measure to that illiterate popular audience was, in effect, the only locale in which a popular culture found expression in a context that contrasted it to the dominant culture reflected in the play's settings. In a strictly hierarchical seventeenth-century society, Spain's public theater, as did its Elizabethan counterpart, became, via the comical performance of its *gracioso*, a significant democratizing factor.

The next series of examples will highlight the cowardice inherently present in the *gracioso*. Cowardice, emphatically differentiates the *gracioso* from the invariably valorous noble protagonists that surrounded him in every play. The '*capa y espada*' label of so many *siglo de oro* plays clearly reveals the intrepid, swashbuckling action of its male protagonists. There is little question that valor, the absence of cowardly fear, constituted an idealized, *sine qua non* condition of noble behavior. The *gracioso*, so often a confidential servant moving among the play's brave noble protagonists, was given ample occasion to manifest his contrasted anti-idealistic self-preserving cowardice.

The projection of cowardly fear, both its verbal manifestation and its expression via facial and bodily movement, is a timeless source of comedy. Playwrights and actors fully exploited that potential in the popular theater of Early Modern Spain. It was the basis in all Early Modern Theater of a broad range of humor that simultaneously confronted, via the *gracioso*, polarized materialistic values relative to life and living. It is for this reason that cowardice can then be analyzed as a form of the comic figure's rejection of a noble, idealized code of honor.

One such polarizing value was the noble code of behavior in which dueling was the accepted method of defending honor. Dueling over real or imagined offenses formed an important part of a gentleman's code of social behavior despite the establishment church's traditional opposition. So this frequently dramatized aspect of the hegemonic code of honor is always humorously avoided by the *gracioso*. There is a vast number of *graciosos* in *siglo de oro* theater who avoid physical violence over questions of honor, and Rojas Zorrilla exploits the laughter latent in their rejection of values that directly threaten life and limb.²⁰⁵ Two of his *comedias* stand out in this sense. *No hay amigo para amigo*, first staged in 1636, is a '*comedia de capa y espada*' whose main plot includes a duel.²⁰⁶ Inserted in acts II and III there is a comical incident which, although with no connection to the main plot, also incorporates a duel that doesn't materialize. The *gracioso* Moscón is slapped by another servant and his master, Don Lope, is annoyed with him because he has not avenged the insult. Don Lope interrogates Moscón on the matter in the following dialogue:

Don Lope: Cuando el bofetón te dio,

¿qué hiciste tú?

Moscón: Recibirle.

Don Lope: En fin, ¿no te satisfizo?

Cuando el bofetón te dio,

¿te hizo cara?

Moscón: Cara no,

²⁰⁵ See MacCurdy, *Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 112-17.

²⁰⁶ The duel ends without bloodshed, as is proper to the '*capa y espada*' subgenre, when one of the duelists slips and falls.

porque antes me la deshizo.

Don Lope: ¿Que esa ofensa en ti no labre

indignar la espada airada?

Moscón: Dice el miedo: “A esotra espada,

que esta vaina no se abre.”

Don Lope: Buscar quiero otro criado,

supuesto lo que te pasa,

que no ha de estar en mi casa

hombre que está deshonorado.

Moscón: ¿Qué medio hay entre los dos?

Don Lope: Morir noble y temerario.

Moscón: Pues págüeme mi salario,

y quédese usted con Dios. (BAE, 54, 95c)

Resorting to humorous punning, ‘*cara*’/‘*hacer cara*’ (to defy), ‘*hacer/deshacer*’ (break up), the *gracioso* tries to avoid the issue, but he is forced to explain why his reaction wasn’t spontaneous, ‘¿*Que esa ofensa en ti no labre / indignar la espada airada?*’ (‘How could such an insult not move / your enraged sword to action?’). He does so by admitting his cowardly fear, personifying the latter in rejecting a duel, ‘*Dice el miedo: “A esotra espada, / que esta vaina no se abre.”*’ (‘Fear says: “Look for another sword / because I’m not going to unsheath mine.”’) When Don Lope says that he cannot have a dishonored person in his household, Moscón seeks any other solution, ‘¿*Qué medio hay entre los dos?*’ His master’s honorable stance offers but one: ‘*Morir noble y temerario*’ (‘To die nobly, bravely’). With that, the *gracioso*, true to his cowardly nature, asks for his pay and says goodbye.

The discussion between noble master and popular *gracioso* continues, however, until Moscón is forced to comply with the alien code of honor. The *gracioso* then appears on stage to practice his fencing while awaiting his opponent. The actor in the role of *gracioso* would have had occasion to mock dueling more effectively than any words could achieve. Between the posturing and gesturing that one can imagine, Moscón enumerates the vulnerable parts of his body. He comments:

Ello hay heridas mortales
 en todas las ocasiones:
 el hígado, los riñones,
 los muslos, los atabales,
 un corazón, dos tetillas.
 en la boca un paladar,
 y en el arca de cenar
 treinta varas de morcillas. . . . (BAE, 54, 99a)

He refers to the thirty yards of intestines in his stomach, ‘*arca de cenar*,’ as ‘*morcillas*,’ blood sausage for which animal tripe is used. The irony of consuming tripe, which is itself part of the digestive system and thus of the defecation process, is clearly linked to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor in its allusion to lower body functions.²⁰⁷ When his opponent appears, the *gracioso* balks at risking his life over an alien code of conduct and humorously consoles himself that he has complied by merely appearing on the field of honor. It is

²⁰⁷ See Bakhtin 162-63, 221, 223.

profoundly ironic that Rojas Zorrilla, who often mocked dueling, almost lost his own life in a duel in 1638, two years after Moscón's stage performance.²⁰⁸

Also staged in 1636, a few months after *No hay amigo para amigo*, *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado* is one of the best known Rojas Zorrilla comedias. Its fame rests on the fact that *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado* popularized the theatrical ruse of having master and servant exchange roles as part of the plot.²⁰⁹ When doubting the fidelity of his arranged bride to be, whom he has never seen, Don Juan de Alvarado exchanges names and clothes with Sancho, his servant, in order to facilitate his observation of Doña Inés. This exchange of identities, with Sancho imitating the manners of a gentleman, brings about several humorous situations. None is more comical than that created when Don Fernando, also wooing Doña Inés, challenges the supposed gentleman to a duel. The situation encourages a 'profound' soliloquy on the part of the *gracioso*. Sancho states:

Yo me entro a ser más profundo,
y yo me entro a discurrir,
¿por qué a mí me ha de podrir
que se usa honra en el mundo?
¿Porque uno llegue a plantar
(dejemos a un lado miedos),
en mi cara cinco dedos,

²⁰⁸ Cotarelo y Mori, *Don Francisco de Rojas Zorrilla* 65.

²⁰⁹ For the exchange of dress/identity in a popular/carnivalesque context, with antecedents in the Roman Saturnalia, see Bakhtin 10.

le tengo yo de matar?
 Duelista, que andas cargado
 con el puntillo de honor,
 dime, tonto, ¿no es peor
 ser muerto que abofeteado?
 ¡Y que a la muerte tan ciertos
 vayan porque el duelo acaben!
 Bien parece que no saben
 los vivos lo que es ser muertos. (BAE, 54, 163a)

Speaking directly to the popular audience, the *gracioso* preambles his thoughts on dueling with a swipe at the entire honor-based system of hegemonic society, ‘¿Porqué me ha de pudrir / que se usa honra en el mundo?’ (‘Why should it irk me / that honor rules in the world?’). He then asks, bolstering the moral stance of his cutting question by eliminating fear as a factor, ‘dejemos a un lado miedos,’ why he should have to kill a man for having placed five fingers on his face.

The elimination of fear as a factor and the visual representation of Sancho as a ‘noble’ may well force us to see this comic figure as a spokesman for the playwright himself. This seems to be confirmed by Sancho directing his comments to duelists in general. He characterizes these duelists as burdened by a personal pride, the much excessive Spanish ‘*pundonor*,’ that he significantly presents in demeaning diminutive, ‘*Duelista, que andas cargado / con el puntillo de honor*.’ All this leads to an insulting address to the aforementioned, supposedly noble duelist, ‘*dime, tonto*,’ and a question that answers itself from a realist and pragmatic popular perspective, ‘¿no es peor / ser muerto que abofeteado?’ (‘Isn’t it worse to be dead than slapped?’) With the

gracioso expressing himself as a reasonable spokesman for the playwright, the final verses from this quote take on the character of an anti-dueling plea.

The fact that the popular stance is being expressed by a supposedly noble ‘*galan*,’ due to the plot-centering exchange of identities, and that the *gracioso* becomes the playwright’s spokesperson, makes this a more direct attack on the noble establishment itself. These factors notwithstanding, Sancho’s comical presentation of noble honorable conduct constitutes a significant cultural interchange. The entire presentation of the *gracioso* rejection of dueling is tied in this case, as well, to the tradition of popular/carnavalesque humor. The exchange of roles between master and servant that moves the entire plot forms part of that tradition and foregrounds the cultural interchange.

Rojas Zorrilla was fully aware of the comical potential inherent in the stock comic figure’s expression of cowardly fear, with both verbal and visual dimensions combining to intensify the hilarity.²¹⁰ He therefore exploited many of its varied manifestations. Besides dueling situations, already looked into, darkness is another context that almost invariably induces comic fear in the *gracioso*. Such is the following example of the *gracioso* Candor when, in *La vida en el ataúd*, he is asked to perform a service at night. He states:

Yo ser lechucho quisiera,
o tener salud agora;
pero el sereno me mata,
y tanto las cosas crece
la noche que me parece

²¹⁰ The actor involved would certainly have employed facial expressions and gestures to accompany his words.

gigante una garrapata. (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando*194)

Excusing himself, he claims to be sick, ‘*o tener salud agora*’ and that the night air would kill him, ‘*pero el sereno me mata.*’ Fearful cowardice, however, soon comes to the fore: ‘*y tanto las cosas crece / la noche que me parece / gigante una garrapata*’ (‘and night enlarges things so/that a tick seems gigantic to me’).

As would be expected, the dead, too, move the *gracioso* to laughable panic. It is a traditionally comic situation to which the plot of *Los bandos de Verona*, Rojas Zorrilla’s version of Bandello’s Romeo and Juliet story, lends itself especially well (BAE, 54, 379b). And *graciosos* tremble, naturally, before anything that appears supernatural, as is exemplified by the magical content of several scenes in *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena* (BAE, 54, 331c; 343b-c; 346b).

