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The Melodramatic Element in the Sainetes of Carlos Arniches

Margaret Jones Dawson

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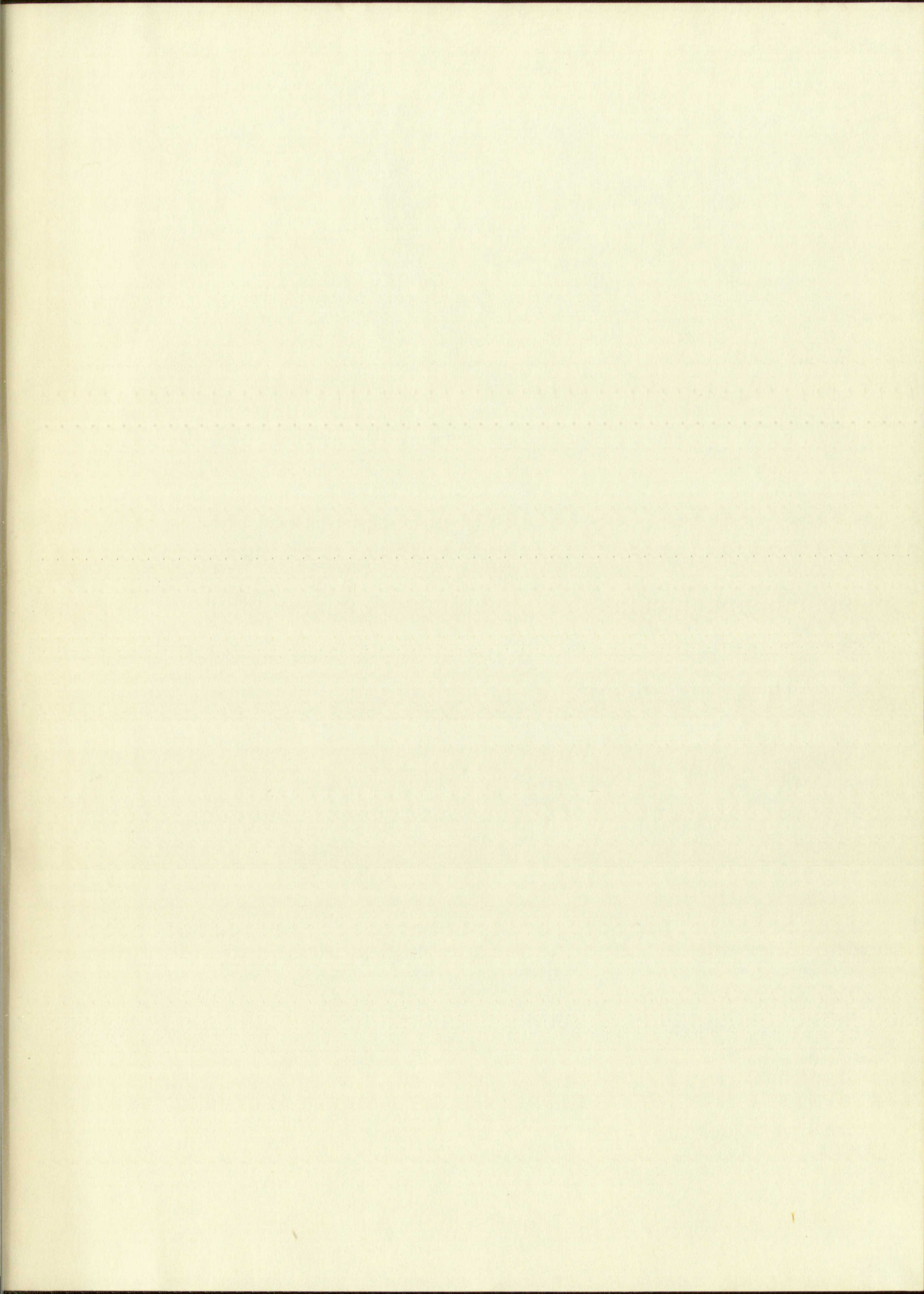
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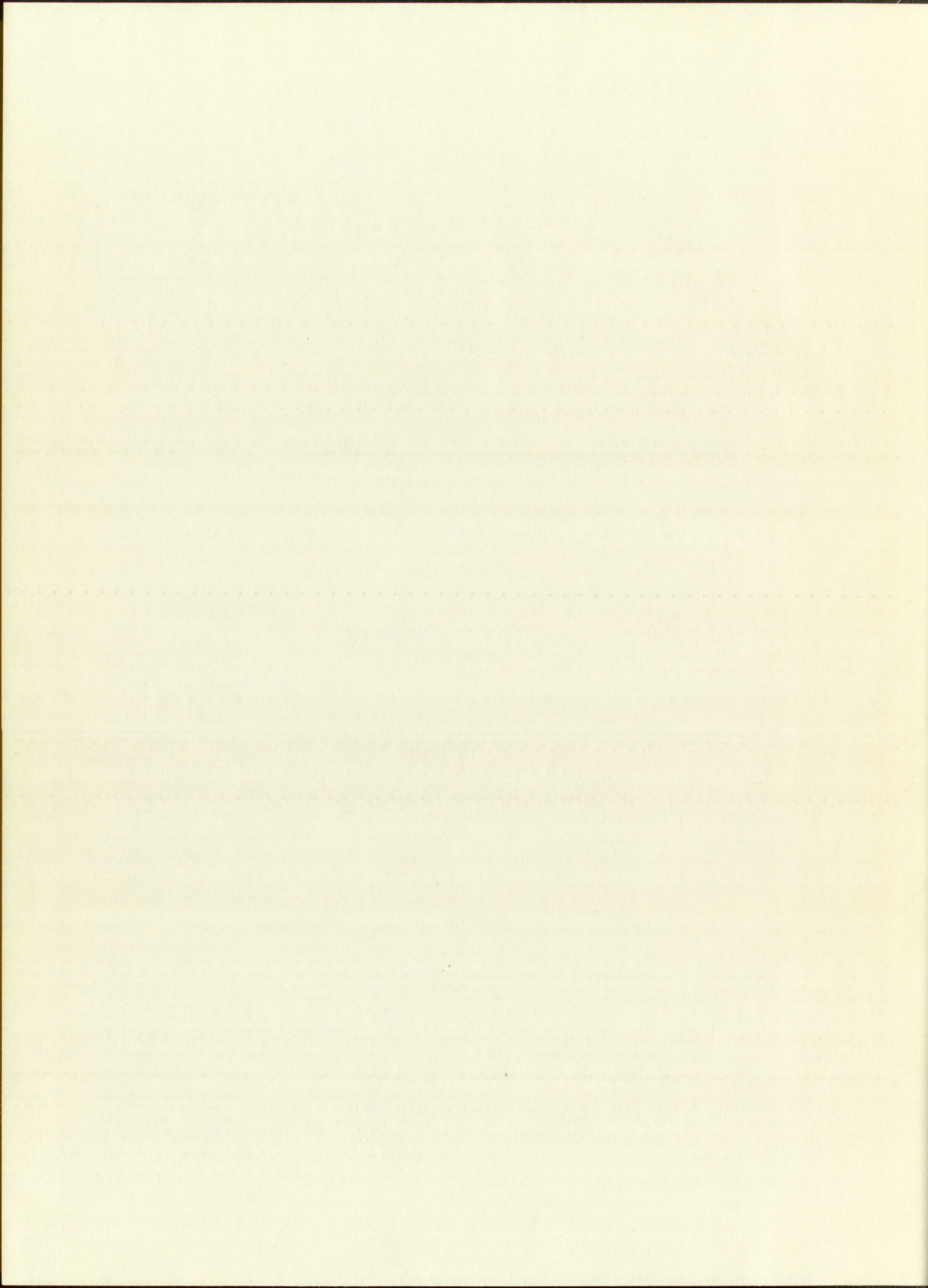


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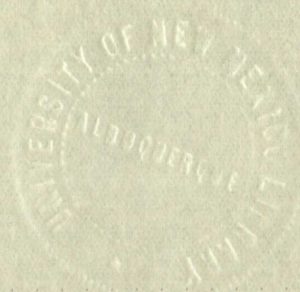
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THE MELODRAMATIC ELEMENT
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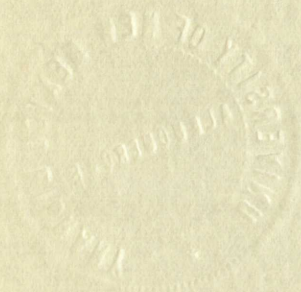
By
Margaret Jones Dawson



A Thesis
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Spanish

The University of New Mexico
1955

THE MELODRAMATIC ELEMENT
in the
SAINTS OF CARLOS ARRIETA



By
Margaret Jones Dawson

A Thesis
in partial fulfillment of the
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The University of New Mexico

1933

This thesis, directed and approved by the candidate's committee, has been accepted by the Graduate Committee of the University of New Mexico in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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INTRODUCTION

Carlos Arniches y Barrera (1866-1943) is a dramatist who has been too long and too consistently neglected. From 1888 until his death in 1943 he was a successful playwright from the point of view of the box office, but the critics were inclined to dismiss him as an author of the despised género chico, a lesser genre and hence unworthy of their attention. Most manuals of literature either ignore him completely or mention him briefly as one more author of short plays. The more generous devote a sentence or two to him.

However, in 1919 the novelist, poet and critic, Ramón Pérez de Ayala brought him to the attention of serious students of contemporary drama when, in Las Máscaras, he recognized Arniches as one of the truly great playwrights of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A year later Marciano Zurita in his El Género Chico proclaimed him the foremost author of this lesser genre. In 1948, Aguilar editions published his Teatro Completo with a comprehensive study of the man and his works in a prologue by E. M. del Portillo. In 1949 Nicolás González Ruiz in his La Cultura Española en Los Últimos Veinte Años recognized him as an author of note. The same year José Deleito y Piñuela

INTRODUCTION

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published his Origen y Apogeo del Género Chico in which he deals generously with Arniches. Pedro Salinas, in his Literatura Española Siglo XX, a collection of articles and essays of literary criticism, devotes a whole chapter to Arniches. In the most recently published manual of literature at my disposal, Juan Chabás' Literatura Española Contemporánea (1898-1950), the author claims for him genuine creative talent. So, twelve years after his death, Arniches is finally being appreciated by at least a few of the critics.

Arniches excelled in the sainete. He differs from other authors of this genre in that his sainetes mix the melodramatic with the comic. It is my intention to present a study of the melodramatic elements in the sainetes of Arniches. In order to make it a complete study I shall first go into the background of the one act play in Spain, then discuss its period of greatest popularity from 1868 to 1910, when the género chico flourished in the teatro por horas, and attempt to justify Arniches' popularity during this period. Finally, I shall discuss his development into a truly great dramatist when he expanded these melodramatic elements into a more extensive and more profound genre, the tragedia grotesca.

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CHAPTER I

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE GÉNERO CHICO

Although Carlos Arniches cultivated other types of drama, it is the sainete which interests us here--the sainete which Emilio Cotarelo y Mori describes as a genre which, in spite of its limited aesthetic scope and its very brevity, does not fail to be important because of its interesting history and even because of its intrinsic nature. It is a drama lacking plot but not lacking attractiveness, often reduced to a simple dialogue in which the comic element predominates. Its characters are often chosen from the lowest social strata, and their language and style are copied. Through such a simple medium it lances its darts against common vices and foibles, thus becoming one of the most curious manifestations of satire. The malicious note is an essential quality in these little plays and is found in similar types in all times and all countries.¹ This final statement launches the student on a trail of research in an attempt to learn the origin of the sainete. The name is comparatively new; the genre is

¹ Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, Don Ramón de la Cruz (Madrid: Imprenta de José Perales y Martínez, 1899), p. 4

CHAPTER I

THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE GENERO *CHICO*

Although Carlos Amador has cultivated other types of drama, it is the *salvaje* which interests us here--the *salvaje* which Emilio Górriz y Mota described as a genre which, in spite of its limited aesthetic scope and its very brevity, does not fail to be important because of its interesting history and even because of its dramatic nature. It is a drama lacking plot but not lacking effectiveness, often reduced to a single dialogue in which the comic element predominates. The characters are often chosen from the lowest social strata, and their language and style are copied. Through such a single medium it launches its bolts against common vices and follies, thus becoming one of the most effective manifestations of satire. The malicious note is an essential quality in *chico* plays and is found in similar types in all times and all countries. This final assessment launches the student on a trail of research in an attempt to learn the origin of the *salvaje*. The name is comparatively new; the genre is

¹ Emilio Górriz y Mota, *Don Ramón de la Cruz* (Madrid: Imprenta de José Fariñas y Martínez, 1897), p. 4.

not. France and Italy have been suggested as possible sources because short plays have long been popular in both countries. But Cotarelo y Mori traces the common origin of these short plays back to the Greek and Roman theater. Greece had brought the mime into Sicily about the fifth century B. C. The mime, as it was popular in Sicily, faithfully reproduced Sicilian customs, popular expressions, proverbs, and street-corner jokes. It was considered an exact imitation of life.

The Latin theater also knew this genre. The atalanae, originally rude comedies of country life, were gradually extended to include town life. They were presented at the end of a longer drama. The successor of the atalanae was the Roman mime, which had little in common with the Greek mime. The former reflected intimate acts of life, or ridiculous deeds, or indelicate or obscene situations and usually ended in a tumult with music to drown out the bedlam. The mime degenerated into pantomime and the dialogue lost importance or disappeared altogether. In the last years of the Roman empire that was all that survived of this dramatic type. Thus was it introduced into Spain and was quickly adapted to Spanish characters and customs. Toward the eleventh century these pantomimes and mimes were converted into the juegos de escarnio condemned by

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sources because short plays have long been popular in both
countries. But certainly in Italy, France the comedy certain
of these short plays look to the Greek and Roman theater.
Greece had brought the short play into Italy about the fifth
century B. C. The short play, as it was popular in Italy,
faithfully reproduced the Greek and Roman comedy, with
songs, proverbs, and a great deal of other things. It was
based on an exact imitation of life.
The Latin theater also has its roots in the Greek. The short
originally this consisted of a single act, was usually
extended to include four acts. They were presented at the
end of a longer drama. The language of the short play was
the Roman play, which had little in common with the Greek
play. The former reflected the state of life, or rather
of the Greek, or indicative of a certain situation and
usually ended in a happy conclusion. It was not a short
play. The short play degenerated into a short play and the short
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was quickly adapted to Spanish characters and customs.
Toward the eleventh century these short plays and short
were converted into the short play as a short play.

Alfonso el Sabio in the name of good taste.²

Since these juegos de escarnio have not been preserved, we have no clear idea of their nature. The name suggests realistic satire and we know that Alfonso considered them coarse and vulgar "porque se facen hi muchas villanias y desapasturas."³ Alfonso forbade clerics to take part in them and even to watch them if others presented them. He permitted religious plays which might increase the piety of the people but he condemned profane drama and, as well, acting for money.⁴

This condemnation must have been effective because we find no manuscript of a Spanish farce earlier than 1496, the date of the publication of the Cancionero of Juan del Encina. In this cancionero are found dialogued villancicos, églogas, and, most important in the history of the sainete, the Aucto del Repelón.

The theme of this farce is a hair-pulling match between a group of students of the University of Salamanca and Piernicurto and Johan Paramas, two rustics, who have come

² Ibid., pp. 4-5

³ Alfonso el Sabio, Siete Partidas, Primera Partida, ley 34, tratado 6. Cotejadas con varios códices antiguos por la Real Academia de Historia. (Paris: Lasserre, 1847), p. 241

⁴ Ibid., p. 242

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The theme of this farce is a hair-splitting match between
 a group of students of the University of Salamanca and
 Platonistas and Johan Ferreras, two villanos, who have come

² Ibid., pp. 4-5

³ Alfonso el Sabio, Alto Partidas, Partidas, Ley 34,
Tratado 8. Cotejadas con varias ediciones antiguas por la
Real Academia de Historia. (Paris: Larousse, 1947), p. 241

⁴ Ibid., p. 242

to town to sell vegetables. The students tip over their stands, drive away their burros, pull their hair and put them to flight. But when one lone student pursues them and attempts to continue the fight, he is soundly beaten. The farce ends with a song by the two rustics:

Bendito Dios y lloado
Pues no me hizan licenciado!⁵

Although it is of scant dramatic merit, the Aucto del Repelón constitutes a worthy grandfather of the pasos of Lope de Rueda, the entremeses of the seventeenth century, and the sainetes of later years.⁶

Also worthy of mention in this connection, among the works of Juan del Encina, is the comic dialogue between Gil and Pascual in the Égloga de Plácida y Vitoriano. This scene interrupts the serious action of the play just as the later entremés interrupted it.

Not to be scorned as a predecessor of the sainete is Encina's Égloga de Antruejo o Carnestollendas. It is a miniature cuadro de costumbres in verse, presenting four shepherds celebrating Shrove Tuesday by eating, drinking, and singing:

⁵ Juan del Encina, El Aucto del Repelón, publicado por Alfredo Álvarez de la Villa. (París: Librería Paul Ollendorff, n.d.), p. 274

⁶ Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, Estudios de Historia Literaria de España. (Madrid: Imprenta de José Perales y Martínez, 1899), Tomo I, p. 167

to turn to sell vegetables. The students tip over their
stands, drive away their horses, pull their hair and put
them to flight. But when one lone student remains alone
and attempts to continue the fight, he is soundly beaten.
The farce ends with a song by the two victors:

Benigno Díaz y Irujo
Fueron los que nos liberaron!

Although it is of recent dramatic merit, the Auto
del Huelga constitutes a worthy grandchild of the Auto
of Los de Rueda, the antecedent of the movement in
very, and the Auto of later years.⁵

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Not to be named as a predecessor of the Auto is
Encina's Auto de Antuano o Garmatolengo. It is a
miniature Auto de costumbres in verse, presenting four
characters celebrating Strove Tuesday by eating, drinking,
and singing:

⁵ Juan del Encina, El Auto del Huelga, published por
Alfonso Alvarez de la Villa. (Madrid: Editorial Espasa
Calpe, S.A., p. 274)

⁶ Emilio Gervasio y Mori, Estudios de Historia Literaria
de España. (Madrid: Imprenta de José Gervasio y
Martínez, 1893), Tomo I, p. 107

Hoy comamos y bebamos
Y cantemos y holguemos
Que mañana ayunaremos 7

In these works, as in the primitive atalanae, the language is that of the rustics. Encina's inspiration was popular, national, and for the most part realistic. Comic and lyric elements overshadow the dramatic. His works are in verse and most of them end with a villancico or song.

Other early dramatists wrote farces: Lucas Fernández, whose Farsa o Cuasi Comedia of the shepherd Prábos, the shepherdess Antona and the soldier Pascual is simple, with lively rustic dialogue; and Gil Vicente, who sketched vivid scenes of the society in which he lived.

By the sixteenth century the one act play, often called the entremés, was common. In the very comprehensive Colección de Autos, Farsas y Coloquios del Siglo XVI published by Leo Rouanet, is the anonymous and undated Entremés de las Esteras, written in prose. Of more interest to the student than this ridiculous farce is the observation made by Rouanet that the religious play of the sixteenth century was interrupted at least once by some song or a ballad to acquaint the audience with what has happened between the scenes, or by an entremés which divides the

Juan del Encina, op. cit., p. 155

Any comments or remarks
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Other early dramatists wrote farces; these farces, the
whose latter a great comedy of the shepherd Frodo, the
shepherdess Astoria and the golden Frodo is simple, with
lively rustic dialogues; and all these, who showed
vivid scenes of the society in which he lived.

By the sixteenth century the one act play, often
called the entremés, was common. In the very beginning
the Comedia de la Cruz, written by Juan del Encina, XVI
published by the author, is the anonymous and undated
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to the student than this ridiculous farce is the observa-
tion made by Barrantes that the religious play of the six-
teenth century was interrupted at least once by some song
or a ballad to acquaint the audience with what had happened
between the scenes, or by an entremés which divided the

action into two parts. These entremeses have not been preserved. "En pareil cas, une simple note nous avertit que aquí habrá un entremés."⁸

Following in the footsteps of Juan del Encina, Lucas Fernández and Gil Vicente were other dramatists who added nothing startling to the genre; Andrés de Prado with his Farsa Cornelia; Sebastian Orozco with his risqué entremés presented in a convent of nuns in Toledo; Diego Sánchez de Badajoz, the most prolific dramatist of the first half of the seventeenth century. The latter composed twenty-eight farces in most of which he mixed the religious and the profane. In three of them the religious element disappeared completely: Farsa del Matrimonio, La Hechicera, and La Ventera.⁹ None of these plays is a typical entremés. Sánchez de Badajoz is to be regarded as a connecting link between the old religious drama and the secular theater which followed.¹⁰

The early dramas had been performed in churches and in the palaces of kings and noblemen. Even in the middle of the sixteenth century public theatres were non-existent.

⁸ Leo Rouanet (ed.), Colección de Autos, Farsas y Coloquios del Siglo XVI (Madrid: Librería de M. Murillo, 1901), Vol. I, p. xii.

⁹ Cotarelli y Mori, Don Ramón de la Cruz, p. 6

¹⁰ G. T. Northrup (ed.), Ten Spanish Farces of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Centuries. (Chicago: D. C. Heath and Co., 1922), p. ix

action into two parts. These sentences have not been preserved. "In part, one should note that the first part of the manuscript is in the handwriting of Juan del Encina, the second part of the manuscript is in the handwriting of Juan del Encina and Gil Vicente were other dramatists who lived nothing according to the genre; indeed he wrote with his Ferns Gonzalez; Sebastian Torres with his Alfaro presented in a context of more in Toledo; these dramas of the sixteenth century. The latter composed nearly eight dramas in most of which he mixed the religious and the profane. In times of their religious element disappeared completely: Ferns del Encina, la Encina and la Encina.² None of these plays is a typical religious drama of the sixteenth century as to be regarded as a connecting link between the old religious drama and the secular drama which followed.¹⁰

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² Las Romances (ed.), Colleccion de Autores, Ferns y Encina del siglo XVI (Madrid: Editorial de M. Arilla, 1907), Vol. I, p. xlii.

¹⁰ G. T. Hartung (ed.), Don Juan de la Cruz, p. 8.

¹¹ Don Juan de la Cruz, p. 8.

¹² Don Juan de la Cruz, p. 8.

At this time we see the rise of travelling theatrical companies, who were forced to perform in any square or yard where an audience could be assembled.¹¹ The director of one of these companies was Lope de Rueda, called by Cervantes "El Gran Lope" . . . quien fué el primero que en España las [las comedias] sacó de mantillas."¹²

In addition to being a director, Lope de Rueda was author and actor. He is the first entremesista whose work has been signed and preserved. His fame rests on short plays called pasos (incidents). The paso is an episodic and realistic sketch, in comic vein, about lower class people. Any insignificant event in ordinary life might serve as its theme: the most banal ruse of a rascal or blunder of a valet furnished Lope with a pretext to divert the public for a quarter of an hour. The value of these playlets rests on the fidelity of observation and presentation, on the liveliness of dialogue and on the witty presentation of ordinary situations.

¹¹ J. P. Wickersham Crawford, Spanish Drama Before Lope de Vega (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Publications, 1937). pp. 112-113

¹² Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Ocho Comedias y Ocho Entremeses Nuevos Nunca Representados, (ed.), Rodolfo Schevill y Adolfo Bonilla (Madrid: Imprenta de Bernardo Rodríguez, 1915), Prólogo al lector, p. 5

At this time we see the rise of heavy companies, who were forced to produce a new type of comedy where an audience would be a necessity. The situation of one of these companies was that of a heavy comedy, the "El Gran Jefe" . . . which is a comedy in Spanish (has comedies) and is a comedy. In addition to being a director, he has been an author and actor. He is the first to have been signed and preserved. His first work is a play called gase (Inolencia). The play is an episode and realistic sketch, in comic vein, about a very poor people. Any insignificant event in ordinary life is served as its theme: the most banal fact of a person's blunder or a valet furnished hope with a protest to divert the public for a quarter of an hour. The value of these plays rests on the fidelity of observation and realism, on the liveliness of dialogue and a certain sympathy of ordinary situations.

11 J. P. Wickschaw Crawford, Spanish Drama from 1800 to 1900 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Publications, 1937), pp. 112-113.

12 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Don Quixote de la Mancha (Barcelona: Editorial Espasa Calpe, 1918), pp. 112-113.

According to Leo Rouanet, "Son génie, si naturel, est en même temps si subtil qu'il échappe à l'analyse."¹³

Lope de Rueda wrote in prose--an innovation for his day--but it was the perfect medium for the lively dialogue and popular proverbs which make his pasos such delightful reading even today. He created a gallery of comic types which never failed to arouse the mirth of his audiences: the bobo, a simpleton; the vejete, an old man, often the deceived husband of a giddy wife or the outwitted father of a headstrong daughter; the barber; the sacristan; the unskilled but pedantic doctor; the ignorant lawyer; the slovenly student always suffering from itch and from starvation; the cruel, tyrannical, venal constable; the French peddler, who usually spoke Italian; the negro and negress who exposed their ignorance by misusing high-sounding words; the moor who was overfond of pork and wine; the gypsy dancer; the miser; the impoverished nobleman; the lovelorn Portuguese.

Leo Rouanet says of him: "Nous saluons en Lope de Rueda le premier entremisista (auteur d'entremeses) sûr de lui et de ses principes, maître absolu de sa pensée et de sa forme, digne en un mot de ses successeurs du XVII^e siècle, qui souvent l'ont imité sans s'élever

¹³ Leo Rouanet (ed.), Intermèdes Espagnols du XVII^e siècle. (Paris: A. Charles, éditeur, 1897), p. 10

toujours a sa hauteur."¹⁴

Lope de Rueda's friend and publisher, Juan de Timoneda, wrote short plays in imitation of Lope's. They are inferior to Lope's and, like the Roman mimes, end in beatings and riots.

In his youth Cervantes had seen and enjoyed Lope de Rueda's pasos. They served as inspiration and model for his Ocho Entremeses nunca Representados. Cotarelo y Mori credits Cervantes with having fixed the form of the entremés just as he fixed that of the novel and the short story.¹⁵

Most of them, like Lope de Rueda's, are written in prose. Only two, El Rufián Viudo and La Elección de los Alcaldes de Daganzo are in verse.

He brought up the question of divorce four centuries before divorce existed in El Juez de los Divorcios; he painted a realistic picture of the underworld in El Rufián Viudo; in La Guarda Cuidadosa a soldier and a sacristan are rivals for the hand of a kitchen wench; in the Cueva de Salamanca he satirizes the deceived husband and popular superstition; in El Retablo de las Maravillas he uses a theme similar to that of Juan Manuel's El Paño Mágico.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 13

¹⁵ Cotarelo y Mori, Ramón de la Cruz, p. 7

...a se hanter. ...
...de Rueda's friend and ...
...wrote about plays in ...
...inferior to Rueda's and, like the ...
...ings and riots.

In his youth Cervantes and ...
...Rueda's ... They served as ...
...his Don Quixote ...
...credits Cervantes with having ...
...premise just as he fixed that of the novel and the story ...
...story.

Most of them, like ...
...prose. Only two, El Gallo ...
...Alcalá de Henares and in verse.

He brought up the question of ...
...before divorce existed in ...
...painted a realistic picture of ...
...Vides; in La Guardia Civil ...
...are viable for the kind of a ...
...de ...
...superstition; in El Hotel ...
...theme similar to that of ...

In Idem, p. 13

is Don Quixote y Don, Remón de la Cruz, p. 13

As Romera-Navarro aptly expresses it:

El ligero argumento de estas piecillas no puede dar idea de su mérito excepcional. Lo importante y admirable es la ejecución: el minucioso estudio de las costumbres, que tienen nueva vida en la escena, la gracia y verdad de las situaciones, la intensa humanidad de aquellos caracteres que proceden con tanto desembarazo y donaire, el diálogo chispeante, el primor de los detalles, y el conjunto que no puede ser más armonioso ni más artístico. Está copiada la realidad con el mismo risueño y hondo humorismo que campea en las escenas populares del Quijote. Ni Lope de Rueda antes, ni Quiñones de Benavente después, igualaron los entremeses de Cervantes en la creación de tipos, en la universalidad de sus rasgos, y en la fina ironía. ¹⁶

Northrup, too, considers his entremeses superior to those of his predecessors and of his successors.¹⁷

Perhaps his greatest contribution to the genre is that attributed to him by William Shaffer Jack. According to him, other famous writers had written entremeses but, apparently ashamed of cultivating so humble a genre, they refused to sign or to publish them. Lope de Vega even denied authorship of those attributed to him. Cervantes was an established writer by the time he published his Ocho Entremeses (1615) and his recognition of the entremés as a genre worthy of his talents did much to remove the stigma from it. Many writers of note later not

¹⁶ M. Romera-Navarro, Historia de la Literatura Española (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1928) p. 246

¹⁷ Northrup, op. cit., p. xix

only admitted writing them, they even published their entremeses.