Other examples of the extent to which Rojas Zorrilla humorously exploited the comic figure’s characteristic cowardly fear come readily to mind. Take for example Coscorrón, *gracioso* of *No hay ser padre siendo rey*, comically talking himself out of a street confrontation by punning on ‘*llevar miedo.*’ He states:

Un indigno escudero
de la duquesa Casandra;
llevaba un poco de miedo
y íbale a dejar en casa. (BAE, 54, 395c)

Or Polo, *gracioso* of *Morir pensando matar*, comically poetizing, with ‘*culterano*’ overtones, his fear. He comments:

Y aquí me verán también,
si acaso me descalabran,

con el purpúreo licor

teñir en carmín la grama. (MacCurdy, *Morir pensando* 53)

Rojas Zorrilla exploited, as well, several comical possibilities deriving from the stock comic figure's expression of cowardly fear. One such comical possibility was the stock comic figure's self-mocking self-application of the word coward itself or its equivalent. The animal symbol of cowardice, the chicken, is adjectively self-applied, for example, by Sabañón of *Sin honra no hay Amistad*. He states:

Ya sabéis que soy gallina,

pues mi antigua línea recta

del gallo de la pasión

desciende de cresta en cresta. (BAE, 54, 305b)

The quoted verses are a good example of Rojas Zorrilla's great capacity for comical expression. In four short verses there is, first, the direct self-identification with the proverbial chicken, which itself would have made the audience laugh. The self-identification is then integrated into a pseudo-genealogy, '*Pues mi antigua línea recta / del gallo de la pasión / descende de cresta en cresta.*' The comical genealogy, a mode of *gracioso* humor already analyzed, is chock-full of elements that intensify and extend the laughter. Replete with the terminology of a noble pedigree, '*antigua,*' (ancient) '*línea recta,*' (direct line) '*desciende*' (descends), it mockingly relates his cowardice to the hegemonic nobility. It actually goes a step beyond that, linking the 'nobility' mockingly alluded to, '*del gallo de la pasión*' (the crowing rooster of Christ's passion), to Saint Peter, founder of the hegemonic Church. And to top it off, a final poke at

nobility in the pun on ‘*cresta*’ (rooster-comb/top of the helmet appearing on most noble coats-of-arms).²¹¹

Another comical potential of *gracioso* cowardice is its possibilities for punning, a mainstay of the popular stock comic figure’s jargon. Rojas Zorrilla did not fail to take advantage, for example, of possibilities to which ‘*tener miedo*’ lends itself in Spanish. The *gracioso* of *El Caín de Cataluña*, Cardona, plays on it one way. He states:

Berenguel. ¿Miedo tienes?

Cardona. A mí me tiene el miedo. (*BAE*, 54, 285c)

and Guardainfante, *gracioso* of *Los bandos de Verona*, plays it in another: “*El miedo me tiene a mí*” (*BAE*, 54, 381a).

The scatological is another rich comical potential frequently exploited via the cowardly fear displayed by the *gracioso*. It is so frequent in Rojas Zorrilla and so directly manifests the lower body functions associated with popular/carnavalesque humor that I will briefly focus upon it here. Although not considered in itself a distinct mode of *gracioso* humor, the scatological is a comical factor often interwoven into the stock comic figure’s characteristic cowardice.²¹² In most cases, the stock comic figure’s references to defecation as a consequence of his cowardly fear are offered up as metaphoric puns on the verbs or nouns (these are never used as such)

²¹¹ For other *gracioso* self-identifications with a chicken, see, for example, *BAE* 54, 427a, 435a.

²¹² References to lower body functions, defecation in particular, abound in the dialogue of Rojas Zorrilla’s *graciosos*. Many of these are not directly tied to the character’s proverbial cowardice, which is our interest here. See, for example, *El Caín de Cataluña*, *BAE*, 54, 271a; or MacCurdy *La vida en el ataúd* 192-93.

normally involved.²¹³ These numerous scatological references serve, most comically, to constantly, self-mockingly highlight *gracioso* cowardice in the face of a noble valor that was often rash and deadly. The scatological means employed and the punning delivery, clearly link to a popular/carnavalesque tradition that countered with laughter an unassailable hegemonic culture.

Worthy of mention, as well, are those occasions on which Rojas Zorrilla achieved a measure of innovation in the widespread comical projection of fearful cowardice in the *gracioso*. Such would be, for example, the probably novel idea of confronting two cowardly *graciosos*, as occurs with Cosme and Damián of *El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza*. Cosme states:

Tornarme
no parece bien, que ya
me ha visto y será brindalle
con el miedo a más valor,
que no trae el hombre talle
de menos miedo que yo,
y de cobarde a cobarde
vence el que acomete. (BAE, 54, 170c)

²¹³ *Obligados y ofendidos y gorrón de Salamanca*, BAE, 54, 67a; *No hay amigo para amigo*, BAE, 54, 95b; *Casarse para vengarse*, BAE, 54, 118c-119a; *Abre el ojo*, BAE, 54, 133a; *Sin honra no hay amistad*, BAE, 54, 305b; *Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena*, BAE, 54, 329a; *Peligrar en los remedios*, BAE, 54, 364a; *Los bandos de Verona*, BAE, 54, 369c, 380c; *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, BAE, 54, 437c.

The *gracioso* Cosme encounters his enemy *gracioso* in the play, Damián, when walking down a street. He thinks of turning around, but rejects the idea because Damián has already seen him, and his fear will lend the other valor: '*Tornarme / no parece bien, que ya / me ha visto y sera brindalle / con el miedo a más valor.*' So identified is cowardice with the *gracioso* that Cosme can be sure that Damián is no less fearful than he, '*que no trae el hombre talle / de menos miedo que yo.*' This knowledge allows him to keep moving, because when a coward faces a coward, he who attacks will be victorious, '*y de cobarde a cobarde / vence el que acomete.*'

Another possible innovation has our playwright presenting a *gracioso* conflicted between two of his traditionally prominent characteristics, cowardly fear and self-interest. Such is Bofetón's quandary in *Peligrar en los remedios* when realizing the danger involved in delivering messages as go-between. He comments:

Una cosa he presumido
 que me ha puesto gran cuidado.
 Estos papeles que escribe
 yo soy quien ha de llevarlos;
 ¿Mas qué está escribiendo en ellos
 que me den quinientos palos?
 Tómolos, bien lo merezco;
 pero a él no le faltan manos
 y él me los pudiera dar
 con muy gran desenfado;
 pero no, los alcahuetes
 son dichosos. (BAE, 54, 360a)

The *gracioso* fears that the content of the letters he surreptitiously delivers can bring violence down on the messenger, ‘¿Mas qué está escribiendo en ellos / que me den quinientos palos?’ These ‘palos’ would be deserved, ‘Tómolos, bien lo merezco,’ but he immediately realizes they could be severe, ‘pero a él no le faltan manos / y él me los pudiera dar / con muy gran desenfado.’ Still, self-interest wins out in the end, as he decides to rely on the good luck of go-betweens, ‘pero no, los alcahuetes / son dichosos.’ In effect, if the play must go on, fearful cowardice must almost always give way to greedy self-interest.

Still another of Rojas Zorrilla’s innovating dramatizations of *gracioso* cowardice, this in a somewhat anachronistic philosophical vein, has Caimán of *Los áspides de Cleopatra* comically justifying his flight in battle. He first does so, in a long soliloquy directed at the audience, by means of a very reasoned pragmatism. He states:

Y en la batalla después,
 viendo que con los gitanos
 no me valían las manos,
 me aproveché de los pies;
 pero yo estoy satisfecho,
 que huir, como hombre mortal
 luego, luego, hace gran mal,
 después, después, gran provecho;
 que queda un hombre corrido
 dice el vulgacho malvado;
 mas al huir me he quedado
 como si no hubiera ido. . . . (BAE, 54, 425a)

The descriptive pun on '*manos*' (fighting) '*pies*' (fleeing) confirms his flight and is followed by a full avowal of his cowardice, '*pero yo estoy satisfecho.*' Caimán argues that, being a human mortal, his cowardly action has a short term inconvenience, but a long term benefit, '*luego, luego hace gran mal, / después, después, gran provecho.*' He then explains that he will be immediately shamed by evil public opinion, but in the long run he will be alive, '*que queda un hombre corrido / dice el vulgacho malvado; / mas al huir me he quedado / como si no hubiera ido.*' The *gracioso* cannot, of course, forego the funny word-play on '*quedar / quedarse.*'

The expresión '*vulgacho malvado*' that Caimán uses while speaking directly to the popular audience may constitute a jab at the latter for assimilating noble, hegemonic values in shaming him for fleeing. This would justify, as well, the *gracioso* continuing, via a simulated dialogue with his noble Roman commander, a philosophical assault on posthumous fame, a noble's standard reward for extreme bravery:

díjome Octaviano fiero
de su ruina en el afán:
--Di, ¿porqué huyes, Caimán?;
y yo dije:--Porque quiero;
--Si mueres, dijo, es muy cierto
que tu fama el orbe aclama;
--¿Y qué he de hacer con la fama,
le dije, después de muerto?—
Señores, ¿no es necedad
que haya hombre de tal suerte
que se deje dar la muerte

por tener posteridad?

¿Por dar líneas a la historia

haya quien llegue a lidiar?

¿Que se entre un hombre a matar

por dejar grande memoria?

Hombre, a tu valor incierto

el engaño te apercibo:

No hay quien se acuerde de un vivo,

¿y quiere memoria un muerto? (*BAE*, 54, 425a)

The imaginary dialogue with the future emperor of Rome has the latter advising the *gracioso* that if he were to die, he would gain universal fame. To which Caimán cynically replies that fame is of no use after one is dead. The *gracioso*, with ‘*Señores*,’ then underscores that he is speaking, for real and outside the plot and timeframe of the play, directly to the audience. What follows is a scathing assault upon a core tenet of noble behavior: Isn’t it absolutely foolish that there are men who are willing to be killed in order gain posthumous fame; that there are men who fight in order to add pages to History; that a man should kill in order to leave behind a great memory of his feats? After this series of rhetorical interrogatives, Caimán, with his ‘*hombre*,’ in the singular, appears to speak to all mankind, warning it against the deception that the conduct-guiding concept of fame involves. Brilliantly, Rojas Zorrilla has his *gracioso* end his rhetorical anti-hegemonic sermon with an admonition that has all the flavor of a popular, real and empirical observation. ‘*No hay quien se acuerde de un vivo, / ¿y quiere memoria un muerto?*’ (Nobody even remembers the living, and a dead guy wants to be remembered?).