"In 1615, with the publication of entremeses bearing the name of Cervantes the form assumes a real literary importance, breaking the ties that held it as a purely popular form."¹⁸

Among the seventeenth century entremesistas, Cervantes' closest rival was Luis Quiñones de Benavente, who wrote nothing but short plays. He took the stock comic characters and endowed them with a grace hitherto lacking. He was a worthy rival of Lope de Rueda and of Cervantes in his realistic dialogue and in his handling of a comic situation. Northrup makes an interesting comparison between him and Cervantes--a comparison supported by Leo Rouanet and Romera-Navarro:

We may freely admit that Benavente had wit, grace, and charm, lightness of touch, delicacy of fancy, native refinement, dramatic sense, skill in the use of dialogue; but he lacked universality. For this alone he ranks second to Cervantes as an "entremesista." Cervantes is universal in his appeal when writing farces as when writing novels because the source of his comedy is human nature. While distinctly a Spaniard of his day and age, Cervantes' understanding of human nature makes him, like Molière, a writer for all peoples. Benaventes' humor

¹⁸ William Shaffer Jack, The Early Entremés in Spain (Philadelphia, 1923), p. 131

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Horner and Horner--Horner:

We may freely admit that Horner's had wit, grace, and charm, lightness of touch, delicacy of fancy, native refinement, dramatic sense, skill in the use of dialogue; but he lacked versatility. For this alone he ranks second to Cervantes as an *entremesista*. Cervantes is universal in his appeal when writing farces as when writing novels because the source of his comedy is human nature. While distinctly a Spaniard of his day and age, Cervantes' understanding of human nature makes him, like Molière, a writer for all peoples. Horner's, however,

is William Gifford, *The Early Cervantes in Spain* (Philadelphia, 1932), p. 151

depends too much upon allusions to events of the day, to customs peculiar to the passing moment. The point of many of his jokes escapes us. He is local and temporary in his appeal. The qualities which endeared him to his generation alienate him from us. 19

However, from 1609 to 1645 Benavente was the favorite "entremesista" of the city and of the court. He did not deign to publish his works, but a friend and admirer, Don Manuel Antonio de Vargas published in 1645 a collection of his entremeses, loas and jácaras, under the title Ioco Seria--Burlas Veras o Reprehensión Moral y Festiva de las desórdenes Públicas. The publisher's admiration for Benavente is expressed in his prólogo al lector:

el autor que tenía una mala comedia, con ponerle dos entremeses deste ingenio, le daba muletas para que no se cayese, y el que tenía una buena, le ponía alas para que se remontase, con que todas las comedias le debían, la buena el ser mejor, la mala el no parecerlo. 20

To the modern American theater-goer the custom of presenting a one act play between the first and second acts of a longer play, and another between the second and third acts, seems strange indeed. But Leo Rouanet presents a very logical explanation of the custom. The old Spanish "corrales" had nothing in common with our comfortable theaters. Plays were given out of doors in daylight.

19 Northrup, op. cit., pp. xxv-xxvi

20 Luis Quiñones de Benavente, Entremeses Loas y Jácaras recientemente allegados por Don Cayetano Rosell (Madrid: Librerías de los Bibliófilos, 1872), Tomo I, p xix

Seats were limited. Many spectators, eager to obtain the best possible seats, installed themselves as soon as the doors opened and dared not budge before the end of the performance. The wait seemed long. It was early necessary then, under pain of incurring their illwill, to provide entertainment to amuse and calm "Cette enfant terrible qu'est une réunion populaire."²¹

It is not difficult to understand, then, that with the flowering of the drama in the seventeenth century coincided the increased cultivation of the lesser genres. They multiplied and were published under various names: loas; jácaras entremesadas y cantadas; mojigangas; bailes cantados o representados--all of these, and especially the entremés had their highest form of expression.²² Every dramatist of note wrote them. No known entremés of Lope de Vega is available, but to him have been attributed the Entremés del Letrado, el Entremés de los Títulos de Comedias, and El Soldadillo. Salas Barbadillo, Castillo Solorzano, Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza and Agustín Moreto wrote many.

²¹ Leo Rouanet, Intermèdes Espagnols, p. 30

²² Cotarelo y Mori, Ramón de la Cruz, p. 8

Nor were they scorned by Francisco de Quevedo, who wrote twenty, or Pedro Calderón de la Barca, who is credited with thirty.²³ Numerous undated and unsigned entremeses were also published.

By this time anybody and everybody thought he could write an entremés, and decadence was inevitable. At its best the entremés was a satirical farce which parodied popular customs. After having attacked general vices, they began to be directed at an actuality, a mode, to search for allusions and double meanings. Sometimes authors stooped to personal satire. Most did not even try to be original. Plagiarism was the order of the day. If a situation amused the public, it became the theme for numerous entremeses. ". . .Plaisanteries n'étaient pas toujours d'un goût innocent, souvent dépassèrent les limites de la bienséance. Telle liberté apparaît aujourd'hui incroyable." 24

The entremés gave birth to two new farce types: the sainete and the mojiganga. The word sainete appears to have been first used by Quiñones de Benavente to designate a more extensive farce, with more complicated action. It was presented between the second and third acts of a play, while

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Rouanet, Intermèdes Espagnols, p. 35

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extensive farce, with more complicated action. It was pre-
sented between the second and third acts of a play, while

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Romanet, Introducción Española, p. 35

the name entremés designated the one act play presented between the first and second acts. The mojiganga or máscara required a greater number of personages, was even more episodical, and was interspersed with dances. These two genres were much in vogue in the early eighteenth century.²⁵

The first half of the eighteenth century was a period of sterility in all genres. The only two dramatists of note, Antonio de Zamora and José de Cañizares wrote amusing comedias de figurón in which they carried the comic to the extremes of caricature. After them came the neo-classic school, characterized by slavish imitations of French drama. The Conde de Aranda, of neo-classic tastes, was the drama censor at court and he succeeded in discouraging any playwright who might have reared his uncertain head. In the middle of the century appeared Ramón de la Cruz. In his youth he had condemned the sainete as unworthy of his talents, and had written translations of French dramas and imitations of neo-classic dramas. But he found his true field in the scorned sainete. Cotarelo y Mori credits him with taking this decadent genre out of the gutter and raising it to the level of the comedy of manners.²⁶ His

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 39-40

²⁶ Cotarelo y Mori, Ramón de la Cruz, p. 9

the same entirely designated the one and only woman of
between the first and second case. The difference in the
case required a greater number of witnesses, and even
more official, and was interpreted with caution. These
two cases were much in vogue in the early nineteenth cen-
tury. 25

The first half of the eighteenth century was a period
of sterility in all cases. The only two exceptions of
note, Antonio de Bernal and José de Benavente, were men-
tioned in the casos de Bernal in which they were the only
the existence of evidence. After that time the case-
school, characterized by a lack of interest in the case-
The casos de Bernal, of neo-classic taste, was the first
case at court and he succeeded in illustrating the case-
wright who might have turned his knowledge to good use. In the
middle of the century appeared a man of letters, in the
youth he had condemned the casos de Bernal as unworthy of the sci-
ence, and had written Tratado de la ciencia de la ciencia and
imitations of neo-classic taste. He was the first to
field in the second edition. He was a man of letters who
with taking this doctrine came out of the case-
ing it to the level of the science of the case.

sainetes are one act plays similar to but more extensive than the pasos of Lope de Rueda and the entremeses of the seventeenth century: realistic and witty cuadros de costumbres, satirical sketches of the manias and prejudices of Spanish society of the epoch, especially that of Madrid, and of types of the middle and lower classes with their ideas, attitudes and language. They are in verse, in short meters, and tend to have at the beginning or at the end, or somewhere in between, songs and dances. Ignoring the set types of his predecessors he enlivened the stage with perfumed petits-maitres, gallant abbés, gay and garish majos and majas with their impudent boasting, gay coquettes, loquacious chestnut vendors, henpecked husbands, starving musicians, wily servants, licentious old men, students scheming for a free meal.

Leo Rouanet reproaches his incorrect style, negligent versification, his tendency to precipitate the action, for a sameness in the development of his plots; but he admires his gay abandon, his exactness of observation, his characters so well portrayed that they impose themselves on our imagination.²⁷

²⁷ Rouanet, Intermèdes Espagnols, p. 47

... are one of the most important...
... the pages of the book...
... century...
... artistic...
... of Spanish...
... of the...
... with their...
... in short...
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also.

27. Spanish Literature, p. 27

Leandro Fernández de Moratín somewhat reluctantly conceded that:

Don Ramón de la Cruz fué el único de quien puede decirse que se acercó en aquel tiempo á conocer la índole de la buena comedia; porque, dedicándose particularmente á la composicion de piezas en un acto, llamadas sainetes, supo sustituir en ellas al desaliño y rudeza villanesca de nuestros antiguos entremeses, la imitacion exacta y graciosa de las modernas costumbres del pueblo. Perdió de vista muchas veces el fin moral que debiera haber dado á sus pequeñas fábulas; prestó al vicio (y aún á los delitos) un colorido tan halagüeño, que hizo aparecer como donaires y travesuras aquellas acciones que desaprueban el pudor y la virtud, y castigan con severidad las leyes. Nunca supo inventar una combinacion dramática de justa grandeza, un interes bien sostenido, un nudo, un desenlace natural; sus figuras nunca forman un grupo dispuesto con arte. Pero examinadas separadamente casi todas están imitadas de la naturaleza con admirable fidelidad. Esta prenda, que no es comun, unida á la de un diálogo animado, gracioso y fácil (más que correcto) dió á sus obrillas cómicas todo el aplauso que efectivamente merecian. 28

The best appreciation of his sainetes is that found in his defense of his own drama written in answer to uncompplimentary criticism, published by Doctor don Pedro Napoli Signorelli in his critical history of the theater:

Los que han paseado el día de San Isidro su pradera, los que han visto el Rastro por la mañana, la Plaza Mayor de Madrid en víspera de Navidad, el Prado antiguo por la noche,

²⁸ D. Leandro Fernández de Moratín, Orígenes del Teatro Español (Paris: Librería de Garnier Frères, 1883), p. 460

considera que:

Don Ramón de la Cruz y su obra
puede decirse que es la obra más
completa de la literatura española
del siglo XVIII. En ella se
encuentra una gran variedad de
géneros literarios, desde la
novela hasta la poesía. Su obra
es una muestra de la gran
capacidad creativa de este
autor. En ella se puede ver
cómo se desarrolló la literatura
española en este período.
Su obra es una gran obra de
arte, que ha sido admirada por
muchos siglos. Su obra es una
obra de gran valor, que ha
contribuido a la cultura española.
Su obra es una obra de gran
importancia, que ha sido
reconocida por todos.

The best appreciation of the author's work
in his domain of his own time, which is
complementary criticism, published by the
Napoli University in his critical history of the literature
Los que han pasado al otro mundo
su presencia, los que han sido
la manera, la Plaza Mayor
para de Navidad, el Prado antiguo por la

y han velado en las de San Juan y San Pedro, los que han asistido a los bailes de todas clases de gentes y destinos, los que visitan por ociosidad, por vicio o por ceremonia. . . en una palabra cuantos han visto mis sainetes reducidos al corto espacio de veinte y cinco minutos de representación (después de rebajar el punto de vista, con la decoración a veces nada apropiado y las aptitudes tan mal estudiadas como a veces los versos) digan si son copias o no de lo que ven sus ojos y de lo que oyen sus oídos; si los planes están o no arreglados al terreno que pisan, y si los cuadros no representan la historia de nuestro siglo. En cuanto a la verdad, la imitación y la disposición de las figuras, a fe que tienen más de historia que la que tengo entre las manos [Signorelli's book] y no me dejaré mentir, si hay quien dude de lo que yo escribo y ella me dicta. 29

Ramón de la Cruz introduced something new into the sainete: an element of parody. He calls this genre "tragedias para reír o sainetes para llorar, no con tres, sino con tres mil unidades." The best known is Manolo, whose hero, after spending his youth in various prisons, returns home and dies of a sword thrust in a love quarrel. The personages are all of the lowest class of Madrid who express themselves in the high-sounding language used in the neo-classic tragedies, in pompous hendecasyllabic verses.

Ramón de la Cruz was more than a successful and popular sainetista. He represents the triumph of realism and the liberty of artistic creation of Spanish humor and the

29 Don Ramón de la Cruz, Colección de Sainetes (ed.), Don Agustín Durán (Madrid: Gabinete Literario, 1843) Prólogo del Autor tomo I, p. xl

satirical spirit of Spanish genius, over the cold imitations of French drama and, at the same time, the triumph of popular speech over the purely literary and pompous language of the ultra-classical writers.³⁰

Cotarelo y Mori claims for him still another distinction:

Su gran mérito filológico ha sido, aunque tardía, solemnemente reconocido por la Academia Española al señalarle inscribiendo su nombre entre los de los grandes hablistas, como uno de los maestros y modelos de nuestro idioma ¡quien como él a conservado esos mil giros caprichosos, pintorescos y castizos de lenguaje, especialmente en las clases populares?³¹

Ramón de la Cruz had many imitators but his only serious rival was Juan Ignacio González del Castillo. He was less spontaneous but equally adept in the representation of customs and in satirical attacks on the vices and follies of men. The scene of most of his sainetes is his native city, Cádiz.

Short plays never really disappeared from the Spanish stage. José Zorrilla, the great Romantic poet and dramatist, wrote one in twenty-four hours on a bet (el Puñal del Godo). Bretón de los Herreros wrote delightful zarzuelas. But with the creation of the "teatro por horas" in 1868 the short play began its period of greatest popularity.

³⁰ Romera-Navarro, op. cit., pp. 433-434

³¹ Cotarelo y Mori, Don Ramón de la Cruz, p. 10

CHAPTER II

THE GÉNERO CHICO

In 1868 there wasn't a suburban café in Madrid which didn't have a stage and a theatrical troupe. Even some of the cafés in the heart of the city offered theatrical performances. Admission was free--one paid only for his refreshments. Since the café owner was in business to make money, he paid low salaries to the actors and could attract only amateurs, or professional actors who were unable to find work in the regularly established theaters. Some of these café teatros specialized in melodrama, a few in zarzuelas (musical plays), some in one act plays. Many of the companies, called piquetes, boldly attempted to present complicated and ambitious dramas. One may well imagine the quality of these performances when he considers the size of the stage, the inadequacy of the stage settings and the qualifications of the actors. But a benevolent and tolerant public put up with them, and people who could not afford a seat at the large theaters here cultivated a taste for the theater. And out of this cocoon

In 1988 there was a...
didn't have a stage...
the cattle in the...
former...
freemen...
money, he paid...
only...
find work in the...
these...
...
the...
sent...
imagine the quality of...
drew the...
settings and the...
benevolent and...
who could not afford...
divided a... for the...

came the butterfly which was to upset the complacent dramatists and theater managers of the day, the género chico.¹

The term género chico is popularly used for short plays, whether in prose or in verse, with or without music, when given at the teatros por horas, or theaters where each play takes an hour or less and one may pay admission to each one separately.² The teatro por horas flourished from 1868 to 1910 and was the brain child of three comic actors. Antonio Riquelme and Juan José Luján were acting at the café teatro Lazoja. After the last performance one night in 1868 they went to the Calle de la Flor to find a third comedian, José Vallés and enlist his aid in a daring project. Their plan was to introduce into the theater El Recreo, a theater por secciones or por horas or por funciones instead of a función completa. Heretofore the one act play had been used to entertain the audience during the intermissions of a long play. Riquelme proposed to present a short play every hour on the hour, hence the name teatro por horas. Thus, nobody would have

¹ Francisco Flores García (Córcholis), Memorias Íntimas del Teatro (Valencia: F. Sempere y Compañía, n.d.) pp. 75-80

² S. Griswold Morley and W. J. Entwistle, Tres Sainetes en Verso (San Francisco: D. C. Heath and Co., C 1926) p. vii

came the butterfly which was a great success
dramatic and theater manager at the time.

Notes.

The term teatro is used in the text to refer to the plays, whether in prose or verse, which are written and when given at the teatro for the purpose of being acted. Each play takes an hour or two and the way of distribution to each one separately. The teatro was founded in 1888 from 1888 to 1910 and was the first of its kind in the city. Antonio Elguera was the first manager and acted as the teatro manager. After the first performance one night in 1888 they went to the teatro as a sign to find a third comedian. José María was called and he was a dancing project. Their plan was to introduce into the teatro El Negro, a comedian who was not a native or for functions instead of a teatro comedian. Before the one act play had been acted a number of times once during the first performance of a long play. It was proposed to present a short play every evening in the teatro hence the name teatro for night. This, nobody would have

1. Francisco Flores García (1888-1910), teatro manager.
del teatro (Valencia: El teatro, 1910).
pp. 75-80

2. S. Guisado Morley and S. J. Guisado, teatro manager.
en teatro (San Francisco: El teatro, 1910).
p. vii

to spend four or five hours in the theater. Prospective spectators might choose the hour, or the play, most suited to them.³ Thus they would cater to the night hawks of Madrid: the public that frequented cafés and casinos for after-dinner entertainment, to escape the boredom of a party, or while waiting for an appointment. The teatro por horas would compete with the café teatros by giving a better brand of entertainment.

The three comedians acted as directors of the Recreo and shared the profits. The master stroke was to put the price low enough--they set the price at one real per performance, a price which was then incredible and which immediately caused the plays to be called "piezas" by analogy with the cry of the ticket vendors: "a real la pieza."⁴

Success was immediate and small wonder: the company was really good. Vallés had an arrogant appearance, a beautiful voice and excellent dramatic style. Luján was a very witty comedian, and Riquelme was an excellent wit and improviser. Their colleagues were equally talented.⁵

³ Marciano Zurita, Historia del Género Chico (Madrid: Prensa Popular, 1920) p. 11

⁴ Ibid., p. 7

⁵ Ibid., p. 13

he spent four or five hours in the theater. Prospective spectators might choose the hour, on any day, most suited to them.³ Thus they would order to the night house of Madrid: the public house was open and casual for after-dinner entertainment, to escape the boredom of a party, or while waiting for an appointment. The house for horse would compare with the old house by giving a better brand of entertainment.

The three comedians acted as directors of the house and shared the profits. The master stroke was to put the price low enough--they set the price of one real for performance, a price which was then increased and which immediately caused the play to be called "closed" by analogy with the cry of the street vendors: "a real is closed."⁴

Success was immediate and small vendors: the company was really good. Valde had an average appearance, a beautiful voice and excellent dramatic style. Julian was a very witty comedian, and Ripstein was an excellent wit and improviser. Their colleagues were equally talented.

³ Mariano Barba, Historia del Género Lírico (Madrid: Planeta Popular, 1950) p. 11.

⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

But if the public was immediately captivated, the same cannot be said of the press, the personnel of the larger theaters, and the critics. The press took sides and started a campaign against the "demoralization of dramatic art." The theatrical managers, authors, and actors, foreseeing that other small theaters would copy the Recreo and give them serious competition, tried every means to discredit and destroy the new-born industry. The critics either denounced the new genre or ignored it. The foremost critics of the day, Manuel de la Revilla, Manuel Cañete, and Peregrin García Cadena condemned alike the theaters, comedians, and repertoire of the género chico.⁶

Blanco García published a scathing denunciation of the teatro por horas:

Las revistas callejeras, las alegorías absurdas y sin ingenio, las parodias indecentes, las sátiras políticas en que el odio y la mala intención ocupan el lugar del mérito artístico; todos los delirios, en fin, que puede engendrar la imaginación enclenque de una turba de poetastros reñidos con el decoro y el sentido común constituyen hoy un peligro constante para la moralidad pública y un obstáculo para el progreso de la literatura dramática nacional.⁷

⁶ Flores García, op. cit., pp. 84-87

⁷ P. Francisco Blanco García, La Literatura Española en el Siglo XIX (Madrid: Saenz de Juliera Hermanos, 1910). Vol. II, p. 615

But if the public was immediately captivated, the same cannot be said of the press, the personnel of the larger theaters, and the critics. The press took sides and started a campaign against the "demoralization of dramatic art." The theatrical management, however, and noting forecasting that other small theaters would copy the success and give them serious competition, tried every means to discredit and destroy the new-born industry. The critics either denounced the new genre or ignored it. The most critical of the day, Manuel de la Revilla, director of the Teatro Español, and Fernando Garcia Gadea, director of the Teatro de la Comedia, and reporters of the Temps and El Financiero, published a testifying demonstration of the tema no nuevo.

Las revistas calificaron, las alusiones abundan y sin embargo, las parodias abundan. Las revistas calificaron a su vez el teatro y la mala literatura ocupan el lugar del teatro en la crítica; todos los críticos, en fin, que pretenden engañar la imaginación con el teatro y el teatro de postas con el teatro y el teatro y el teatro de cada comedia hoy un teatro constante para la moralidad pública y un teatro para el progreso de la literatura dramática nacional.

6 Flores Garza, op. cit., pp. 84-85

V. p. Francisco Flores Garza, La literatura dramática en el siglo XIX (Madrid: Saena de Bellas Artes, 1970), Vol. II, p. 815

Finally, the fury of the opposition passed--everything passes--and even the severest critics had to admit that the género chico wasn't all bad. Even the conspiracy of silence had to break down in the face of some of the delightful sainetes of Ricardo de La Vega.

The first critic of importance to concede any merit to these theaters was Leopoldo Alas (Clarín) who was just starting his brilliant career. He focussed his attention on quality, not quantity and, while he found much to condemn, he also found much to admire in the teatro por horas.⁸

The eminent critic, Eduardo Gómez de Baquero (Andrenio) writing for La España Moderna in 1895, accepted the género chico. He quoted M. Gaston Deschamps on the mission of the critic: to be a mediator between the author and the public, now pleading for the former, now defending the latter. And he proceeded to defend the right of existence of the plays presented in the teatros por horas, and the right of the public to enjoy them:

Pero ¿quién duda que tienen su razón de ser? El buen éxito que alcanzan y aún los centenares de representaciones que consiguen, no son un hecho arbitrario y caprichoso, ni denotan una

⁸ Flores García, op. cit., pp. 86-87

depravación anormal del gusto público. Son estas obras la democracia de la literatura; una diversión asequible a todos los bolsillos y a todas las inteligencias. La mayoría de los espectadores no pide pasatiempos delicados; su paladar está más hecho a la sal de cocina que a las sales, éticas; se deleita con la caricatura, goza con la exageración de lo grotesco, se satisface con unas cuantas bufonadas de grueso calibre que amenicen su digestión; no pide más que darse una ración de vista de carne femenina y tomar un baño de música alegre. La frase con que los críticos suelen compaginar lo que deben a su sentido estético y a su cultura literaria con la consideración al autor y al éxito, aquello de que la pieza no tiende más que á hacer reír, á entretener un rato al senado, como se decía antes, expresa una realidad, aplicándola a la aspiración del público. Lo que éste busca en los teatros por horas es eso: algo que le entretenga y le mueva á risa, para lo cual sirven perfectamente los desatinos. Como excepción hay algunas obras ingeniosas, y hasta bien escritas; pero en la mayor parte no se descubre otra cualidad positiva que lo que se llama conocimiento del teatro, cierta habilidad de orden inferior, que consiste en buscar efectos sobre el público, en aprovechar los puntos vulnerables de éste, en sacar partido de los aptitudes especiales de los cómicos.

Se va á estos espectáculos como va en París al Café Concierto, á oír canciones notables por su simpleza, por su obscenidad, or por ambas cosas a la vez. Aquí la obscenidad es menor--no en balde vivimos en el país de los padres de familia--pero la simpleza no tiene que envidiar nada á la del repertorio de los Paulus y las Yvettes. ⁹

Three years later, Andrenio was still defending the género chico:

⁹ E. Gómez de Baquero, "Crónica Literaria," La España Moderna (December, 1895), p. 184

Los éxitos teatrales de esta temporada no han correspondido á los géneros principales, sino á un género democrático como el llamado género chico, el cual, si se atiende á la aceptación que encuentra en el público y á la abundancia de sus producciones, es ahora, sin embargo, el más grande de nuestros géneros dramáticos.

Positivamente no se ha estrenado ningún drama, ni alta comedia alguna que supere en su género á tres de las obritas cómico-líricas que están representando en los teatros por horas: El Señor Joaquín, de Romea; La Revoltosa, de Fernández Shaw y López Silva, y El Santo de La Isidra de Carlos Arniches. ¹⁰ . . . Es indudable que el sainete es un género secundario, y que el drama o la alta comedia son obras de mayor dificultad y más importancia literaria que un juguete cómico, un sainete o un zarzuelita. Pero cualquiera de estas últimas obras, si es acabada en su género, valdrá más cualitativamente que un drama o una comedia malos o mediados. ¹¹

The same author makes some interesting observations on the trend the género chico was following by 1898:

La sátira de las costumbres de la clase media y las revistas de sucesos de actualidad, en particular políticos, han sido, durante bastante tiempo, los dos grandes temas y los dos formas más comunes del género chico. Hoy, por el contrario predomina la pintura de las costumbres populares, de la chulería madrileña, sucesora de los antiguos manolos y chisperas, viniendo así, á reanudarse la tradición del sainete clásico y aún en cierta medida de los antiguos entremeses. ¹²

¹⁰ E. Gómez de Baquero, "Crónica Literaria," La España Moderna (May, 1898), p. 154

¹¹ Ibid., p. 155

¹² Ibid., p. 156

Los Estados Unidos de América y el Reino Unido de Gran Bretaña e Irlanda del Norte, por un lado, y el Imperio de Brasil, por el otro, han acordado celebrar un tratado de amistad y comercio, el cual, al ser ratificado por el Parlamento de Gran Bretaña e Irlanda del Norte, y por el Congreso de los Estados Unidos, y por el Emperador del Brasil, quedará en vigor.

En fe de lo cual, los plenipotenciarios de las partes contratantes, a saber: el Sr. John C. Calhoun, Secretario de Estado de los Estados Unidos, y el Sr. John A. B. Caldwell, Ministro de Negocios Extranjeros del Brasil, han firmado el presente tratado, y lo han sellado con sus sellos respectivos, en la ciudad de Washington, el día veintidós de mayo de mil ochocientos sesenta y tres.

En testigo de lo cual, los plenipotenciarios de las partes contratantes, a saber: el Sr. John C. Calhoun, Secretario de Estado de los Estados Unidos, y el Sr. John A. B. Caldwell, Ministro de Negocios Extranjeros del Brasil, han firmado el presente tratado, y lo han sellado con sus sellos respectivos, en la ciudad de Washington, el día veintidós de mayo de mil ochocientos sesenta y tres.

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10. A. Gómez de Barroto, "Gobierno Militar," 1874.
11. 1874, p. 133.
12. 1874, p. 133.

. . . .

Como lo principal en lo sainete es la pintura exacta de los tipos y costumbres populares, entre los que hoy se escriben, hay no pocos en nada inferiores á los antiguos--y como la gran aceptación por parte del público ha hecho que sea el género chico un género productivo, ha acaecido lo que sucede siempre en cualquier clase de trabajo bien remunerado: que afluyen á él personas de capacidad preferiéndolos á otros trabajos similares, de los cuales puede esperarse menos, económicamente hablando. ¹³

Yxart in his Arte Escénico en España, although he condemned the género chico in general, did admit that some sainetes were worthy of consideration:

En ninguna parte reluce vivo el reflejo de costumbres conocidas sino en el sainete, la única producción cómica que aspira á desentenderse de todo artificio y se realiza con una simplicidad, con una ingenuidad aparente de medios escénicos que le dan un valor artístico excepcional. ¹⁴

Juan Valera, in a letter to El Correo de España in Buenos Aires in 1896, is more generous in his praise:

Contamos hoy como poetas dramáticos de este género que llaman chico no pocos de mérito singular y que a veces competen con don Ramón de la Cruz en agudeza, gracia, y dichosa facilidad para pintar costumbres, lances, escenas, y caracteres de la gente del vulgo. ¹⁵

Carlos Cambronero justifies the popularity of this

¹³ Ibid., pp. 156-157

¹⁴ José Yxart, El Arte Escénico en España, (Barcelona: La Vanguardia, 1896), Tomo II, p. 112

¹⁵ Juan Valera, Ecoss Argentinos (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1943), p. 23

13 Told. pp. 1-107

lesser genre and explains its lack of literary merit:

Hemos arrojado del Teatro Español la parte alegre y musical, y como contaba con la simpatía constante del público, ha formado rancho aparte creando el género chico, que, educado fuera de la casa paterna, en los teatros-cafés, con el desenfreno propio de quien no tiene en los primeros pasos persona prudente y cariñosa que la dirija, ha venido á parará la triste situación en que hoy la vemos, y lo peor del caso es que el género chico forma ya estado, y se dispone á anular al teatro serio.¹⁶

Cambroneró also makes an interesting observation on its pedigree:

Convencido está el lector de que el género chico es hijo legítimo de su padre, el sainete; mas no sé yo si conoce al otro cónyuge, á la esposa que el sainete eligió por compañera, y que fué el encanto de nuestros antepasados, la tonadilla. [composición métrica, breve y sobre asunto familiar, la cual suele cantarse en los intermedios de la comedia.] Jueguetona, vivaracha y alegre, la tonadilla sirvió para animar el teatro en las postrimerías del siglo . . . si desde el punto de vista literario ofrecen escaso mérito en general, como género y como arsenal provisto de noticias sobre costumbres es fuente provechoso de estudio.¹⁷

E. Gómez de Baquero was still defending the género chico in 1905 when he wrote an essay entitled "Filosofía del Género Chico."