I will end this section on cowardice in the *gracioso* with the only example in Rojas Zorrilla of the most notorious aspect of the then prevalent noble honor code: conjugal honor. It occurs in *Cada cual lo que le toca* and has the married *graciosos*, Beltrán and Angela, scandalously re-enacting an honor-staining adulterous situation. I will focus on the *graciosos*, but it is necessary to indicate that the main plot of Rojas Zorrilla's *comedia* is also centered on the conjugal honor theme. In this main plot, the married female protagonist has had a pre-marital affair with a friend of her husband. When that 'friend' attempts to renew what would then be a fully adulterous affair, the wife dutifully rejects him. The 'friend' is subsequently killed by her and the husband forgives his wife her dishonoring deceit. This play was not well received by the public. Its being whistled down has generally been attributed to the husband's forgiving act, a breach of the conjugal honor code that leaves him a dishonored man.²¹⁴

The secondary plot has a sexual scene that somehow escaped religious censorship, always more inclined to strike heretical elements than moral transgressions. At night, Galindo, himself a servant-*gracioso*, is accompanying his adultery-minded master inside the home of his target when they come upon the bedded couple, Angela and Beltrán. Galindo, who has had his eye on Angela, is ordered to kill the household servants if they awaken, but, when left alone, decides to take full advantage of the situation:

Galindo: Pues Beltrán duerme, yo intento
 esta vez decir y hacer.
 Despertando su mujer,
 Le dire mi pensamiento:
 ¿Oyes, Angela?

²¹⁴ See Castro, *Cada qual* 177

Beltrán: Si él le da algo, callaré.

Galindo: Un alma.

Beltrán: Mala moneda.

Angela: ¿Pues cómo ahora has entrado?

Galindo: Que estoy en ti, es lo que sé.

Angela: Y si Beltrán....

Galindo: Yo le hare
 Con mi acero....

Beltrán: Y apaleado....

Angela: Digo que estimo tu amor.

Beltrán: ¡O, traidora! Ay, me duele;
 Saco la daga y daréle
 En tocándome el honor.

Beltrán's silent monologue initially reveals his expected materialistic self-interest, in this case fueled, as well, by self-preservation, '*Si le da algo, callaré.*' Beltrán's greed is squelched, '*Mala moneda,*' when Galindo offers Angela nothing but his soul. Her immediate question, '*¿Pues cómo ahora has entrado?*', can be interpreted sexually, as Galindo's response suggests, '*Que estoy en ti es lo que sé.*' When Angela fears that her husband might awaken, Galindo indicates that he will penetrate him with his sword, '*acero.*' A frightened Beltrán then confirms that the other two are engaged in sex, '*Y apaleado,*' which cannot help but recall the widely used set expression for the worst circumstances, '*Tras cornudo apaleado.*' Only when his wife indicates that she is pleased by Galindo, '*digo que estimo tu amor,*' does Beltrán react with husbandly jealousy, '*¡O, traidora! Ay, me duele,*' and pulls out a dagger. His subsequent

affirmation, ‘y darle / en tocándome el honor,’ is, however, ludicrous in its cowardly denial of the obviously completed act

In this laughter-ridden presentation of cuckoldry, it is not difficult to perceive the echo of a surviving popular/carnavalesque tradition’s comical presentation of that subject.²¹⁵ The extreme situation staged, with the *gracioso* witnessing his cuckolding in the closest of quarters, mimics a scenario in which a bloodletting was inevitable in the reigning code of honor. The comical deriding of that extreme scenario almost seems intended to counter the famous honor tragedies of Calderón de la Barca, Rojas Zorrilla’s colleague. In these, a mere suspicion, usually unfounded, leads to the female victim’s death. Scholars have deemed these deaths tragic rebuttals of the honor code they depict. In a sense, Rojas Zorrilla’s outrageously funny presentation of that extreme honor- cleansing wife-murder scenario comically achieves, via a theatrical cultural interchange, that very same rebuttal.

Summary

The examples analyzed in this mode of *gracioso* humor focus on his self-mockingly comical rejection of the socially sustained code of honorable behavior. It is a code that reflects the supposedly innate character traits of the hegemonic nobility of his day, loyalty, magnanimity and bravery. These idealistic character traits are discarded in favor of the disloyalty, self-interest and cowardice that almost invariably characterize *gracioso* conduct. Idealized loyalty and idealized magnanimity are replaced by material, self-serving gain and idealized bravery by a cowardly self-preservation of material existence.

²¹⁵ See Bakhtin 221-22

The materialization of the pretentiously idealistic, often supported by the earthy, lower body imagery projected in its presentation, links the *gracioso* performance to the popular/carnavalesque tradition of humor. It must be borne in mind, as well, that such *gracioso* stage performances involve the rejection of character traits that, as distinguishing hallmarks of a dominant nobility, were never conceded the lowly masses. It then becomes clear that the stock comic figure's self-mockingly exaggerated projection of the opposite character traits, seconded by the predominantly popular audience's laughter, take on an 'in your face' quality. This comically mock confirmation of the hegemonic establishment's discriminatory credo regarding the popular masses may well constitute a significant manner of cultural interchange.

Chapter 5

Defiance of Theatrical Illusion

This chapter will deal with the *gracioso*'s defiance of theatrical illusion.²¹⁶ In a few words, theatrical illusion can be characterized as a lapse of critical judgment that allows an audience to override reality in accepting as real the fiction represented on stage.²¹⁷ The *gracioso* often disregards theatrical illusion in all manner of dramatic situations by directing his words to the audience. Bristol's description of the phenomenon, referring to the clown of Elizabethan theater, is valid for Early Modern Spanish Theater's *gracioso*:

The independent public relationship between the clown and his audience disregards the conventional boundary between a dramatic performance and the social occasion that provides its surrounding environment. (124-25)

Only the *gracioso* carries out what has been indicated, possessing a monopoly on the duality that it presupposes: to be at once inside and outside of the play. He willfully transcends the separation that exists between the real, everyday world centered in the attending public and the imaginary world of the work being acted out on stage. As Bristol indicates:

In addition to his role within the narrative, he is also a chorus who stands outside it and draws attention to what

²¹⁶ See Ley 123. Also see Burningham 154-55.

²¹⁷ Recent studies, particularly of Early Modern English Theater, question the quality and character of dramatic illusion. See, for example, Wells 171-188.

other characters do not ‘know’—that they have only a limited, purely nominal existence. (14)

The stock comic figure’s privileged defiance of theatrical illusion constitutes, in itself, a primary mode of *gracioso* humor. The dispelling of dramatic illusion, reminding the audience that it has temporarily abdicated its critical judgment in order to identify with the fiction being staged, is an inducement to laughter. It is a comical ploy in use, as Duckworth has noted, since Roman times:

Another source of comic effect which Plautus often uses is the breaking of the dramatic illusion. The actor for the moment steps out of his part, speaks directly to the audience, and calls attention to the fact that he is an actor in a play. (2)

The laughter provoked is undoubtedly self-directed at each member of the audience for having allowed the fictional to momentarily substitute for the real. It is the self-mocking that is experienced, for example, upon waking from a dream and realizing that one has momentarily slipped the moorings of reality by accepting the unreal. This theatrical procedure often has, besides, a redoubled comical effect, because the comic figure’s dramatic illusion-breaking remarks to the audience can themselves be laughter-inciting. This redoubled comical effect fuses the self-directed laughter associated with disregarding dramatic illusion to the other-directed laughter induced by the remarks of the *gracioso*.

The mode of *gracioso* humor characterized by his monopolized disregard for dramatic illusion is the extreme manifestation of a phenomenon that is widespread in Spain’s Early Modern Theater. It is detected, to begin with, in a theatrical spectacle that systematically

inserted popular comical genres such as *entremeses*, *jácaras* and *bailes* between the acts of the *comedia*.²¹⁸ These interpolations interrupted the portrayal of a noble, hegemonic world alien to popular *corral* audiences and in its place, periodically, appeared a farcical popular world that reflected the real everyday life of those audiences.

The set characteristics of the *siglo de oro* theatrical spectacle, including the introduction and the closing of its centerpiece the *comedia*, contributed to a general disregard for dramatic illusion. They created, together, a most porous separation between the real world of the attending public and the necessary illusion required by the theatrical performance. An extraordinary permeability of the theatrical fourth wall thus characterizes the Early Modern Spanish theatrical spectacle itself, with the *gracioso* as a major participant.

The stock comic figure's direct communication with the audience is evidenced in a variety of ways. On the one hand, it can occur via the mere presence of elements in his dialogue that, defying dramatic illusion, can only be understood as directed to the public. In this sense, it generally occurs, as noted in chapter three, on those numerous occasions in which the *gracioso* comments on his role in the *comedia* or uses in his dialogue terms ('*tramoya*,' '*silbar*,' etc.) that allude to the theatrical genre in which he is involved. And it occurs most openly, on the other hand, when his dialogue contains terms of formal address clearly directed to the public. In such cases, words like '*Caballeros*,' '*Señores*' or a simple '*ustedes*,' suffice as indicators that the *gracioso*, openly stepping outside his role in the play, is addressing the specifically evoked audience. Beyond these two modalities of a patent *gracioso* dramatic-illusion-dispelling communication with the popular audience there are some other theatrical procedures that, although are less patent, also function to that end. In the following pages I will first offer and

²¹⁸ See Aubrun 189

analyze examples of the two patent modalities listed and defined above. I will follow with a survey of other conventions of Early Modern Spanish Theater that, defying dramatic illusion, augment the direct communication between popular *gracioso* and popular audience. The conventions referred to are punning, asides and soliloquies/expository speeches.

I will begin with the analysis of examples of the first modality, that in which, without open appeals to the audience, the *gracioso* still dispels dramatic illusion by clearly reaching out to it. This more subtle yet patent manner of *gracioso* communication with his audience is the more pervasive, but it obviously requires more analytical comment. A good number of instances of the *gracioso* directly commenting on his role have already been analyzed in chapter three as examples of the stock comic figure's parody and satire of the *comedia*. I have chosen the following two added examples of this modality precisely because the stock comic figure's references to his role in the play are less openly expressed. Even so, they fully qualify as *gracioso* dialogue containing elements that in disregarding dramatic illusion can only have the audience itself as valid receptor of his words. Pepino, *gracioso* of *Primero es la honra que el gusto*, refers, in the midst of his discourse and in a completely uncalled for manner, to the fact that he is speaking in a specific verse form. He states:

Mientras se dicen los dos
veinte y cuatro disparates,
que fueran cuarenta y nueve
si cupiera el asonante. . . . (BAE, 54, 443b)

The dramatic context in no way calls for his *non sequitar* comment; 'While those two exchange / twenty-four stupidities, which could just as well be forty-nine / if the assonantal rhyme allowed...' He is speaking in *romance*, so he is referring to the fact that changing numbers (24 to

49) would add a syllable to the second verse. This ninth syllable would defy the eight syllable pattern of the *romance* and disqualify ‘*disparates*,’ a necessary a/e assonantal rhyme with ‘*asonante*.’ His commentary, explicitly indicating that he is an actor in a play, clearly disregards dramatic illusion. In doing so, Pepino, removing himself from the play’s context, can only be directing himself to the audience. There is humor, as noted, in the disruption itself of dramatic illusion, and some redoubled humor, as well, in the arithmetic dilemma that effects that disruption.