¹⁶ Carlos Cambroneró, "El 'Género Chico' a Fines del Siglo XVIII" La España Moderna (July, 1907), p. 5

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 6-7

latter genre and explains the lack of literary merit:

Hemos averiguado del género español la parte
alegre y musical, y como coincide con la alegría
constante del pueblo, ha formado también espíritu
ordenado el género chico, que, adscrito fuera de
la otra parte, en los teatro-cómedes, por el
desentramado propio de quien no tiene más que
mayor parte humana, graciosa y sencilla que la
digna, ha venido a formar la parte aludida
en que hoy la vemos, y lo poco del caso es que
el género chico forme ya estado, y se aligere a
analizar el teatro serio. 16

Garcimorero also makes an interesting observation on

its pedigree:

Garcimorero adds the latter to the género
chico as hijo bastardo de su padre, el serio;
mas no sé yo si conoce al otro género, y
así que el serio es hijo por coacción, y
que fue el amante de su madre, la
comedia. [Composición melódica, prove y sobre
sonido familiar, la cual puede compararse en los
informes de la comedia.] (Garcimorero, *El teatro*
y el arte, la comedia para el arte y el
teatro en las postmodernas del siglo . . . el
desde el punto de vista literario, el teatro serio
mérito en general, como género y como arte
provisto de notables rasgos constructivos en tanto
previstos de estado. 17

2. Además de Garcimorero está el taladador del género

chico in 1906 when he wrote an essay entitled "El género

del género chico."

16 Carlos Garcimorero, *El género chico, a fines del siglo
XVIII* (La Habana: Editorial, 1907), p. 5

17 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7

Vienen aquí sabios e ignorantes, personas de gusto delicado y personas de gusto grosero mas todas vienen con un propósito vulgar espontáneo, humano: el propósito de divertirse. No digo vulgar en sentido despectivo. Dígolo como cosa común, normal, que no tiene asomos de excepción ni de artificio.¹⁸

And he elaborates still further:

Ha pensado usted lo que significa el Vengo á divertirme con que contestaría el espectador si le preguntarán á qué viene á este teatro ó á otro semejante? Venir á divertirse es venir á experimentar sensaciones agradables, que no exijan esfuerzo ni produzcan movimientos de ánimo violentos, que sean para el espíritu no reactivo enérgico, sino suave cosquilleo. Es venir á ver cosas que recreen los ojos y la fantasía; es hacer una escapatoria al imperio de la risa, huyendo de la seriedad de la vida que a todas nos acosa bajo diversas formas y con preocupaciones diferentes. Para unos toma la espantable figura de la escasez, para otros la fea catadura de las enfermedades; á éste le da el acíbar de los desengaños amorosos, á estotro la sed de las ambiciones no satisfechas o el amargor de las injusticias padecidas. Acaso á alguno el desaliento del vano esfuerzo de nuestra inteligencia frente al misterio que nos rodea. . .¹⁹

The most amusing answer to the critics of the género chico was a poem published by Ricardo de la Vega in el Madrid Cómico (1881) in answer to Armando Palacio Valdés, who had asserted that the género chico dishonored the Spanish stage.

¹⁸ E. Gómez de Baquero, "La filosofía del Género Chico," in Letras e Ideas (Barcelona: Imprenta de Henrich y c 1905), p. 13

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 14-15

Vienen aquí a dar a conocer el estado de la cuestión y a presentar los resultados de la investigación que se ha realizado en este campo. En primer lugar, se debe tener en cuenta que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos. Sin embargo, se puede afirmar que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos.

And he elaborates still further:

En segundo lugar, se debe tener en cuenta que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos. Sin embargo, se puede afirmar que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos. En tercer lugar, se debe tener en cuenta que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos. Sin embargo, se puede afirmar que la investigación en este campo ha sido muy limitada, y que los datos que se tienen son muy escasos.

The most striking answer to the question of the

which was a poem published by Alfonso in 1881. In answer to a question asked by Alfonso who had asserted that the Alfonso stage.

18 E. Gómez de Pedraza, "El Alfonso," Alfonso, 1881, p. 10.

El Sainete

Señor don Armando Palacio Valdés
Os pido dispensa, señor don Armando
Si en pro del sainete la pluma tomando,
Prefiéralo al género bufo francés.

Aparte dejando mezquino interés
Yo admiro en la chula la antigua manola,
¿Deshonro por esto la escena española,
Señor don Armando Palacio Valdés?²⁰

D. Julio Cejador y Frauca wrote a magnificent defense
of the genre:

El Género Chico es para algunos críticos e historiadores cosa tan baja y grosera, que apenas entra en cuenta para nada en la literatura. Tenemos aquí la eterna cantilena de la crítica erudita, para la cual las obras populares nada valen. Pero el género chico es una de las manifestaciones más brillantes que de la afición al teatro popular y nacional se han dado en España. Sus asuntos son populares, la pintura de las costumbres; sus actores, poco eruditos y ni aún literatos; su estructura y forma la ceñida, suelta y realista del antiguo entremés, anterior al gran teatro nacional. Es el arte teatral genuinamente español que siempre vuelve á rebrotar de las entrañas de la raza como únicamente castizo y eterno. Lo cual debiera bastar para ser admirado y estudiado; pero los eruditos se pirran más por la grandeza superficial del llamado gran teatro, por lo extraño y extranjero en asuntos y maneras, en fin, por lo extraordinario y poco común, criterio falso y detestable en el arte.²¹

While the critics argued, the "chico" grew. During the years 1890-1900, the only successful theaters in Madrid

²⁰ Ricardo de la Vega, "El Sainete," quoted in Narciso Alonso Cortés, Quevedo en el Teatro y o tras cosas (Valladolid: Imprenta del Colegio Santiago, 1930, p. 54

²¹ D. Julio Cejador y Frauca, Historia de la Lengua y Literatura Castellana (Madrid: Tip. de la "Revista de Archives, Bibl. y Museos," 1918) Tomo IX, p. 18

were those devoted to the género chico: Apolo, La Zarzuela, Eslava, Novedades, Moderno, Teatro Cómico, Recoletas, Felipe Romea, Maravillas, Eldorado. Some fifteen hundred new works appeared.²² There was a variety of types. To the sainete and the zarzuela were added the revista lírica, the juguete cómico, and parodies of the longer plays. What gave unity to these forms was their satirical costumbrista and popular character, and the fact of their being presented as "funciones por horas."²³

Ricardo de la Vega, with his Canción de la Lola, presented on May 25, 1888, assured the place of the zarzuela in the repertoire of the género chico.

A los ocho días de estrenarse La Canción no había en Madrid cocinera que no acompañase sus domésticos quehaceres con alguno de los cantables de la obra.²⁴

The place of the revista lírica was assured with the success of La Gran Vía of Felipe Pérez y González (March, 1884).

²² Zurita, op. cit., p. 68

²³ Ángel del Río, Historia de la Literatura Española, (New York: The Dryden Press c 1948) Vol II, p. 118

²⁴ Zurita, op. cit., p. 29

The juguete cómico, popular at the Lara, was the genre chosen by Arniches for his first play written without a collaborator, Nuestra Señora. It is a type of farce which "cumplía con más o menos literatura, verdad y sentido común el fin para que fué creado: distraía, hacía reír, ayudaba a la digestión, y preparaba un plácido sueño."²⁵

Many authors took a fiendish delight in writing parodies on every drama brought to their attention. The best were written by Enrique López-Marín, Pablo Parellado, and especially Salvador María Granés. Other parodists were guilty of the very defects they sought to censure.²⁶

Since the death of Ramón de la Cruz, the sainete had been neglected, but Tomás Lucero presented to the directors of the Recreo his Cuadros al Fresco, an imitation of the classical sainete. It was presented on January 31, 1890 and its success was phenomenal. Zurita credits him with reviving the sainete:

El sainete español había resucitado y con él una forma sencilla y clásica de nuestra ética popular, un aspecto quizá el más justo y desde luego el más pintoresco, de nuestras costumbres,

²⁵ José Deleito y Piñuela, Estampas del Madrid Teatral Fin de Siglo (Madrid: Editorial Saturnino Calleja, n.d.), p. 319

²⁶ Zurita, op. cit., pp. 83-84

de nuestra manera de ser, de nuestra innata y consubstancial pinturería, de nuestra gracia natural, de nuestro dicharachero optimismo galanteador y donjuanesco, un poco pendenciero y un mucho romántico--y aquella resurrección, incorporaba al repertorio del naciente "género chico" un caudal inagotable de ingenio, de donosura, de pajolera sal española, que andando el tiempo, había de producir obras primorosas.²⁷

Ricardo de la Vega immediately started writing sainetes, and became the best sainetero of the nineteenth century. A close second to him was Javier de Burgos:

Uno de los más exquisitos y más finos de nuestros saineteros--pero ¿porqué no hizo Javier de Burgos lo que un cuarto de siglo después han hecho los hermanos Quintero? ¿Porqué no redujo su esfera de acción a Andalucía, que le era mucho más familiar que Madrid?²⁸

His best known sainete is Los Valientes which served as an inspiration for more than one of Arniches' sainetes.

The género chico even tempted such successful playwrights as Martínez Sierra and Jacinto Benavente, and Los Quinteros. Best known among its cultivators, in addition to those already mentioned, are López Silva, Miguel Ramón Carrión, Vital Aza, Enrique García Álvarez, Pedro Muñoz Seca.

But the género chico was destined to die at the hands of the género infimo. Various causes of death have been suggested by the critics.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 20-21

²⁸ Ibid., p. 24

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de nuestra manera de ser, de nuestra manera
constitucional pluricultural, de nuestra
natural, de nuestra historia, de nuestra
teoría y de nuestra práctica, de nuestra
muchos problemas--y muchos de ellos son
porque al respecto del "problema"
un cambio teórico de fondo, de estructura,
de política del espacio, que afecta al mismo
habla de problemática pluricultural.

Ricardo de la Vega, La cultura y la política
and became the best estimation of the historical context.
A closer reading to him was needed to understand

uno de los más importantes y más recientes
nuestros estudios--porque no se ha hecho
estudio de esta historia de este país
los problemas de este país en este país
los de este país en este país, que en este país
Familiar que está en este país

His best known estudio is La cultura y la política
as an inspiration for more and more of the historical context.
The general idea even today is very important in the
rights as Marxist ideas and ideas of the historical context.
Gaiter. Best known among the historical context, in the historical
to those already mentioned, are John W. G. Gaiter, John W. G. Gaiter,
Garvín, Vital Ass, Enrique Ass, Enrique Ass, Enrique Ass,
Ass.

But the general idea was not the only of the historical context.
of the general idea. There is also the idea of the historical context.
suggested by the author.

Eduardo Bustillo, one of its bitterest enemies, gave his version:

Pero ese género chico viene cada vez más a menos. También está llamado á morirse; pero de la misma enfermedad con que nació, de anemia, de pobreza del ingenio, de monotonía del procedimiento, de falta de arte, de exceso de codicia de la industria. . . El noventa por ciento de esas obrillas está forjado en la misma máquina. . . de coser escenas; con hilo inconsistente y aguja sin punta de ingenio, supliendo á los primores de la gracia los arrojos de la desvergüenza.²⁹

The diagnosis of Marciano Zurita:

A los 30 años . . . adiós juventud. Que fué precisamente lo que le ocurrió al género chico. Doblar el siglo y trasponer el cabo de los tormentos, todo fué la misma cosa. Se notó en seguida que iba perdiendo las fuerzas de una manera alarmante. Ya no era aquel mozo robusto y lleno de salud que escribía veinte, treinta, cuarenta obras de éxito cada temporada. Ahora tenía que contentarse con un porcentaje más modestito. Y bien sabe Dios que no era por ausencia de autores, ni por escasez de músicos, ni por falta de teatros, que de todo andaba abundante y aún sobrado sino porque con los años iba perdiendo los entusiasmos y así como antes le dió por ser formal y persona decente, luego se dedicó á las picardías y al amor libre, y eso le debilitó un poco.³⁰

Cejador y Frauca, instead of trying to be witty, gives a logical and comprehensive explanation of the

²⁹ Eduardo Bustillo, *Campañas Teatrales*, (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1901), pp. 9-10

³⁰ Zurita, op. cit., pp. 87-88

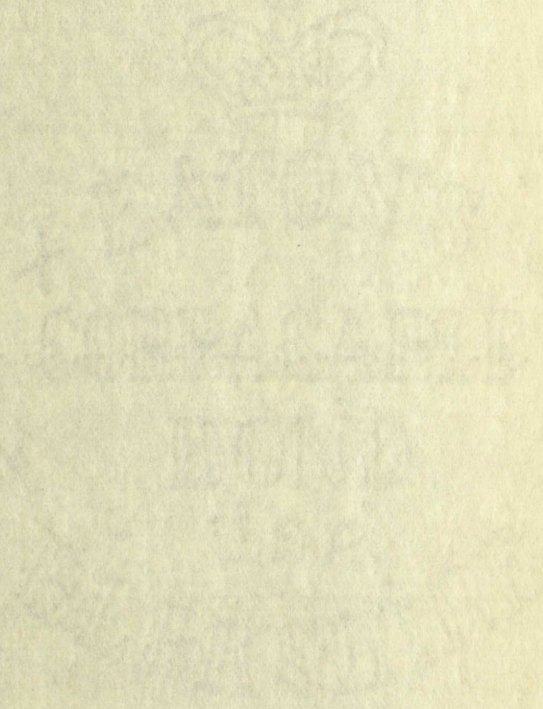
decline of the género chico:

De esta alegría, de este divertirse y pasar un buen rato, que busca el público español acudiendo á la representación de su propia vida y costumbres, nació cabalmente, por bastardeamiento, el principal defecto del género chico, la comezón por el chiste que hace saltar el trazo de la risa á los oyentes, sin devanarse los sesos en tramar mejor la pieza. De los donaires naturales del habla popular que el dialogado vivo de los buenos autores llevo á las tablas, pasóse al chiste artificioso y hasta sandio y frío. Los autores medianos, que no sabían expresar la vida tal como la veían en las calles, diéronse á colocar chistes en una trama cualquiera de burdo y grosero cañamazo. El chiste, la gracia, el buen dicho, es cosa harto dificultosa de hallar hasta para un ingenio tan despierto como el español, cuyo idioma está de ellos cuajado. No dando abasto el inmenso almacén de donaires que el idioma encierra y el río de ellos que por esas calles de Dios corre en labios de las gentes, tuvieron que forjárselos los autores; estrujaron su magín, retrocaron y retorcieron el habla exprimiendo retruécanos, acudieron al arte de lo inesperado, del disparate mismo, de los andaluzadas ó exageraciones extremosas, de las comparaciones traídas por los cabellos. El caso era despertar la risa con un golpe nuevo, nada esperado. Las adivinanzas, los colmos, las comparaciones, todo linaje de chistes, chistosos o no chistosos, ingeniosos y torpes, agudos y botos, se elevaron al escenario, pegándolos de cualquier manera al diálogo, supliendo con ellos lo cómico legítimo que brota de personajes y situaciones, porque lográndose antes y más fácilmente el intento de hacer reír, ahorra a sus autores del arte de saber expresar la vida real del cual carecían los más. De esta manera bastardeó el género chico, convirtiéndose hacia 1910 en el llamado género ínfimo, cuando a esa comezón por el chiste

se añadió la demasía en lo vistoso; los bailes
trajes y decoraciones, elementos venidos de
Francia con el Vaudeville y las Variétés. ³¹

³¹ Cejador y Frauca, op. cit., Vol. IX, pp. 10-11

En el día de hoy se ha celebrado en la ciudad de Madrid una reunión de los señores de la Real Academia de Ciencias y Letras, en la que se ha tratado de la necesidad de que el Gobierno adopte algunas medidas para fomentar la agricultura y la ganadería.



CHAPTER III

ARNICHES: THE MAN AND HIS WORKS

Carlos Arniches y Barrera was born in Alicante on October 11, 1866 of a middle class family. At the age of seventeen, he went to Barcelona where he worked, first as a clerk, then as a journalist on La Vanguardia. He spent his evenings and his vacations writing poetry. At nineteen he went to Madrid where he shared the bohemian existence of many struggling authors until, in 1888, in collaboration with Gonzalo Cantó, he presented his first play, Casa Editorial. The work was well received by the public but not by the critics. The latter even stooped to misspelling his name and the name "Carlos Currinche" appeared repeatedly in articles in El Madrid Cómico.

In those days the serious theater was dominated by José Echegaray and the comic and lyric by Ricardo de la Vega. The género chico had proved its ability to endure despite the severest critics so Arniches started writing for the teatro por horas. In 1890 he presented, without a collaborator, a comic skit entitled Nuestra Señora. He continued to write short plays until long after the vogue for them had diminished.

In 1894 he married Doña Pilar Moltó y Campo Redondo and they had five children: Carlos, José, Fernando, Pilar, who married Eduardo Ugarte and Rosario, who married José Bergamín.

He lived a very simple life. He arose and breakfasted at eight-thirty. At nine he was in his study. In his Autorretrato he wrote:

He sido un trabajador de una perseverancia heroica. Todos los días, a las nueve, estoy trabajando. Estreno, tengo un gran éxito; al día siguiente, a las nueve, trabajando. Estreno, me dan una grito que me aturden; al día siguiente, a las nueve, trabajando. ¡Que se necesita ánimo . . . después de un fracaso! . . . Pero así he podido sobrellevar cincuenta y cuatro años de profesión . . . y hacer trescientas comedias.¹

He used to lunch at two-thirty. If he had a play in rehearsal, he often attended the rehearsal after lunch. At four o'clock he went walking in the suburbs of Madrid, studying and observing, entering taverns, cafés, stores, and pawnshops. When he was rich enough he bought a car but he seldom used it; he learned more walking. He dined at eight and then went to the movies.

In his Autorretrato he describes himself at the age of seventy-seven:

¹ Carlos Arniches, Teatro Completo (Madrid: Aguilar, 1948) Vol. III, p. 11

In 1894 he married Dona Eliza Rios y Campo, who
and they had five children: Carlos, José, Esteban, Eliseo,
who married Amanda Urdaz and Rosendo, who married José
Bergamín.

He lived a very simple life. He earned and spent
lived at eight-thirty. He died he was in his study. In
his Autobiography he wrote:

He also an extraordinary man, a person of
heroic. Todos los días, a las nueve, a las
trece y media. Después de la comida, a las
diez y media, a las nueve, a las trece y media.
me dan una grata que me atrae; al día siguiente
a las nueve, a las trece y media. (He no recorda más
... después de la comida ... a las trece y media ...
político revolucionario, a las trece y media ...
profesión ... y hacer traducción ...)

He used to finish at two-thirty. If he had a day in
rehearsal, he often attended the rehearsal after lunch.
At four o'clock he went walking in the suburbs of Mexico,
studying and observing, entering taverns, coffee houses,
and pawnshops. When he was rich enough he bought a car
but he seldom used it; he preferred more walking. He dined
at eight and then went to the movies.
In his Autobiography he emphasizes himself at the age
of seventy-seven:

Soy un hombre viejo, de muchos años; pongan ustedes los que quieran, que no me molesto. Yo tengo la culpa por haberlos vivido. Alto, todavía esbelto, hasta cierto punto; correcto y moderado en el vestir, y de no mala facha pues, según han dicho varios biógrafos, tengo un cierto aire de personaje yanqui. No sé si esto será cierto, porque yo no me he sentido nunca ni personaje ni yanqui; pero como el trazo no me disgusta aquí queda. Guapo no lo soy, no quiero engañar a nadie, y, además, a estas alturas, ¿para que? Tengo los ojos pequeños . . . y ¡cuidado que he visto cosas! . . . y la nariz, grande y de mala calidad; me acatarro mucho. La boca . . . la boca no sé cómo la tengo . . . ; desde luego, harta de decir lo que no quiere . . . Yo soy un poco cargado de espaldas, de espaldas y de otras muchas cosas. ¡ Hay en la vida tanta cosa cargante . . . !

Es mi cuadratura física. La moral es peor . . .²

This last was far from true. His son Carlos said of him:

Era la bondad personificada con todo el mundo; el mejor esposo y el mejor padre que se pueda soñar.³

In the "Prólogo Biográficoocrítico" written as an introduction to the first volume of Arniches' Teatro Completo, E. M. Portillo recounts many incidents which serve as a key to the personality of Arniches. He was

² Ibid., p. 9

³ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 19

normally a calm and sensible individual, but when he had a play in rehearsal the slightest error disgusted him. He would walk out in a rage--and return the following morning to apologize. At dress rehearsals he was capable of deciding that the last act needed "a few changes." He rewrote the third act of La Chica del Gato and the actors had only twenty-four hours in which to learn the new version.

He was very absent-minded. On one occasion he suggested a yellow dress for the leading actress. Because it was more becoming, she chose green instead. At the dress rehearsal she asked him:

"¿Era eso lo que usted quería, don Carlos?"

"Sí hija, sí. Está muy bien."

On opening nights he was worse. On one occasion after he had emptied a box of bicarbonate of soda, he absent-mindedly ate rice powder from the make-up box.

The opening night of his best play, Es Mi Hombre, he was at his worst. He was so afraid of a failure that he wanted to go home and let somebody telephone him the reaction of the public. The leading man, Valeriano León, looked him in his own dressing room and didn't let him out until the audience demanded the author. Even then he had to be dragged onto the stage--he wanted to sneak out the back door.

I have already mentioned Arniches' first two plays, Casa Editorial and Nuestra Señora. Between 1891 and 1896 he wrote several short plays in collaboration with Celso Lucio, Gonzalo Cantó, José Jackson Veyan, López Silva, and Antonio Paso. They were staged in the theaters Apolo, El Moderno, Eslava, Capellanes, La Infantil, and enjoyed varying degrees of success. They were modeled for the most part on the sainetes of Eduardo Escalante, a Valencian sainetista, and those of Ricardo de la Vega.

By 1898, with the performance of El Santo de La Isidra and La Fiesta de San Antón, Arniches had perfected a form of sainete peculiar to him--what Portillo calls a "melodrama asainetado" a sketch of popular customs in which the melodramatic predominates. These were followed by others of similar tendencies: Sandías y Melones, Las Estrellas, La Pena Negra, La Noche de Reyes, El Amigo Melquiades, El Chico de las peñuelas, and two longer sainetes, El Último Mono and Rositas de Olor.

By 1910 the género chico was being replaced by the género ínfimo. Although Arniches continued to write sainetes, he recognized the trend of public taste toward longer plays. As early as 1899 he had written a three-act melodrama, La cara de Dios and he wrote another, La

I have already mentioned that the first of these
García, González and González. The first of these
has known several other plays in the same style as the first.
In fact, González, José, González, José, González, José,
and Antonio Paez. They have played in the same style,
El Moderno, Salazar, Capatzen, in the same style,
varying degrees of success. They were written for the
most part on the pattern of the first play, and the
other plays, and those of the same style, and
by 1895, with the first of the same style.

and the first of the same style, and the first
a form of the same style, and the first
"melodrama sentimental," a style of the same style, and the first
the melodramatic predominates. The first of the same style,
others of similar tendency, and the first of the same style,
Estrellita, La Fama, La Fama, La Fama, La Fama, La Fama,
Salazar, El Chico de las Indias, and the first of the same style,
El Último Monje and Rosalva, and the first of the same style.

By 1910 the same style, and the first of the same style,
genre film. Although the same style, and the first of the same style,
salaries, he recognized the trend of the same style, and the first
larger plays. As early as 1910, and the first of the same style,
not melodrama, in the same style, and the first of the same style.

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Sobrina del Cura in 1914. He had also produced two two-act comedies, La Pobre Niña in 1912 and La Gentuza in 1913. The critics, however, continued to consider him an author of the lesser genre until 1916 when his Señorita de Trevélez attracted the attention of the novelist, poet and critic Ramón Pérez de Ayala. This play brought about his recognition as an author of teatro grande.⁴ These longer plays, deprived of the support of music which had contributed much to the success of his sainetes, had to depend on character portrayal, plot, their faithfulness in reflecting society, and the wit and spontaneity of the dialog.

By 1918 he had developed a new type of tragic-comedy, which he called a tragedia-grotesca. It is the plays of this genre for which he will probably be known to future generations: Que Viene Mi Marido, La Diosa Ríe, and especially Es Mi Hombre.

And what of his style? His biographer, Portillo, claims for him much more careful writing than appears at a first glance. According to him:

Guida su diálogo; retoca sus metáforas,
que son abundantes en su obra; las incorrecciones

⁴ Carlos Arniches, Teatro Completo, Vol. I, p. 23

Señor del Oro in 1914. He had also written two
 two-act comedies, La Fama and La Fama
 in 1913. The critics, however, were not
 him an author of the first order. In 1915
Señor del Oro attracted the attention of the
 critics and wrote a number of plays. His
 brought about his recognition as an author of
granda. These plays, however, were not
 music which had composed a number of songs of the
 nature, but to regard it as a musical play, which
 faithfulness in religious music. The first and
 tenets of the faith.
 By 1916 he had developed a new type of musical comedy,
 which he called a tragedia musical. In the first of
 this genre for which a play, he wrote for the
 generations: Los Viejos, La Fama, and
 particularly En El Hombre.
 And what of his novel, El Hombre, which
 claims for him more serious work than his songs or
 a first glance. According to him:
Queda en el libro: el hombre y el mundo
 que son abundantes en el mundo; la vida y la

* Carlos Arango, Tragedia Musical, Vol. I, p. 10.

en el léxico de sus personajes son intencionadas. Todo en él es producto de la reflexión. Estudia, medita, sopesa, corrige, tacha de nuevo; pero por encima de todos sus cuidados, salta la frase espontánea, chispeante, que caracteriza su teatro; frase que nunca viene sola, pues, como las cerezas del racimo, unas tiran de las demás y se producen esas escenas en que un chiste va engendrando otros, en un juego irresistible de cadena retórica. Va de la sonrisa a la risa, de la risa a la carcajada y de ésta al grito alacre y estentóreo. Fuerza de autor teatral, sin duda; sabiduría, experiencia, dominio, poder.⁵

After viewing Arniches' procession of chulos with a razor always within reach; of women who would willingly scratch out a rival's eye; of timid men who suddenly became brave enough to defy a bully but are too shy to kiss a girl; of domineering women and their hen-pecked sons and husbands, one wonders whether these types really exist. How realistic are the sainetes of Arniches?

Nicholás González Ruiz calls him a "verdadero autor melodramático que extrae sus materiales de esa inagotable cantera. Reviste esos materiales con una actualidad madrileña a la que tienen acceso los tipos y las costumbres más o menos deformadas--de cada momento de la vida de Madrid y logra éxitos resonantes."⁶

⁵ Carlos Arniches, Teatro Completo, Vol. IV, p. 16

⁶ Nicolás González Ruiz, La Cultura Española en los Últimos Veinte Años: El Teatro (Madrid: Instituto de cultura Hispánica, 1949), p. 14

Por Gómez Baquero: "Sus tipos son tomados de la realidad, no caricaturas, de suerte que lo cómico no llega a la exageración de lo grotesco."⁷

Pedro Salinas speaks of his "Gentes del pueblo como personajes, expresándose en el lenguaje lleno de saber y de plástica, abundante en giros caricaturescos, escenas que no son más que cuadros de costumbres animadas dramáticamente."⁸

In discussing realism in the works of Arniches, Ramón Pérez de Ayala insists that whether or not they are a true mirror of customs doesn't matter:

La realidad artística es una realidad superior, imaginativa, de la cual participamos con las facultades más altas del espíritu, sin exigir el parangón con la realidad que haya podido servirle de modelo o inspiración; antes al contrario, rehuímos ese parangón que anularía la emoción estética y concluiría con la obra de arte, o la reduciría a un tedioso pasatiempo.

. . . Ahora que muchas veces se toma por realidad artística lo que no es sino aparente parecido con la realidad histórica y pasajera. De aquí las famas fugaces y las reputaciones caedizas. Pero el tiempo lo va depurando todo; las realidades simuladas se desvanecen, consumen y olviden, y sólo

⁷ Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, "Crónica Literaria," La España Moderna, (May, 1898), p. 157

⁸ Pedro Salinas, Literatura Española Siglo XX (México, D. F.: Lucero, n.d.), p. 192

Por ótros aspectos, la realidad no es una simple
 realidad, no es una simple
 llega a la comprensión de la realidad.
 Pedro Salinas, *El tiempo y la vida*,
 personajes, experiencias, emociones,
 y de pláticas, abstractas, concretas,
 que no son más que una simple
 constante. 18

En óstas cosas, la realidad es una simple
 Pedro de Ayala, *La vida y la muerte*,
 mirror of nature, *La vida y la muerte*,
 La realidad es una simple
 imaginativa, de la cual se deriva la vida.
 fides más allá del mundo, más allá del mundo,
 con la realidad, con la vida, con la vida,
 modelo o imitación; *La vida y la muerte*,
 una parábola que a la vez es una simple
 constante con la vida, con la vida,
 un tiempo constante.

Además, la realidad es una simple
 dad, *La vida y la muerte*,
 con la realidad, con la vida, con la vida,
 fides fides y la vida, con la vida,
 el tiempo es una simple
 simulada se deriva de la vida, con la vida.