An example, along the lines of that analyzed above, may, in its extreme manifestation, help clarify this redoubling idea of the humor involved on such occasions. In this example, Testúz, *gracioso* of *El profeta falso Mahoma*, is pleading with the Prophet himself (such was the nature of anti-Islamic propaganda of the day) to excuse his drinking. He accusingly states:

Yo sé bien que bebes vino,
 yo te he visto hecho un atún
 dando tufo por arrobas,
 aunque eres tal avestruz
 que digieres una carga,
 como si fuera un azum,
 el bre puedes perdonarme
 que el consonante me atur
 de, y así para que no. . . . (Parte I, 262Ra)

The element of the quoted verses that forces an instantaneous dissolution of the theatrical fourth wall is the reference to the verse form controlling Testuz’s expression: ‘*aunque eres tal avestruz / que digieres una carga, / como si fuera un azum / el bre puedes perdonarme / que el*

consonante me atur / de...’ (you’re such an ostrich / that you can digest a cart-load / as if it were a mere azum / the bre you can forget²¹⁹/ because its consonants are in the way)²²⁰. All this cries out that he is speaking in *romance* with an accented ‘u’ assonance pattern; that is, that he is speaking lines in a play.²²¹ The disregard for dramatic illusion has its comical effect. But the manner in which dramatic illusion is set aside, the breaking up of words to achieve the appropriate assonantal verse ending, is also comical. It is comical, as well, that Testúz’s desperate breaking up of words in order to comply with a specific verse form, comes at the end of a very long, *tour de force* monologue in a difficult and rarely used assonantal pattern.²²²

The two examples analyzed above reveal how readily and easily, without even any direct reference to his role as player, the *gracioso* can suddenly, comically dispel dramatic illusion. The following examples reflect, as indicated, just the opposite in the varied ways in which the *gracioso* defies dramatic illusion: the open address to the audience as such. In the previous chapter I have had occasion, in dealing with the stock comic figure’s voiced rejection of ‘honor,’ to analyze several examples of this open address to the audience. In his evocative use of

²¹⁹ The ‘azumbre, that is broken up in order to allow for an accented ‘u’ verse ending, is a liquid measure consisting of some two quarts.

²²⁰ The word ‘aturdir,’ is also broken up to allow for another accented ‘u’ ending required by the assonantal rhyme.

²²¹ For further examples of versification leading the *gracioso* to break with dramatic illusion, see MacCurdy, *Lucrecia y Tarquino* 86, 96 and *Casarse por vengarse*, BAE, 54, 110c.

²²² The verses quoted also carry a viciously comical propaganda charge, with the Prophet of Islam depicted as a drunk (‘yo te he visto hecho un atún / dando tufos por arrobas’) (I’ve seen you filled to the gills / smelling like a barrel of wine).

‘*caballeros*’ or ‘*senores*’ the *gracioso*, in keeping with the language’s masculine collective, is usually speaking to the popular audience as a whole, to both the *mosquetería* and the *cazuela*. The following example of this most direct and patent manner of breaching the theatrical fourth wall was selected as a showcase of the *graciosa* openly directing her words to the *cazuela*. This kind of direct communication between a popular *graciosa* and the popular women’s section of the *corral* is probably unique in Western theater.

Libia, *graciosa* of *Los áspides de Cleopatra*, complains, in a very public manner, to Cleopatra’s new law condemning adulteresses to burning at the stake. She states:

¿Qué haya mandado en Egipto
 que no haya quien tenga amor?
 ¿Qué con su casta pureza
 la cruel Cleopatra intente
 derogar por accidente
 lo que obra naturaleza?
 Si con ser irracionales
 en la tierra y mar mejor
 se tienen también amor
 peces, plantas y animales.
 Desde ha que todos ven
 este precepto importuno,
 no encuentro hombre ninguno
 que no me parezca bien....
 ¡Que nuestra reina aperciba,

porque su virtud se crea,
 que la que adúltera sea
 la saquen a quemar viva!....
 Senores míos, protesto
 Que me endiablo o enquillotro,
 ¿qué les queda para esotro
 si queman aquí por esto?
 Esta sujeción cansada
 más a mi deseo aumenta;
 viva yo ahora contenta
 y muera después quemada. (BAE, 54, 425b-c)

Libia's initial verses give expression to a perception of sexuality that, as based on the workings of all nature, must itself be natural and, therefore, irrepressible. She makes it clear that no law-maker can outlaw what is natural, '*derogar por accidente / lo que obra naturaleza.*' She also indicates that its prohibition can only serve to intensify what is natural. Her words give expression to a feminine sexuality that, usually silenced or denied, only a *graciosa* could effect on the stage of that time. She immediately underscores the double standard imposed by Cleopatra's new law, '*que la que adúltera sea / la saquen a quemar viva.*' By referring to this double standard, she alludes, despite the distance in time and space, to contemporary Spain. The breaking of theatrical illusion itself, as in this case, implies a transfer into the present. This allusion to the Spain of her present is also suggested by Libia's choice of words in ending with a valiant, suicidal defiance of the free-love inhibiting law, '*Esta sujeción cansada*²²³ / *más a mi*

²²³ The adjective 'cansada' meant 'old,' inappropriate to Cleopatra's new law and only

deseo aumenta; / viva yo ahora contenta / y muera después quemada.' It is worthy of note that the scene has Libia encounter Caimán, the play's *gracioso*, where she begins his seduction. The process underscores the double standard in that Caimán does not have to worry about being burned at the stake.²²⁴

Libia, despite the collective masculine in the quoted verses, '*Senores míos,*' is more likely than not directing her words to the *cazuela*. Her concerns, the persecution of feminine sexuality and the double standard employed with respect to women, would most likely have been supported by its segregated women. Besides, there is little question that Cleopatra's fictional law was contrived by Rojas Zorrilla in order to reflect on women's status in his own day. As indicated, only a *graciosa* could give expression on stage to such controversially taboo subjects. To which could be added that only a *graciosa* could comically reach out to the feminine public in order to boldly encourage a defiance of the *status quo*.

Of the listed theatrical conventions that augment the incidence of *gracioso* disregard for dramatic illusion, punning is the most pervasive. In Early Modern Spanish Theater, unlike in its English counterpart, funny and often allusive word-play is monopolized by the stock comic figure. The mental mechanism involved in the pun's tendency to pierce the fourth theatrical wall is suggested by Lopez in his study of Early Modern English Theater, but is valid for the contemporary Spanish theater:

for the brief moment it is asked to deal with it,

meaningful as a reference to the actresses' present.

²²⁴ More importantly, it is played out as a burlesque parody of a piously religious exchange of inter-gender kindnesses, thus singling out the Church, supporter of such sanctions, for the incited laughter.

the audience is on a level entirely separate from the action, and perhaps even its physical space, of the play, a level where getting the joke is the only thing that matters. (47)

Whether the word-play is germane to the dialogue in which it is inserted or completely fortuitous, the audience, dissolving dramatic illusion, is momentarily brought back to the real present. Lopez suggests (49) that in Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre the theatergoer is then brought to confront the playwright, creator of the word-play that he is challenged to solve. That could be the case, as well, in Early Modern Spanish Theater, except that in the latter the punning is almost invariably delivered on stage by a *gracioso*. This is the same uniquely Spanish popular stock comic figure who often communicates directly with the predominantly popular audience. It is thus logical, in this case, that the reality to which the audience is drawn by the funny pun is that of the character that, stepping out of his role, once again dispels dramatic illusion in delivering it.

This most frequently employed comical tool of the *siglo de oro gracioso* takes on a great variety of forms, all of which require, to one degree or another, the audience's distraction from the ongoing play. The following are a few examples that do not pretend to exhaust the possibilities. I have organized them to go from the most to the least distracting of the audience's attention away from the play.

In the following example the word-play is based on metaphorical allusion. When awakened by his master, Cabellera of *Entre bobos anda el juego*, states: "A las doce de la noche, que ya han dado, / de mi medio columpio me has sacado, / y discurrir no puedo / donde ahora me llevas." (BAE, 54, 23c-24a). The word-play based on metaphorical allusion is always the most distracting for the audience and holds it longest from the ongoing play. It usually creates

interpretative problems, as well, for the modern reader. In this regard Profeti states that “los juegos de palabras del teatro barroco pueden hoy resultar incomprensibles para un público ‘no entendido,’ es decir un público que ha perdido el contexto referencial que hacía posible la alusión” (15).²²⁵ It is fairly clear that ‘medio columpio’ alludes to his bed, but what does ‘half a swing’ tell us? Did servants sleep at inns, where the quoted action takes place, in hammocks?

Next in line would probably be the word-plays based on metaphorical allusions that had already become set expressions, a great number of which have come down to our own day. Sancho of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, indicates his mastery of his ‘amo’ by stating: “*Yo puedo hacer de mi amo / un sayo, y un gabán.*” (BAE, 54, 158c). The word-play is based on the expression ‘Hago de mi capa un sayo’ (I do as I please), which is still current. Or Andrea, *graciosa* of *Entre bobos anda el juego*, who, in proclaiming marriage to be the death of love, states: “*y las tibiezas tan grandes, / que pone un requiebro en Flandes, / quien llama a su mujer hija.*” (BAE, 54, 17a). This is based on a metaphorical reference to the sixteenth and seventeenth century wars in the Low Countries, ‘poner una pica en Flandes,’ which is still used to indicate an extraordinary feat.

The least distracting word-plays, with only slight differences of degree, are those based on personal names. Thus Sabanón of *Sin honra no hay amistad*, states: “*Ahora me dijo el soldado / que por él habías llorado / más de treinta Jeretuyas.*” The play is on *Jeremías* (Jeremiah), which is still the human representation of mournful weeping. The audience would have had to fix on ‘*Jeremías*’ and then grasp the play on name-ending possessives. Or Baraúnda of *Los celos de Rodamonte*, who merely plays on the names of characters in the play:

²²⁵ There are literally hundreds of punning metaphorical allusions that even ‘*entendidos*’ cannot today fully resolve.

Rodamonte/rodallano (Part I, 178Aa) and Mandicardo/mandi-escarola (197Aa). The choice of ‘*escarola*,’ ‘chicory,’ to funnily alter the original name-ending, ‘*cardo*,’ which should probably be translated as ‘weed,’ was probably governed by the rhyme, since any other plant would have worked.

A difference must be noted in dealing with the other two theatrical conventions of Early Modern Theater that distractingly dispel dramatic illusion, asides (*apartes*) and expository speeches (*soliloquios*).²²⁶ Whereas punning represents an exclusive domain of the *gracioso* in Early Modern Spanish Theater, *apartes* and *soliloquios* are shared by the *gracioso* and other characters. My position is that both asides and expository speeches, when delivered by the *gracioso*, are more likely to have had a dramatic-illusion-dispelling effect than those delivered by other characters in a play. The main reason is simply that Early modern Spanish theater’s omnipresent popular stock comic figure was socially identified with the popular audience. More than that of any noble protagonist, the language, imagery and subject-matter of his asides and expository speeches would have brought the *mosquetería* and the *cazuela* into the real present. Besides, there is the matter of familiarity. During the course of a play the audience would likely have already experienced the *gracioso*, and only the *gracioso*, stepping out of his role to reach out to them in any of the varied forms already indicated.