7 *La vida y la muerte*, Pedro de Ayala,
La vida y la muerte, Pedro de Ayala,
 8 Pedro Salinas, *El tiempo y la vida*,
 D. R. 1. *La vida y la muerte*, Pedro de Ayala.

perduran los realidades artísticas verdaderas, aquellas que tienen una vida propia, y no el mentido y breve reflejo de las vidas ajenas y transitorias.⁹

Portillo calls Arniches

"un observador silencioso, con un sentido de lo cómico que llegaba a lo caricaturesco, y no pocas veces a lo sarcástico. Su manera de hacer no puede ser calificada de costumbrista, porque Arniches es un deformador de las características sainetescas. . . sus personajes son producto de su imaginación, que por levantina es barroca y complicada. Arniches no ha copiado al pueblo madrileño según las normas sencillas de don Ricardo de la Vega; no: lo que ha hecho don Carlos Arniches es inventar unos tipos madrileños con tal fuerza expresiva y persuasiva, con una imaginación mediterránea tan caliente y colorista, que su madrileño resulta una criatura metafórica, mucho más complicada de lo que es en su esencia. No, no ha copiado, ha inventado; pero su creación-- crear es privilegio de los escogidos--es tan poderosa que ha logrado influir en el madrileño de la calle, convirtiéndole en un personaje arnichesco, con gracia, dichos y dichos verdaderamente postizos. Talento? ¡Inmenso! Maestría? Extraordinaria!"¹⁰

So according to Portillo, Arniches didn't copy the Madrileño; the Madrileño copied Arniches!

The same has been said of his language by Juan Chabás:

Arniches . . . ha tenido el acierto de crear una lengua propia, o más bien, una jerga madrileña, de sabor popular, caricaturalmente, exagerada. Supo

⁹ Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Las Máscaras. (Madrid: Saturnino Calleja, 1919). Vol I, pp. 259-260

¹⁰ Arniches, Teatro Completo, Vol. I, pp. 14-15

perduran las realidades espirituales verdaderas,
aquellas que tienen una vida propia, y no el
mentido y breve reflejo de las vidas ajenas y
transitorias.

Portillo celta Amichas

"Un observador atencioso, con un sentido de
lo eterno que llega a lo cotidiano, y
no pocas veces a lo anecdótico. Su manera de
bajar no queda son calientes de costumbres,
porque Amichas es un defensor de las car-
acterísticas espirituales. . . sus personajes
son producto de su imaginación, que por lo
tanto es barroca y colorida. Amichas no se
coge al pueblo matando según las normas
seculares de los ritos de la vida; no lo
que ha hecho con los Amichas es inventar
unos tipos matando con el lenguaje expresivo
y persuasivo, con una imaginación matancera
tan caliente y colorida, que se matan
resaca una cultura material, mucho más
completa de lo que es en su esencia. No,
no se coge, se inventa; pero se crea
crear su privilegio de la esencia--se tan
podemos que ha logrado trazar en el ma-
tado de la vida, convirtiéndolo en un per-
sonaje amichas, con gracia, ritmo y dis-
tinción verdaderamente poética y literaria.
manos! Manos! Externamente!"

So according to Portillo, Amichas this copy the

Matrices: the Matrices copied Amichas:

The same has been said of the language by Juan Ochoa:

Amichas . . . de donde el autor de crear
una lengua propia, o más bien, una lengua matancera,
de saber popular, coloquialmente, expresada. Bajo

9 Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Los Matanceros. (Matriz: Matancero)
Calleja, 1919. Vol. I, pp. 225-226

10 Amichas, Texto Completo, Vol. I, pp. 14-15

Arniches con tal extraordinaria fortuna traducir al habla de los barrios bajos madrileños y recrearla escénicamente que en ciertos momentos era difícil decidir si había en Madrid tipos que hablaban como los personajes de Arniches o éste trasladaba exactamente a su prosa dramática caricaturizándola un poco, pero con fidelidad documental, la jerga del chulillo o de la gachí. En realidad aspira a dar rango artístico aunque no lo consiga muchas veces, al habla vulgar y momentánea de su pueblo.¹¹

Commenting on his success, Arniches himself said (in his Autorretrato):

"El público me ha querido bien; la prensa, así, así."

And he was right. Numerous critics ignored him; some made fun of him. Many manuals of literature and books on the contemporary theater ignore him completely. Some grant him a line or two. John Garrett Underhill in an article on "The One Act Play in Spain" says of Arniches, the Quintero brothers, and García Álvarez, "the writers who are most intimately identified with the popular form are all castizo in the Spaniards' phrase; that is, they lie within the strict Spanish tradition and show no trace of marked foreign influence."¹²

¹¹ Juan Chabás, Literatura Española Contemporánea, 1898-1950. (La Habana: Cultural S. A., 1952), p. 638

¹² John Garrett Underhill, "The One Act Play in Spain," Drama VII, (1917), p. 19

América con el extranjero...
traducción al español...
y por tanto...
los que...
que...
esta...
ortodoxa...
documental...
No...
no...
movimiento...

Comentario de...

his Anteriores)

"El..."

rel. rel."

and he was right...
some made fun of him...
books on the contemporary...
Some...
an article on...
the...
who are most...
are all...
lie within the...
of...
of...
of...

- 11 Juan... 1950. (La...)
- 12 John... 1917. (La...)

However, although he published six one act plays in translation, he published none by Arniches.

But some critics were more generous. Eduardo Gómez de Baquero, in 1898, named Arniches' El Santo de la Isidra as one of the three best plays of the year and wrote a very favorable review of it.¹³

Ramón Pérez de Ayala, in Las Máscaras, published in 1919 wrote:

Las únicas valores positivas en la literatura dramática española de nuestros días son Benito Pérez Caldós, y en grado más bajo en la jerarquía, los señores Álvarez Quintero y don Carlos Arniches.¹⁴

In a series of essays written between 1932 and 1940, in writing of Arniches and the género chico, Pedro Salinas wrote:

Arniches era el benjamín de los autores de género chico en competencia con un Luceño o con un Ricardo de la Vega. Es el momento de sus obras en un acto, acompañadas todas de trozos musicales, de las zarzuelas y los sainetes líricos, etapa de su obra que está representada en el tomo que da ocasión a este artículo por el sainete titulado El Santo de la Isidra. Es esta obra un dechado de su género.¹⁵

Marciano Zurita, in his El Género Chico was eloquent in his praise:

¹³ Eduardo Gómez de Baquero "Crónica Literaria," La España Moderna (May, 1898), pp. 154-157

¹⁴ R. Pérez de Ayala, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 152

¹⁵ Pedro Salinas, op. cit., p. 192

Los astrónomos teatrales señalaron en Arniches la aparición de una estrella de primera magnitud llamada a alumbrar espléndidamente el cielo del "género chico" . . . De éxito a éxito creando nuevos moldes o perfeccionando los antiguos ha llegado a ser Arniches la primera figura del género chico ante la cual palidecen todos sin excepción alguna.¹⁶

Nicolás González Ruiz, in La Cultura Española, in the section on the theater wrote:

Se advierte que hace veinte años los autores del momento eran Benavente, los hermanos Quintero y Arniches.¹⁷

José Deleito y Piñuela in his Origen y Apogeo del Género Chico says of him:

La década de 1890-1900 se caracteriza en el madrileño teatro de "Apolo" por la hegemonía de Carlos Arniches, que sucesivamente va desplazando y sucediendo a los saineteros destacados antes que él; Javier de Burgos, Ricardo de la Vega, Ramos Carrión.¹⁸

La Crítica descubrió en Arniches un valor nuevo, un hombre de teatro que tendría gran porvenir, y por esa vez los profetas no erraron en sus augurios.¹⁹

Juan Chabás adds:

¹⁶ Zurita, op. cit., pp. 64-65

¹⁷ González Ruiz, op. cit., p. 7

¹⁸ José Deleito y Piñuela, Origen y Apogeo del Género Chico, (Madrid: Revista de occidente, 1949), p. 202

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 205

Es indudable que este autor posee fértil ingenio y creador talento de dramaturgo. No es un pequeño autor de género chico. En éste descubre todas las posibilidades artísticas que contiene y revive su tradición más insigne: la que va desde los entremesistas de la edad de oro, a Ramón de la Cruz y Ricardo de la Vega. Y como había dado a sus libretos ímpetu y tono de verdaderas obrillas maestras, en las mayores sabe alcanzar con pleno dominio de la composición tal interés y tan ágil movimiento que sus comedias y farsas logran el aplauso del público y poseen además, indiscutible valor artístico.²⁰

Pedro Massa in La Prensa of Buenos Aires compared his sainetes with those of Ramón de la Cruz and Ricardo de la Vega. For the former the sainete was:

un todo dramático con exposición nudo y desenlace; Ricardo de la Vega sin apartarse de este modelo, complica y redondea las primitivas fábulas y da a los tipos mayor densidad humana: Carlos Arniches crea un lenguaje arbitrario pero de una comicidad irresistible, hace del sainete una comedia cabal y entrevera con lo jocoso escenas honradas y ejemplares que antes apenas si apuntaban en este linaje de piezas.²¹

Ángel del Río, too, is generous in his praise:

Con los Quintero compartió la popularidad y debe compartir el lugar más destacado en la historia del teatro cómico de costumbres en nuestro tiempo el sainetero madrileño Carlos Arniches (1866-1943) en cuya obra culmina el

²⁰ Juan Chabás, op. cit., p. 633

²¹ Pedro Massa, "El Sainete en los tiempos Modernos: Ricardo de la Vega, Carlos Arniches," La Prensa Buenos Aires, November 27, 1938

"género chico" creado en la segunda mitad del siglo XIX. Dotado de genio indudable para recoger, potenciar y hasta crear o recrear la pintoresca lengua del pueblo bajo madrileño y para trasladar su rica variedad de tipos a la escena, Arniches deja en sus sainetes, comedias y libretos de zarzuela una obra abundante que en sus buenos momentos no desmerece en la comparación con la de los grandes autores que en el pasado cultivaron este tipo de teatro, sean Lope de Rueda, Quiñones de Benavente, Cervantes, don Ramón de la Cruz o Ricardo de la Vega.

. . .Lo característico de Arniches era el chiste, la salida inesperada y la penetración al trazar personajes populares con gran naturalidad. A medida que profundizó en su teatro fué desarrollando ciertos elementos caricaturescos de farsa, que le dan una nueva dimensión dramática en el camino de lo grotesco.²²

Naturally not all of the criticism was favorable. Even the most ardent of Arniches' admirers admitted that he wasn't perfect.

For Ramón Pérez de Ayala:

Cuando un escritor posee temperamento y cualidades sobresalientes de autor dramático--que tal es el caso de Arniches--sus defectos suelen ser concesiones al gusto predominante de la época en que escribe . . .

El público teatral español pide a sus autores que satisfagan en alguna medida aquellas dos condiciones: primera, reñir y rodear, con episodios y expedientes dilatorios,

²² Ángel del Río, Historia de la Literatura Española,
Vol. II, p. 202

"Además de los otros que se han mencionado en el artículo anterior, el Dr. J. J. Gálvez ha publicado recientemente un libro sobre la fisiología de la digestión y la absorción de los alimentos, en el que trata de la acción de los jugos gástricos y de la absorción de los nutrientes en el intestino delgado. Este libro es muy interesante y merece ser leído por todos los que se dedican a la medicina y a la fisiología."

En el capítulo de la absorción de los nutrientes, el Dr. Gálvez trata de la acción de los jugos gástricos y de la absorción de los nutrientes en el intestino delgado. Este capítulo es muy interesante y merece ser leído por todos los que se dedican a la medicina y a la fisiología.

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la emisión sincera y rotunda de la verdad; esquivar las situaciones extremas, distraer la atención de lo sustancial hacia lo accidental; en suma: lo que se llama habilidad comúnmente; segunda, respetar la abdicación que de su inteligencia ha hecho el público y darle gusto, abdicando también el actor de cuando en cuando, y no otra cosa es el retruécano o preferencia por la risa más plebeya y obtusa, la de origen fisiológico, con daño de la risa noble, de origen intelectual . . .

Los defectos de las obras de Arniches se ocasionan de la habilidad que muchos encarecen en este autor, y que las priva de plenitud, y del abuso del retruécano, que las priva de armonía. Hablo de las obras extensas, porque en las breves ha llegado con frecuencia a los aledaños de la perfección.²³

For Juan Chabás:

Arniches carece de grandeza. Falta a su obra virtudes literarias de expresión, sentido de la armonía entre la acción y la palabra, gusto y pudor para frenar la contorsión de lo cómico, no caer en lo vulgar y chocarrero y detenerse frente a ese tenue límite que separa la delicada expresión de la ternura, del jipío banal del sentimentalismo . . . No siempre consigue nuestro autor, y esa es otra de sus limitaciones, ascender del costumbrismo localista con que sus personajes aparecen en escena a la universalidad humana de los caracteres que encarnan; del anecdotismo de los episodios y peripecias de sus enredos a la amplitud de los temas. Sobre algunas de sus obras esos defectos pesan tanto que cortan su vuelo grande.²⁴

²³ R. Pérez de Ayala, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 249-251

²⁴ Juan Chabás, op. cit., p. 634

la emula sin embargo y volviendo de la verdad: en-
guir las alusiones extrínsecas, distorsionan la
estructura de la estructura hacia lo contradictorio;
en suma; lo que es la misma realidad contradictoria;
segunda, respecto la adicción que de una in-
teligencia ha hecho el sujeto y desde luego,
adicionando también el dolor, lo cuando en cuando
y no otra cosa es el verdadero o verdadero
por la misma razón y como, la de origen
filosófico, con todo de la misma forma, de
origen intelectual.

Los defectos de las obras de filosofía no
ocasionan de la realidad que muchos consideran
en este asunto, y que las privan de filosofía,
del mismo del mismo, que las privan de
armonía. Hecho de las obras mismas, porque
en las obras se llama por filosofía a los
alientos de la filosofía.

Por Juan Chabás:

América caraca de granadina. Luce a su
obra vibrante literaria de expresión, nacido
de la armonía entre la realidad y la palabra,
guato y poder para traer la conciencia de lo
oculto, no caer en lo vulgar y desconocer y co-
tenuar frente a las mismas líneas que sepa
la delgada expresión de la belleza, del tipo
bello del sentimiento. . . No siempre
construye nuestro autor, y así es que de sus
limitaciones, aspecto del sentimiento local-
ista con que sus personajes aparecen en escena
a la universalidad humana de los verdaderos
que encarnan; del anacronismo de las expresiones
y peripetias de sus acciones a la amplificación
los temas. Sobre algunas de sus obras esas
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23 R. Pérez de Ayala, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 242-251

24 Juan Chabás, op. cit., p. 634

CHAPTER IV

THE MELODRAMATIC ELEMENT IN THE SAINETES OF CARLOS ARNICHES

The word melodrama comes from two Greek words: melos, meaning music, and drama. The original meaning of melodrama, therefore, was drama with music. It has come to mean a play of common life, filled with surprises, acts of violence, and all that excites and sustains the attention of the audience, mixed with dancing and music, and sometimes with scenes of rudely comic character. Probability is freely sacrificed for the sake of striking situations. The object is to be sensational and to catch the applause of the gallery. The typical melodrama has a happy ending.