One example of a *gracioso* aside will suffice to clarify the distinctions outlined above. Beatriz, *graciosa* of *Obligados y ofendidos, y gorrón de Salamanca*, is present in the scene in which her *ama*, Fénix, refuses the Count, her lover, entry after he asserts that their relationship will not lead to marriage. The Count argues that their different social positions impede marriage

²²⁶ See Lopez 57-58, 79-80.

and that, anyway, marriages are not based on love. Fénix holds to her rejection, at which point Beatriz states in an aside:

Lo que más le alabo yo
 es el buen desembarazo,
 ¡bergantes hombres, esto es,
 ser rocas y ser diamantes!
 ¡Cuales son antes del antes!
 ¡Cuales después del después! (BAE, 54, 63a)

It would be hard to suggest that Beatriz is not directing her words specifically at the *cazuela*. This uniquely Spanish segregation of general admission women from men and/or women who could afford expensive tickets, facilitated a target for the dramatic-illusion-dispelling popular *gracioso*. The subject, the anti-men position taken, “*bergantes hombres*” (shameless men), the generalized call to strength in confronting them, “*esto es, ser rocas y ser diamantes*” (that’s it, be rocks, be diamonds), clearly indicate it. The redundantly comical end of the aside is a confidential woman to women summary of their common experience that men are one way before seduction and another way after, “¡*Cuales son antes del antes!* / ¡*Cuales después del después.*” Spanish allows for this kind of comically suggestive redundancy. In this case, the first use of the temporal adverbs complies with their function, while the redundant use suggests much more.

The theatrical convention of the expository speech or *soliloquio* tends, in having no audience but the audience, to dispel dramatic illusion.²²⁷ In Early Modern Spanish Theater, this convention is overwhelmingly, if not exclusively employed by the *gracioso*. This is well

²²⁷ See, for example, Lopez 79-80.

exemplified in Chapter four where half dozen examples of the convention were analyzed in studying the mode of *gracioso* humor based on the rejection of honor. In most of those analyzed, the convention's capacity to dispel dramatic illusion is heavily reinforced by the stock comic figure's direct exhortations to the audience or indirect communications with it. The direct exhortations, employing the proper formulaic terms (*caballeros, senores, etc.*) can appear either as an introduction to the *soliloquio* (BAE, 54, 396a) or toward its end (BAE, 54, 163a). The indirect communication with the audience usually initiates a long expository speech. All support, in any case, my contention that the Spanish *gracioso*, given his omnipresence, popular status and special privileges, maximizes the dramatic-illusion-dispelling effect of this theatrical convention.

In this example, Beatriz, *graciosa* of *Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado*, introduces a rather long expository speech. She states:

Yo solamente no tengo
 a quien le cuente mis males;
 pues vaya de soliloquio,
 que en cuantas comedias se hacen
 no he visto que las criadas
 lleguen a soliloquiarse. (BAE, 54, 165c)

With her *gracioso* privilege, Beatriz patently comments on her role in the play, indicating that she is about to offer a soliloquy, which '*criadas*,' like her, rarely achieve in *comedias*. Beyond the comical effect of disregarding dramatic illusion, she gives her words an added humorous twist by inventing the term '*soliloquiarse*.' The long *soliloquio* that follows ponders on her ideal male. She fixes a prototype of insensitively gruff maleness that is clearly directed at

the popular women gathered in the *cazuela*. Communicating very directly with that section of the audience, it is likely that her comments would have drawn a vociferous reaction from it.

There is a great deal of dramatic-illusion-dispelling effect, finally, in *gracioso* words and actions never registered in the theatrical texts that, whether in manuscript or printed form, have come down to us. *Siglo de oro* theatrical texts are notoriously lacking in detailed stage directions.²²⁸ It is only logical to assume, still, that an indispensable popular *gracioso*, in a role monopolized by famous actors, would not have failed to employ the facial expressions and gestures that are traditional tools of the comedian.²²⁹ One has to assume, as well, that such exercises, whatever the dramatic context, would have usually been directed, disregarding the fourth theatrical wall, to the popular audience. This non-verbal manner of communication between the popular *gracioso* and his predominantly popular public transmitted, via a shared code, an impacting message.²³⁰ Significantly, that message is always capable of adding to, modifying or even nullifying the spoken words that they accompany.

There is a verbalized dimension to this extra-dialogical communication between *gracioso* and public, the interjection, whether with or without expletive content. Again, the texts that have come down to us fail to hint at their possibility. But, again, it is difficult to imagine the actor in the role of *gracioso* dispensing with this traditional comedic tool. The prior ecclesiastical censorship to which dramatic texts were subject precluded the textual appearance of any manner

²²⁸ See, for example, Burningham 146-47.

²²⁹ More personal names of actors associated with the role of *gracioso* have come down to us than of any other role.

²³⁰ The 'meaning' of facial expressions and gestures is variable, ranging from those expressing a permanently fixed significance within a culture to those of a faddishly short existence.

of *Bathgate*, but one has to wonder whether the *gracioso* was so limited once on stage. If not, as it is reasonable to assume, the use of interjections, in or around a given textual content, would have had, like gestures or facial alterations, an important impact upon that content.

Although hypothetical due to the lack of textual evidence I believe that the popular *gracioso* employed both these verbal and the non-verbal means to pierce the theatrical fourth wall and reach his popular audience. With a wink, a universally understood hand gesture or a well-placed expletive, the words he actually spoke on stage could be comically intensified, nullified or rejected. In fact, what would be difficult to accept is that these traditional means of comedic communication would have been banned or somehow excluded from the popular theater of Early Modern Spain.

This widespread, *gracioso*-based disregard of dramatic illusion in Early Modern Spanish Theater, as demonstrated by the various forms of its implementation, requires a general, if tentative explanation. As is often the case in attempting to explain a broadly extended cultural phenomenon, both synchronic and diachronic perspectives are appropriate. It must be borne in mind that these are not mutually exclusive, but will in general reinforce each other. In the present case, four explanations, two synchronic and two diachronic are pertinent. I will first comment on those of Lopez and Orozco Díaz, offering synchronic focuses, and follow with comments on the diachronic approaches of Bakhtin and Burningham.

Lopez, summarizing recent studies in Early Modern Theater, indicates that the “conventions of continuous staging and unlocalized settings in both public and private theaters allowed for an easy interplay between illusion and reality” (1). There is little to counter this assessment. The norm of presenting successive scenes along the length of the stage and the lack of differentiating scenery required a great imaginative projection of the audience upon the stage.

This extraordinary interplay between audience and performance would naturally have weakened the theoretical separation between illusion and reality. To these dramatic-illusion-weakening conventions of Early Modern Theater in general, should be added the particularly Spanish theatrical spectacle conventions (*loa*, inter-act interpolations) already mentioned.

The title of Orozco Díaz's book, *Teatro y teatralidad del barroco*, sets his point of focus on a period in the history of Western art, the Baroque, that is characterized by its rejection of classical aesthetics. The latter, as revived and championed by the Renaissance, is challenged in every artistic medium, most relevantly so, perhaps, in theater. Early Modern Spanish Theater clearly was, in this anti-classical sense, baroque. By the late Sixteenth Century, the *comedia*, its three-acts, its expressive variety of poetic forms, its total disregard for the Aristotelian unities, constituted a full-blown expression of baroque, anti-classical art. This aesthetic context would have itself encouraged a defiantly systematic disregard of the theatrical fourth wall in the face of an idealized classical verisimilitude

The triumphant arrival of a new aesthetic is often perceived as the result of the individualized efforts of artists imposing a novel sense of life upon a passive public. I suspect that the above is rarely the case, that the reverse is probably what usually occurs, that the sensitive artist merely gives meaningful expression to what is already in the public domain. The latter is most evident in theater, where the public can immediately and directly reject any novel indoctrination on the part of the artist. This is most pronounced in the popular theater of Early Modern Spain, for which Lope's *Arte nuevo* offers fairly clear evidence of a public-imposed baroque, anti-classical mode of writing *comedias*.

The fact that the public tolerated Early Modern Theater's recurrent disregard of dramatic illusion, coalescing the real and fictional worlds, presupposes the existence of a general mind set.

A convincing proposal in this regard is that offered by Orozco Díaz, who synchronically points out Counter-Reformation Spain's universal assimilation of the metaphorical "life is theater".

After indicating how the theatrical phenomenon invaded all aspects of the Spain's daily life, Orozco Díaz explains:

Todo ese desbordamiento de lo teatral debió llevar a la conciencia de todos el sentimiento de que el mismo vivir, es una representación, de que el mundo es un teatro. La metáfora era muy vieja y por distintos medios llegaba a los oídos de todos; pues corría no sólo entre los doctos en la tradición literaria, sino también en boca de las gentes, en el mismo teatro, y, en especial, en boca de los predicadores. El entusiasmo que todos sentían por el teatro, la importancia que éste había alcanzado en la vida como centro de toda clase de diversiones, debió impulsar a los predicadores a repetir la vieja comparación, con la conciencia de que era, para la imaginación de las gentes, no una fría abstracción sino el recuerdo de algo vivo y concreto que podía conmover a una sociedad en la que nobles y humildes, seculares y religiosos participaban del mismo entusiasmo por la fiesta teatral, que era, además, centro y causa de otras diversiones. El lugar común del *theatrum mundi* se renueva y vivifica con la referencia concreta y directa al tipo de teatro que se está contemplando todos los días; y, especialmente, en España, donde se había impuesto una comedia que mezclaba, como en la vida, lo trágico lo cómico, lo elevado y lo vulgar, y con hechos extraordinarios, pero que sucedían en el mismo plano y ambiente de la realidad cotidiana. (171-72)

Although referring to the religious, '*predicadores*,' as the most significant disseminators of the metaphor, Orozco Díaz does not stress sufficiently why it would logically be so in Counterreformation Spain. It is difficult, almost impossible to understand, today, the general mindset of that period. It was a religious fervor based on a faith-filled, sincere and systematic devaluation of this brief life and this sorrowful world in stressing the indubitable existence of an eternal afterlife, of a blissful afterworld. It was a religious context in which this-life/world-devaluating metaphors thrived, with comparisons to dreams and literature accompanying that of theater in numerous literary works of the time.²³¹

As Orozco Díaz points out, *Theatrum Mundi* was probably the comparison that impacted the broadest segment of society. And the mental integration of that specific metaphorical proclamation of the insubstantial, ephemeral character of this life and world, would certainly have encouraged a most permeable separation between the theatrical world of a play on stage and the real world of its audience. *Siglo de oro* playwrights knowingly took advantage of a public mind-set that readily bridged the qualitative separation between theater and life. And they readily augmented the comical density of their works by delegating a systematic overriding of that separation to their *graciosos*.

Another explanation for the fact that Early Modern Spanish Theater offers a systematic assault on dramatic illusion is diachronic in its perspective. It rests on the complementary fact that the emblematically popular *gracioso* is the prime mover of that theatrical spectacle.

²³¹ Both life as a dream, that is, this world as indistinguishable from that offered in our dreams, and life as literature, that is, this world as indistinguishable from that offered in a romance of chivalry, are equally prevalent, as *siglo de oro* art indicates, in the baroque mind-set of Counter-Reformation Spain.

Bristol's statement concerning that practice in the clown of English Elizabethan Theater is again fully applicable to *siglo de oro* theater's stock comic figure. He states that "the power of the clown over other *dramatis personae* corresponds to the power of an objective social domain over the nominal individuality of a particular character or person" (141).

It should be stressed that the 'social domain' personified in the clown/*gracioso*, according to Bristol, is that of the popular audience to which he directs himself. It is the real, popular world that the *gracioso*, the periodic destroyer of dramatic illusion, invariably projects on stage. This connection, established in direct violation of theatrical illusion, recalls Bakhtin's definition of the popular/carnavalesque:

Because of their obvious sensuous character and their strong element of play, carnival images closely resemble certain artistic forms, namely the spectacle. In turn, medieval spectacles often tended toward carnival folk culture, the culture of the marketplace, and to a certain extent became one of its components. But the basic carnival nucleus of this culture is by no means a purely artistic form nor a spectacle and does not, generally speaking, belong to the sphere of art. It belongs to the borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play.

In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators.

Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very

idea embraces all people. (7)

It is no accident that the emblematically popular *gracioso* is the prime engine of Early Modern Spanish Theater's assault on theatrical illusion. The latter's direct communication with the popular audience in the varied ways indicated evidences a link to the tradition of the popular/carnavalesque, to a surviving popular subculture. I will return to the prominent role of the *gracioso* in dispelling dramatic illusion in an attempt to establish its significance in the persistent cultural interchange that I feel the *comedia* represents. But I will first present one further explanation for the theatrical phenomenon under scrutiny.

The title of Burningham's recent study, *Radical theatricality*, reveals its diachronic perspective in rejecting the traditionally presumed lack of medieval theater in Spain. He convincingly redefines the concept of theater by including theretofore excluded manifestations of theatricality. This he identifies, during the centuries he studies, with the jongleur, a term that includes all who performed before live audiences. The jongleuresque, the fusion of all such artists, represents a performative continuum of those who characteristically entertained without a stage separation from their audience. It is no surprise, then, that he states, with respect to the fool and the clown of English theater, the other European popular theater. Burningham states:

In both cases, these characters have inherited the jongleur's privileged position both inside and outside their texts. By creating the very relationship that binds them all together, these fools and buffoons function precisely as performative mediators who bridge the gap between the world of the audience and the world of the other fictive characters. . . . No figure on the early Spanish stage better exemplifies the jongleuresque function of this performative bridge

than the ubiquitous gracioso. . . . (155)

Burningham perceptively connects the *gracioso* of Early Modern Spanish Theater to the performative theatricality that he posits as the centennial theatrical practice of medieval Spain. He does so specifically on the basis of that stock comic figure's privilege of standing, in defiance of dramatic illusion, both inside and outside the text being acted out on stage. This connection would certainly explain the singular privilege bestowed on the *gracioso* of Early Modern Spanish Theater of dispelling dramatic illusion at will. Via the existence of a supporting jongleuresque tradition in this respect, it explains, as well, the acceptance of the practice by essentially popular audiences.

In summary, all that has been adduced to explain the systematic disregard of the theatrical fourth wall in the Early Modern theater of Spain converges sufficiently to offer a consistent justification of the practice. Synchronically, the general Early Modern conventions of continuous staging and lack of scenery, to which would be added those peculiar to Spain's theatrical spectacle, clearly encouraged a porous fourth wall. The same can be said of a prevalent baroque, popular and anti-classical aesthetic that, in all the arts, defied Aristotelian verisimilitude. It was facilitated, finally, by the then generalized assimilation of the Counterreformation-stressed *Theatrum Mundi* metaphor, equating real life with a theatrical performance. In diachronic terms, the central role of the emblematically popular *gracioso* in the dispelling of dramatic illusion suggests a basic linkage to a then still extant medieval popular/carnavalesque tradition. The latter, as defined by Bakhtin, is only possible when nothing separates performer from participating audience. More recently, Burningham identifies Spanish medieval theatricality with the jongleuresque, a centennial theatrical tradition of performative entertainers who invariably worked among their audience. Moreover, he specifically links that

tradition of direct communication between entertainer and audience to the *gracioso* of Early Modern Spanish Theater.

What undoubtedly emerges from the previous pages is the primary role played by the *gracioso* in the systematic defiance of the theatrical fourth wall that characterizes *siglo de oro* theater. This warrants a rejection of literary criticism's already traditional attribution of the stock comic figure's creation to Lope de Vega. The character's laughter-inducing function, popular identification and special theatrical privileges have too many antecedents in European and Spanish literary culture to claim a creation from scratch. At best, Lope de Vega was the successful adapter of those antecedents to the *comedia*, to its requirements in terms of verse format, plot motifs, social medium, etc. His success, however, had criticism focusing for decades on the adaptive elements (*criado* status, for example, or Sancho-like side-kick) instead of the essential elements derived from cultural antecedents.

There are basically three essential characteristics of the Early Modern *gracioso* drawn from fairly clear cultural antecedents. First and foremost is his near monopoly of the indispensable comedic dimension of the popular *tragicomedia* formula of Early Modern Theater. As much as the *comedia*'s three act format and its varied poetic medium, the presence of a *gracioso* serves to define the *comedia*. The general character and quality of the stock comic figure's fundamental comedic output has been studied in previous chapters. There, the varied modes of *gracioso* humor analyzed reveal a firm connection to a popular/carnavalesque tradition in which self-mocking laughter is both medium and message.

The second essential trait of the *gracioso* is his popular identity. He always proceeds demographically from the popular social strata, but, as noted, his indispensable humor irrevocably ties him, besides, to the popular subculture expressed in the carnivalesque tradition.

In a theater invariably set in the noble ambience of the hegemonic class, the representatively popular audience consistently shared much more, culturally, with its *gracioso* than its protagonists. It is hard to imagine the *mosquetería* or the *cazuela* being more readily reached by any other character upon the stage.

The third essential characteristic of the *gracioso* and the subject of this chapter is his privileged monopoly of a persistent, dramatic-illusion-dispelling communication with the popular audience. I have already analyzed its function as a distinct mode of *gracioso* humor. And have underscored how its comical impact is often redoubled by the comical quality of the mechanisms (gestures, punning, asides, references to his role, direct address etc) employed to pierce the theatrical fourth wall. But this persistent disregard of dramatic illusion by the *gracioso* transcends in significance its important contribution to the comedic content of the *comedia*. It is a communication with the public, achieved in the various ways outlined above, that accompanies the omnipresent *gracioso* throughout the life of the *comedia* as an art form. Its full significance in terms of the social impact of the *comedia* is best presented, however, accompanied by his other, related essential characteristics.

As the main source of humor in the *comedia*, the *gracioso* elicits a volume of predominantly self-mocking laughter that echoes the medieval popular/carnavalesque tradition of Europe. It also echoes that tradition, as has been noted throughout these pages, in the subjects, themes and imagery of the stock comic figure's comical repertoire, the modes of his humor. The significant comical input of the *gracioso* reflects, thus, a popular/carnavalesque tradition that gives expression to a popular subculture. It is a subculture that is traditionally alien to the hegemonic world depicted on stage. By and large the stock comic figure's humor reinforces, thus, his demographically fixed, emblematic popular status, identifying him with a popular

audience that shares that subculture. This popular *gracioso*/popular audience connection is then systematically strengthened by the stock comic figure's persistent defiance of dramatic illusion in communicating directly with his popular audience.

All of the essential characteristics of the Early Modern *gracioso* combine to create an important communicative channel between himself and the popular audience, the *mosquetería* and the *cazuela*. In a way, this brings about a manner of communal complicity between the two against the alien noble, hegemonic world displayed in the play. As such, it cannot help but color everything that the *gracioso* says and does within the hegemonic world in which he moves on stage. The popular audience, heir to a subculture of carnivalesque origin, understood, as a modern audience cannot, a *gracioso* humor that self-mockingly brought hegemonic values to the punishing court of laughter. Professor Blue has identified both the means and their implementer in the *comedia* and states that "the carnival spirit and laughter belong to clowns, and graciosos are the clown-princes of *comedia*" (*Spanish Comedies* 90).

Early Modern audiences probably perceived that the self-mockingly preposterous name that the *gracioso* takes makes nomination itself, whether it be 'count,' 'duke,' Mendoza or Guzmán, food for derisive laughter. It probably understood that the self-mockingly comical genealogy that the *gracioso* comically claims brings all genealogical evaluations to questionable laughter. And it probably sensed that the stock comic figure's self-mockingly, extreme cowardice brought devaluating laughter, too, to heedless valor, its opposite, noble extreme. The popular audiences of *siglo de oro* theater would not otherwise have flocked day after day for decades to plays that simply projected their subculture in the most laughably demeaning manner. They did so concealed within the time-tested, survivalist philosophy of that very subculture, in

which laughter, as Bakhtin has noted, was both the solace for and the safe protest against their powerlessness.

It is difficult to comply in the evaluation made by Maravall of the social impact of Early Modern Spanish Theater. Recent scholarship has, in effect, called for research that would, as Burningham has put it, “complement and balance the influential work of José Antonio Maravall and the picture he paints of the Baroque comedia as an early form of mass culture, a propaganda tool with which a resilient aristocracy secured broad acceptance of its conservative value system” (32). And Blue has openly defied Maravall’s conclusions by stating that:

If on the one hand, theater may be a potential means for the power structure to ‘rewrite’ the audience, to propagandize, to insist on a given value system, on the other hand, the theater inevitably produces broader awareness of self, of situation, of inhabited cultural, political, social, and economic matrices, a self-awareness that the power structure can neither totally curtail nor totally turn to its advantage.

Theater, like language, says more than it says. (*El principe* 95)

It seems clear that research to counterbalance Maravall’s sweeping dictums, would have to be centered on the *gracioso*. It would have to focus on the sub-cultural character of his humor and, above all, perhaps, on the multiple ways in which he communicates with the popular audience.

Summary

As Plautus already understood, a spontaneous, self-directed laughter flows from a theatrical audience abruptly reminded that it has allowed its critical, life-preserving judgment to lapse. It is the comical resource exploited by Early Modern playwrights, including Rojas Zorrilla, in having their *graciosos* systematically disregard dramatic illusion. In Spain’s Early

Modern Theater this comical resource is exploited so often in the varied forms of its implementation that I believe it to constitute a primary mode of *gracioso* humor. The most direct and patent forms of dispelling dramatic illusion, directly addressing the audience or blatantly confessing to role-playing, are the privileged domain of the *gracioso*. In more subtle forms of disregarding dramatic illusion, punning, asides and soliloquies, the *gracioso*, given his social identification with the popular audience, is, at the very least, most effective in reaching it. It is clear, then, that the *gracioso* is the primary instrument of dramatic-illusion-dispelling communication with the public.

The permeability of the fourth wall is encouraged, from a synchronic perspective, by factors that characterized the staging of all theatrical performances in Early Modern Europe. Norms such as the continuous projection of scenes on a single stage and the lack of localizing scenery certainly weakened the distinction between illusion and reality. In Early Modern Spanish Theater, this porosity was clearly reinforced by the nature of its theatrical spectacle, incorporating loas and between-the-acts interpolations of popular performative subgenres. This permeability was also reinforced (Orozco Díaz) by an ambient Baroque aesthetic that rejected classical verisimilitude, and a no less ambient Counterreformation mindset that compared life to a theatrical representation. From a diachronic perspective, a disregard for dramatic illusion was inherent in a medieval popular/carnavalesque tradition (Bakhtin) that flourished in Early Modern Spain. As it was (Burningham) in the theatricality that characterized the performative tradition of medieval Spain.

This mode of *gracioso* humor, consisting of a systematic disregard for dramatic illusion, periodically brings the popular stock comic figure into direct contact with the popular audience. It establishes a fixed channel of communication, of shared understanding, that colors all that the

gracioso does and says upon the stage. If this be the case, much of the latter's self-mocking humor acquires the character of the kind of cultural interchange that Maravall's appreciation of Spain's Baroque theater fails to contemplate. It could well serve as the counterbalance to that appreciation that contemporary criticism seeks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as the title of my thesis indicates, I have sought to underscore the strong links between the comical output of Rojas Zorrilla's *graciosos*, including that of his numerous *graciosas*, and the surviving medieval tradition of the popular/carnavalesque. This tie, which I have endeavored to document in the many examples of *gracioso* humor analyzed, would lend the popular stock comic figure's varied comical contributions an overall popular/carnavalesque identity. It is an identification that may serve to coalesce his many varied comical insertions into a broad and persistent presentation of a traditional popular subculture within the noble, hegemonic milieu of most *siglo de oro* plays.

In light of my study, future investigations of the popular stock comic figure in Early Modern Theater will have a strong basis for documenting views which counter Maravall's thesis regarding the social impact of the *comedia*. And, a specific area of my dissertation that offers promising grounds for further study involves the stock comic figure's theatrical illusion-dispelling role as spokesperson and/or *alter ego* of the playwright. When confirmed as the playwright's spokesperson in his criticism of the artistic medium in which he is acting, the *gracioso* offers us an insight into the playwright's aesthetic opinions with respect to specific aspects of the *comedia*. And when, as the playwright's *alter ego*, the stock comic figure confronts his creator on issues concerning the on-going play, he affords us a view of the latter's creative process itself.

The five most important modes of *gracioso* humor that I have developed from the plays of Rojas Zorrilla represent valid thematic guidelines for studying the popular stock comic figure's comical contribution in other Early Modern playwrights. The modes analyzed via

concrete examples that include the popular stock comic figure's name and genealogical humor, the social medium and social satire, the literary satire and parody, the rejection of the honor code and the persistent disruption of theatrical illusion, encompass the breadth and depth of *gracioso* comedic contribution to the *comedia*.

In effect, all the modes of *gracioso* humor analyzed reflected multiple links to the centennial popular/carnavalesque tradition of life-sustaining self-mocking laughter. This encouraged me to believe that Early Modern Spanish Theater represented the reservoir of a continuum, as Bakhtin would have it, of a popular/carnavalesque subculture via its *graciosos*, male and female. It was a popular subculture that the socially and politically impotent popular masses had evolved over the centuries, a survivalist philosophy of safe, self-mocking laughter within an immovable hierarchical society.

As the main source of humor in the *comedia*, the *gracioso* elicits a volume of predominantly self-mocking laughter that, *per se*, echoes the medieval popular/carnavalesque tradition of Europe. It also echoes that tradition, as has been noted throughout these pages, in the subjects, themes and imagery of the stock comic figure's comical repertoire, the modes of his humor. The significant comical input of the *gracioso* reflects, thus, a popular/carnavalesque tradition that gives expression to a popular subculture. It is a subculture that is traditionally alien to the hegemonic world depicted on stage. By and large the stock comic figure's humor reinforces, thus, his demographically fixed, emblematic popular status, identifying him with a popular audience that shares that subculture.

When all the modes of *gracioso* humor analyzed in the previous pages reveal strong ties to traditional popular/carnavalesque humor and thus represent the continuum of a popular European sub-culture, it is no surprise that the potential for the appearance of instances of

cultural interchange multiply exponentially. The stock comic figure's humorously self-mocking projection of a popular, anti-establishment subculture upon the noble, hegemonic milieu of the play is most direct and patent, of course, in the fifth mode analyzed. When the *gracioso* or *graciosa* disrupts theatrical illusion in order to connect with the predominantly popular audience, it is difficult to deny the intent of promoting an alternative, popular, anti-idealistic worldview.

Finally, I believe my thesis can serve as a model for studies of the *gracioso*, of the full impact of his comical contribution to the *comedia*, in other Early Modern Spanish playwrights. Such studies would confirm, given the stipulated homogeneity of that theater, that the full significance of Rojas Zorrilla's *gracioso* reflects that of the stock comic figure in all of Early Modern Spanish Theater. These would go a long way, as well, toward confirming the stock comic figure's significant role as spokesperson for a vital popular subculture within that theater's noble, hegemonic setting.

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Appendix I

A Catalogue of Rojas Zorrilla's *Graciosos*

The following are an alphabetized list of the authentic plays of Rojas Zorrilla. Each of the plays so listed is accompanied by the names of the comical servants, both male and female, as well as the words by which they are identified in the text: *gracioso*, *lacayo* (lackey) or *criado*; *graciosa*, *criada*, etc. Admittedly, such textual designations, especially those assigned in the *dramatis personae*, are not all that significant since they do not necessarily indicate how Rojas Zorrilla perceived the characters. The editors of his published works could very well have chosen or added such designations. In each case it is indicated in parenthesis whether the *gracioso* plays comically on his name. Whenever it seemed pertinent, the outstanding traits, actions, lines and functions of those characters mentioned in my study are briefly indicated.

Abre el ojo: Cartilla, *gracioso* (plays on his name); Marichispa and Leonor, *criadas*. A conventional servant, Cartilla serves his master as confidante and *alcahuete*, but has no amorous relations with the *criadas*. Cartilla denounces the custom of having seconds attend duels: “Lo que me pudre y me mata / el que usen llevar padrinos / ...Pero que llamen padrino / al que va de mala gana / con la cólera del otro / a irse a matar a estocadas, / es cosa que ha de pudrirme; / pero lo que más me mata, / no es que haya tontos que llamen, / es que haya locos que vayan” (*BAE*, 54, 139c-140a).

Los áspides de Cleopatra: Caimán, *gracioso* (does not play on his name); Libia, *criada*. Caimán is a Roman soldier with no concrete master. A confessed coward, he admits to the audience that

he is always prepared to flee in order to avoid danger: “Señores, ¿no es necesidad / que haya hombre de tal suerte / que se deje dar la muerte / por tener posteridad?” (BAE, 54, 425a). When he is scolded for leaving the battlefield, he blames his ‘correncia’ (loose bowels) on a laxative he has taken: “Señores, quedo; / tomé por purga ruimiedo (rather than rhubarb, *ruibarbo*), / y diome luego correncia” (Ibid., 437c). In his non-comical function Caimán pronounces one of the most important expository speeches of the play: an ostentatious description, in 205 romance verses.

Los bandos de Verona: Guardainfante, *gracioso* (plays on his name). One of the most conventional of Rojas Zorrilla’s comic figures, Guardainfante serves his master as confidante and go-between. A ‘*cristiano viejo*,’ he is cowardly but inclined to bragging.

Cada cual lo que le toca: Beltrán, *gracioso*, and Galindo, *criado*; Angela, *criada*. In dealing with the category of literary satire and parody, I have touched on Beltrán’s ‘moral’ conflict presented in the form of a debate between Reason and Self-interest. In dealing with the category of comical secondary plots, I have also commented on the mock ‘tragedy’ involved in his inability to take revenge against his adulterous wife (Angela) and her lover (Galindo), a burlesque rendering of the play’s main plot.

El Caín de Cataluña: Cardona, Camacho and Rufina are the comical *criados*, with no further designation in the *dramatis personae*. Cardona and Camacho are the rivals in an extended battle of tricks that are, for the most part, unrelated to the play’s main plot. They recall the ‘*simples*’ of Lope de Rueda’s *pasos* or the buffoons of the *entremés*.

Casarse para vengarse: Cuatrín, *gracioso* (plays on his name); Silvia, *criada*. Cuatrín is one of the funniest of Rojas Zorrilla's comic figures, displaying many of the characteristics of the traditional comical servant. He satirizes the comic figure's conventional role as his master's confidante in matters of the heart: "Mas cuéntame tu mal y tu tragedia, / en ley de buen galán de la comedia / que habla con su lacayo en mucho seso" (BAE, 54, 105c).

Los celos de Rodamonte: Baraúnda is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such in the *dramatis personae*.

El desafío de Carlos V: Buscaruido (plays on his name) and Mari Bernardo, the passionate hermaphrodite, share the comic function via a curious battle of the sexes although the *dramatis personae* does not designate their comical roles.

Donde hay agravios no hay celos, y amo criado: Sancho, *criado*, and Bernardo, *criado*; Beatriz, *criada*. In exchanging identities with his master, Sancho has a more prominent role than usual in the *comedia*. Probably named after Don Quijote's squire to underscore his discrepancies with his master, he shares the famous squire's simplicity, refusing Bernardo's challenge because: "Pícaro, yo nunca riño, / siendo Sancho. . . ." (BAE, 54, 148c). As indicated in the preceding study, Beatriz proclaims herself the first *graciosa* to offer a soliloquy.

Los encantos de Medea: Mosquete, *gracioso* (plays on his name); Mosqueta, *graciosa*. As conventional comical servants, Mosquette and Mosqueta are involved in a love affair whose tribulations parody the vengeance tragedy that moves the protagonists.

Entre bobos anda el juego: Cabellera, *gracioso* (plays on his name), and Carranza, *criado*; Andrea, *criada*. The verbal portrait that Cabellera paints of Don Lucas (*BAE*, 54, 18b-c) is a model of the art of caricature, but the comical figures of this '*comedia de figurón*' does not attain the level of that of its protagonists.

Lo que quería ver el Marqués de Villena: Zambapalo, a student '*gorrón*' (who curiously does not play on his name, which refers to a grotesque dance imported from the East Indies); Julia, *criada*. With so many other comic figures in this *comedia*, the *graciosos* stand out very little in their function.

Lo que son mujeres: Gibaja, *gracioso*; Inesica, with no designation. Gibaja is an independent marriage broker and one of Rojas Zorrilla's best social satirists. Despite his profession, Gibaja, as his final lines indicate, does not achieve any pairings in the play: "Y don Francisco de Rojas / un vitor sólo pretende / porque escribió esta comedia / sin casamiento y sin muerte" (*BAE*, 54, 211c). It is worthy of note that Gibaja is also a playwright who happens to be writing a play called *Lo que son mujeres*.

Lucrecia y Tarquino: Fabio, with no designation; Julia, *criada*. Fabio first appears as the servant of Lavinia, a secondary character, but thereafter he seems to be at the service of everyone and no one in particular. As indicated in the preceding study when dealing with the category of social satire, Bruto, who pretends insanity in order to save his life, also has some comical moments in the play, but his principal function is that of buffon, telling the truth behind the mask of insanity.

El más impropio verdugo por la más justa venganza: Cosme, *gracioso primero*, and Damián, *gracioso segundo*; Laura, *criada*. As indicated in the preceding study, Cosme and Damián are given the names of two brothers, martyrs, who became the patron saints of Florence.

El mejor amigo el muerto y capuchino escocés: Pierres, without a designation; Elisa, *criada*, erroneously listed in *dramatis personnae* as ‘*tercera dama*.’

Morir pensando matar: Polo, *gracioso*; Finea, *criada*. Polo’s comically burlesque commentary on Rosimunda’s forced drinking of a toast from her father’s skull—“No sé que pueda ser justo / el beber por un cogote, / ni (que) el empinar una nuca/pueda ser brindis de porte. / O garrafa de esqueletos, / o pichel fúnebre, con que / a puros tragos de requiem, / hará el gazzate gori, gori” (fol. 29r)--brings to mind (Bakhtin, op. cit., pp. 408-409) the grotesque realism of gay/death in popular/carnavalesque humor.

No hay amigo para amigo: Moscón (plays on his name) is the *gracioso* although not designated as such; Fernando, *criado*, Otañez, without designation, is the ‘*ama de llaves*.’

No hay ser padre siendo rey: Coscorrón (plays on his name) is the *gracioso* although not designated as such; Clavela, *criada*. Coscorrón, like Cardona from *El Caín de Cataluña*, ponders--in a well conveyed moment of gallows humor--the delights of being hanged. Curious fellow that he is, Coscorrón thinks to round out his life experiences with his execution: “Y no ha de decirse que / no he sabido en este mundo / cuanto pudiera saber” (BAE, 54, 405c)

Nuestra Señora de Atocha: Limonada (plays on his name), *gracioso*, and Laín, *criado*. One of the few Rojas Zorrilla plays in which there is no *criada*.

Numancia cercada: Tronco (plays on his name), *villano*; Olalla, *villana*. This and its sequel,

Numancia destruida, are of the few Rojas Zorrilla comedias in which the comic function is centered on a married couple.

Obligados y ofendidos, y gorrón de Salamanca: Crispinillo is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such; Beatriz and Jacinta, without designation, are *criadas*, although their roles are not, for the most part, comical. Some of the humor in this *comedia* is provided by the criminal slang of a group of ruffians: El Ganchuelo, Zajinto, El Cernícalo, El Mellado and El Borrego.

Peligrar en los remedios: Bofetón (plays on his name), *lacayo*; Celia, *criada* (although referring to herself in the play as a *graciosa*).

Persiles y Segismunda: Tarimón (plays on his name), *gracioso*; there is no comical *criada*.

Rojas Zorrilla was frequently asked for the public's applause at the end of the play. The custom must have started early in his career because in this *comedia*, the earliest of his dated works, February 7, 1633, Tarimón has the following closing lines: "Y aquí da fin el poeta / a la historia de Persiles, / sus trabajos, y tragedias, / y ruega a todo el senado, / que le den a buena cuenta, / no más de un vitor prestado, / a pagarle quando sea / el oyente y vuesarcedes / quien escivan la

comedia.” It must be noted, however, that, in promising to return the applause whenever the audience writes its own play, it is hardly a humble petition.

El primer Marqués de Astorga: Crítico (plays on his name), *gracioso*; there is no comical *criada*.

Primero es la honra que el gusto: Pepino (plays on his name) is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such; Flora (plays on her name), *criada*. The main function of the servants in this play is that of *alcahuetes*, behavior at which Flora is so efficient that she is reproached by Pepino as follows: “Taimada, protoalcahueta, / que sin duda es Satanás / tu catedrático en esta / doctrina de alcahuetear” (*BAE*, 54, 446c). One of the few Rojas Zorrilla plays which ends with the possible marriage of comical servants.

El profeta falso Mahoma: Testuz (plays on his name), *criado*. There is no *criada*.

Progne y Filomena: Juanete (plays on his name), *lacayo primero*; Chilindrón, *lacayo segundo*; Libia, *criada*.

Santa Isabel, reina de Portugal: Tarabilla (plays on his name), *gracioso*. There is no *criada*.

Sin honra no hay amistad: Sabañón (plays on his name), *gracioso*, student; Agueda, *criada*.

Sabañón has a role similar to that of Polilla in Moreto’s *El desdén con el desdén*, in that he creates and organizes the successful plan to combat Doña Juana’s disdain with disdain. As a well-read university student, Sabañón recognizes Góngora as the ‘prince of darkness’: “Acaban

de dar las dos / del reloj de los Basilio. / Está hecho un Góngora el cielo, / más oscuro que su libro” (BAE, 54, 311a).

Los trabajos de Tobías: Morrión, *gracioso*; Dina, criada, but without a comical function.

Morrión proceeds from picaresque literature. He is without a master and survives, flaunting false injuries, by begging.

La traición busca el castigo: Mogenicón (plays on his name) is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such; Inés, *criada*. Both are conventional servants who counsel their masters on matters of the heart and perform as *alcahuetes*. Mogenicón is one of Rojas Zorrilla’s best philosophers of love, offering a long soliloquy on the error of marrying a beautiful woman and the advantages of doing so with an ugly one: “...Al fin, no son pedidoras / las feas desmesuradas, / son seguras, recatadas, / son limpias, regaladoras, / y no ha menester celarlas / quien más las quiera celar; / si uno las quiere pegar / no hace lástima el pegarlas” (BAE, 54, 243a).

La vida en el ataúd: Candor (plays on his name), *gracioso*. There is no comical *criada*.

Appendix II

The following are an alphabetized list of the plays on which Rojas Zorrilla collaborated with other playwrights. Only the role of the *gracioso* in acts attributed to our playwright will be mentioned.

La Baltasara: (Acto I, Luis Vélez de Guevara; Acto II, Antonio Coello; Acto III, Rojas Zorrilla): No *gracioso*.

El bandolero Solposto: (Acto I, Jerónimo Cáncer; Acto II, Pedro Rosete Niño; Acto III, Rojas Zorrilla): Orejón, *gracioso*.

El catalán Serrallonga, y bandos de Barcelona: (Acto I, Antonio Coello; Acto II, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto III, Luis Vélez de Guevara): Alcaraván, *gracioso*; Flora, *criada*.

El jardín de Falarina: Acto I, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto II, Antonio Coello; Acto II, Calderón de la Barca): Brunel, *gracioso*.

La más hidalga hermosura: (Acto I, Juan de Zabaleta; Acto II, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto III, Calderón de la Barca): Nuño, *lacayo*; Flora, *criada*.

El mejor amigo el muerto (y fortunas de don Juan de Castro): (Acto I, Luis Belmonte Bermúdez; Acto II, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto III, Calderón de la Barca): Bonete (plays with his name) is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such.

El monstruo de la fortuna y lavandera de Nápoles, Felipa Catanea: (Acto I, Calderón de la Barca o Antonio Coello; Acto II, Montalván o Luis Vélez de Guevara; Acto III, Rojas Zorrilla): Calabrés (plays on his name), *gracioso*; Lirón (plays on his name), *segundo gracioso*; Beatriz, is the comical *criada*, although not designated as such. Like other Rojas Zorrilla *comedias* with two *graciosos*, this play contains an elaborate secondary plot based on the rivalry between *graciosos*.

El pleito del demonio con la Virgen: (attributed to ‘tres ingenios’ in several editions, but Rojas Zorrilla is thought to have written at least the first act): Alcaparrón (plays on his name) is the *gracioso*, although not designated as such.

El pleito que tuvo el diablo con el cura de Madrilejos: (Acto I, Vélez de Guevara; Acto II, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto III, Mira de Amescua, with some doubt): Tembleque (plays on his name), sexton, is the *gracioso*; Marina, *criada*.

El robo de la sabinas: (Acto I, probably Rojas Zorrilla; Acto II, Juan Coello; Acto III, Antonio Coello, with some doubt regarding the last two acts): Pasquín, *gracioso*; Libia, *graciosa*. The secondary plot is based on the incompatibilities of the married *graciosos*.

También la afrenta es veneno: (Acto I, probably Luis Vélez de Guevara; Acto II, Antonio Coello; Acto III, Rojas Zorrilla): Barreto, *gracioso*; Guiomar, *criada*.

También tiene el sol menguante: (Acto I, probably Luis Vélez de Guevara; Actos II and III, probably Rojas Zorrilla, although attributed to ‘*tres ingenios*’): Galindo, *gracioso*; Luján, *segundo gracioso*; Doña Marta, *dueña-graciosa*.

Los tres blasones de España: (Acto I, Antonio Coello; Actos II and III, Rojas Zorrilla): Torrezno, *gracioso*, but only in act II; Guardainfante (plays on his name) is the *gracioso* in Act III, although not designated as such.

La trompeta del juicio: (Probable collaboration between Gabriel del Corral and Rojas Zorrilla): Coturno (plays on his name), *gracioso*; Florela (plays on her name) is the comical *criada*, although not designated as such.

El villano gran señor y gran Timorlán de Persia: (Acto I, Rojas Zorrilla; Acto II, Jerónimo de Villanueva; Acto III, Gabriel de Roa): Talón (plays on his name), *lacayo*; Hamete, Moor, doorman at the harem; Fátima is the comical *criada*, although not designated as such.