Clayton Hamilton in an interesting article on "Melodrama Old and New," defines it thus:

A play in which the incidents determine and control the characters and in which the auditors are assured from the outset that all will come out as they wish in the end.¹

His explanation of the popularity of melodrama makes the success of Arniches' melodramas asainetados seem

¹ Clayton Hamilton, "Melodrama Old and New," Bookman XXXIII, (May, 1911), p. 313

THE REFORMATION OF THE THEATRE

IN THE SALIENCE OF THE REFORMATION

The word malice means a mean, a spite, a hatred, a
malice, meaning malice, an ill-will, a spite, a hatred,
of malice, meaning malice, an ill-will, a spite, a hatred,
comes to mean a play of some kind, a play of some kind,
acts of violence, and all that is meant by the
attention of the audience, and all that is meant by the
and sometimes with scenes of some kind, scenes of some kind,
hability is freely admitted for the sake of the
attribution. The object is to be understood and to reach
the essence of the play, the essence of the play,
a happy ending.

Clayton Hamilton, in his "The Reformation of the Theatre"
drama and new, "The Reformation of the Theatre"
A play is about the theatre, the theatre,
and control the theatre, the theatre,
audience are assumed to be present, the audience,
will come out as they wish to the theatre.

His explanation of the reformation of the theatre,
the success of the reformation, the success of the reformation,

1 Clayton Hamilton, "The Reformation of the Theatre",
Knox, (May, 1911), p. 112

very logical:

It is because melodrama casts its emphasis on incident instead of character that it has been in every age the most popular of all types of drama. . . and in the theater we bless the happy chance that agreeably rewards the innocent and consigns the villainous to jail.²

He elaborates a bit:

Melodrama is popular because chance plays an important part and adventure is always with us. Secondly, since characters are not rigidly defined, the spectator experiences no difficulty putting himself in the position of the characters--it is the special grace of melodrama that it represents not what a particular person would do in a given situation, but what anybody would do under such a stress of circumstances. Perhaps the most important reason for the popularity of melodrama is that its abiding mood is one of an absolute and dauntless optimism: The world of melodrama is a just and lucky world where all things fall out fitly--that is the great charm of melodrama--that it deals with charmed lives.³

Critics may malign melodrama and the intelligentsia may scoff at it but, to quote Hamilton once more:

No art has ever succeeded because of its defects: and the fact that melodrama has been and is perennially popular can be explained only by what is great and noble in it. Melodrama answers one of the most profound of human needs: it ministers to that motive which philosophers will term the will to believe. It looks at life--as Paul enjoined humanity to look

² Ibid., p. 311

³ Ibid., p. 312

very logical:

It is because Melodrama is a story of
on incident incident of character that it has been
in every age and nation and all kinds of
drama. . . and in the history of the drama
change that necessarily results from the change
conditions for existence is half.

He elaborates a little:

Melodrama is a story of character
as important as the story of the hero
is. Secondly, since character is not really
defined, the appeal to sympathy is
putting himself in the position of the other
person--it is the appeal to sympathy that
it represents not what a person is, but what
he is a given situation, but what he is
do under such a stress of circumstances. This
is the most important reason for the popular-
ity of melodrama is that the appeal to sympathy
one of an absolute and universal sympathy; the
world of melodrama is a world where
where all things fall and rise--and in the
great drama of melodrama--from its beginning
stained lives.

Critics may malign melodrama and the sentimentalists

may scoff at it but, as drama has been since

No art has ever succeeded because of its
defects; and the fact that melodrama has been
and is popularly popular can be explained
only by what it does and gives to the
drama answers one of the most profound of human
needs: it ministers to that world which
Isophore will have she will be satisfied.
looks at life--as have enjoyed immensely to look

3 Ibid., p. 331

3 Ibid., p. 332

at it--with faith and hope. So when the toilers in our sweat shops attend the 10-20-30-cent theaters, they escape into a region where faith is not an idle jest and hope is not an irony; and thereafter when they resume the heavy and the weary weight of all their unintelligible world, they may yet smile back in remembrance of that momentary dream-world in which destiny was just and kind and good. A happy face in the street is a gift to the community and this art that always wears a happy face is a gift to humanity at large.⁴

Carlos Arniches in his melodramas asainetadas follows the pattern of the melodrama: music plays at least a minor part of each one; the emphasis is on incident rather than on character; chance plays an important role; probability is sacrificed for the sake of sensational situations; highly emotional scenes are numerous; they are extremely sentimental; he definitely caters to the gallery by rewarding virtue and punishing vice.

At the same time, these plays are true sainetes: they have a background of folklore; they are animated cuadros de costumbre; they depict types common to the lower classes; the action is held to a minimum and is episodic in nature; the dialog is racy and popular, sometimes untranslatable; satire is ever-present.

⁴ Ibid., p. 313

at it--with faith and hope. So when the rollers
in our sweat shops attend the 10-20-30-cent the-
aters, they escape into a region where faith is
not an idle jest and hope is not an irony; and
thereafter when they resume the heavy and the
weary weight of all their unattainable world,
they may yet smile back in remembrance of that
momentary dream-world in which destiny was just
and kind and good. A happy face in the street
is a gift to the community and this art that al-
ways wears a happy face is a gift to humanity at
large.⁴

Charles Arntson in his melodrama assigns fol-

lows the pattern of the melodrama: melodrama at least
a minor part of each one; the emphasis is on incident rather
than on character; chance plays an important role; proba-
bility is sacrificed for the sake of sensational situations;
highly emotional scenes are numerous; they are extremely
sentimental; he definitely ascribes to the gallery by reward-
ing virtue and punishing vice.

At the same time, these plays are farce satirized:
they have a background of folklore; they are animated by
advice de conscience; they depict types common to the lower
classes; the action is held to a minimum and is episodic;
in nature; the dialog is witty and popular, sometimes un-
translatable; satire is ever-present.

Arniches' first play of this type was El Santo de la Isidra, played for the first time in February of 1898. It shows a resemblance to Los Valientes of Javier de Burgos. Los Valientes were professional bullies who, when defied by an apparently quiet man, proved to be cowards. And their conqueror was, in turn, frightened by a rat.

In Arniches' play, Isidra, a romantic young girl is about to get her trousseau ready when she learns that her fiancé who has been courting her for some year and a half has been living with another woman, and she sends him away. Epifanio, a perfect villain, has consistently frightened away all of her admirers. Now he threatens to slash the face of anybody who dares to dance with her. At the picnic in honor of her saint's day, Isidra is in a mood to welcome a champion. A meek little baker's boy, Venancio, has long admired her from afar. Encouraged by Eulogio, he buys her flowers, but Epifanio smashes the flower pot and repeats his threat. However, Venancio goes to the picnic, dances with Isidra and when Epifanio takes out a razor to make good his threat, Venancio forces him to drop it, and none too gently forces him to sit down--and then kicks over the stool. Epifanio and his friend Rosca leave in disgrace.

Arachnids' first in the world was...
in 1848, played for the first time...
It shows a resemblance to the...
Burgos. The...
when defined by an...
sowder. And...
by a...
In Arachnids' first...
about to get her...
fiance who has been...
has been living with another woman...
away. Epifanio, a...
frightened away all of her...
flash the face of...
At the picnic in honor of her...
a mood to welcome a...
Venancio, has long...
Epifanio, he says...
flower pot and...
to the picnic, dances...
out a razor to make...
to drop it, and...
and then kicks over the...
Roses have in...

Venancio explains his sudden courage:

VENANCIO: Yo, esta mañana era un párvulo; pero dende mi casa aquí he dao el gran estirón.

---Cuadro III Escena VI

But when Eulogio tries to persuade him to demand a just reward from Isidra, he's too timid:

SEÑOR EULOGIO: (a Venancio) ¡ Dile que bendita sea su boca !

VENANCIO: Bendita sea la . . . (aparte, a Eulogio) Cuando tenga más confianza.

---Cuadro III Escena VI

So virtue has triumphed, the villain has been punished, the audience has had its fill of amusement and emotion. Every girl in the audience can imagine that two men are fighting over her; every timid man can imagine he has suddenly become a hero.

However, this is more than a melodrama; it is a sainete in the best tradition. The very title suggests a traditional celebration--that of the feast day of the patron saint of Madrid. The title also indicates that la Isidra, the heroine, is a girl of the people. Various popular types are depicted; in addition to the villain,

Vernando explains his sudden courage:

VERNANDO: Yo, esta mañana era un cobarde; pero ahora

mi casa aquí he sacado el gran estirón.

---Escucha III Escena VI

But when Eulogio tries to persuade him to desert

a just reward from Isidro, he's too timid:

SEÑOR EULOGIO: (a Vernando) ¡Dile que vendite así en

doce!

VERNANDO: Vendite así la... (aparte, a Eulogio)

Grande fuerza más corajoso.

---Escucha III Escena VI

So virtue has triumphed, the villain has been pun-

ished, the audience has had its fill of amusement and

emotion. Every girl in the audience can imagine that

two men are fighting over her; every timid man can im-

agine he has suddenly become a hero.

However, this is more than a melodrama; it is a

satire in the best tradition. The very title suggests

a traditional celebration--that of the Feast Day of the

patron saint of Madrid. The title also indicates that

Isidro, the heroine, is a girl of the people. Vari-

ous popular types are depicted: in addition to the villain,

the hero, and the heroine are Isidra's hen-pecked father and her domineering mother; the cowardly guests at the picnic who were afraid to dance with Isidra; the coquette, Cecilia, who made a date with a clerk and then deserted him for a soldier. The plot is simple--a mere series of episodes. The dialog is lively and full of the slang of the uneducated. The characters are spontaneous and natural.

This play not only pleased the public; it even stirred the critics. Gómez de Baquero was eloquent in his praise of it and named it one of the three best plays of 1898.

La Revoltosa y El Santo de la Isidra sobresalen por lo real y acabado de la pintura que presentan de los costumbres del pueblo madrileño. La acción es sencilla en ambas obras. Sus tipos son tipos tomados de la realidad, no caricaturas, de suerte que lo cómico no llega á la exageración de lo grotesco. Claro es que tratándose de escenas y personajes populares, se despegaría de ellos un alambicado aticismo. Su gracia es franca, abierta, sin rodeos, como corresponde á los que la emplean. Chistes y donaires llevan el sello de la naturalidad maliciosa del pueblo de los grandes centros urbanos, en los cuales parece que la cultura afina el ingenio de las clases menos instruidas sin quitarles esta espontaneidad y ese frescura, que en las gentes más educadas y, por tanto, menos naturales, aparecen oprimidas por las trabas múltiples de los convencionalismos sociales.

Tienen además estas piezas el mérito de estar en ellas muy bien concebido el conjunto; muy bien pensada y desarrollada la exhibición plástica de las escenas, cosa tan importante en esa clase de obras que tienen que entrar físicamente por los ojos, para que produzcan efecto.⁵

⁵ Gómez de Baquero, "Crónica Literaria," La España Moderna, (May, 1898), pp. 157-158

José Deleito y Piñuela, even though he considered it a "nueva edición de Los Valientes de Javier de Burgos," hailed it as the greatest success of the year 1898, and said of it:

El sainete poseía el diálogo chistoso, en que fué siempre maestro Arniches. Sus tipos estaban bien vistos y trazados, dándoles el mayor relieve posible los excelentes cómicos de Apolo . . . El libreto era de Carlos Arniches, maestro en chulaperías, aunque no las cultivara de modo exclusivo. En lo que tenía la exclusiva, y el hábito inveterado, es en presentar a un personaje a quien todos temen como a un león, y que no pasa de la clase de gallina. Esto, entre la gente del bronce, es un recurso cómico de arraigo, y con el público, es un éxito infalible.⁶

Pedro Salinas was eloquent in his praise of it:

Es esta obra un dechado de su género. Los lugares de la escena, plazuela de los barrios bajos, Puente de Toledo, Pradera de San Isidro, la sitúan en ese localismo típico de Arniches, en esa forma dramática dialectal, si no creada, por lo menos robustamente afirmada por él; lo típico madrileño. Gentes del pueblo como personajes, expresándose en un lenguaje lleno de saber y de plástica, abundante en giros caricaturescos, escenas que son no más que cuadros de costumbres animados dramáticamente, como en D. Ramón de la Cruz, y en el centro de la obra como eje dramático, un pequeño conflicto sentimental.⁷

⁶ Deleito y Piñuela, Origen del Género Chico, pp. 290-291

⁷ Pedro Salinas, op. cit., pp. 192-193

El Santo de la Isidra was copied many times by Arniches himself and as well by inferior imitators. His next sainete, published the same year, La Fiesta de San Antón, was similar, but vastly inferior. The feast of San Antón, "La fiesta oficial de caballos y burros," is celebrated on January 17. ⁸

In this melodrama the villain is a woman. The conflict is between Regina, a sentimental little orphan girl who has long loved Antonio, and Felipa, a flirt, who merely wants to make one more conquest. The latter has demanded that Antonio ride to her home on horseback on his feast day, thereby proclaiming her his "novia." Antonio can't forget Regina, but neither can he stay away from Felipa. If he refuses her request, she'll disdain him. But for Regina this will be a grave insult:

REGINA: . . . le va a dar a otra mujer un cariño que es mío, que me ha costao lágrimas de sangre y que me va a costar la vida . . . pa contentar a otra mujer irá mañana a San Antón a afrentarme allí delante de mi misma casa, pa que tóo el mundo se ría de

⁸ Deleito y Piñuela, Origen del Género Chico, p. 292

El Santo de la Lanza was cooled many times by
Annie's hands and as well by inferior means.
His next business, purchased the same year, in 1880
the San Antonio, was almost, but really inferior. The
tenant of San Antonio, "La Lanza" official is a man of
honour, is celebrated in January 19, 1880.
In this respect, the village is a man. The son-
list is between Regina, a somewhat better organ
girl who has long loved Antonio, and Regina, a girl
who merely wants to make the most of the situation. The latter
has demanded that Antonio should be her man on his wedding
on his last day, thereby proclaiming her his "lover".
Antonio can't forget Regina, but neither can he stay
away from Regina. If he releases his present, he will
disdain him. But for Regina this will be a grave in-
justice.
REGINA: . . . is va a dar a otra mujer un cariño que es
mío, que es de mi corazón. ¿Qué me voy a dar a otra mujer
un cariño que es mío? . . . no consentiré a otra mujer
que me dé un cariño que es mío. . . .
da mi mano a San Antonio a regañar. . . .
da mi mano a San Antonio a regañar. . . .

la pena que me mata . . .

---Cuadro I Escena XI

On the morning of San Antón Felipa's soldier novio returns and learns of her infidelity. He and his friend imbibe rather freely and, in a belligerent and threatening mood, call on her father, brandishing razors. After they leave, with a promise to return, Antonio rides up. Both he and his horse are elegantly outfitted. Felipa brings him a glass of wine--equivalent to announcing their engagement. Regina steps forward to prevent his drinking it, holds his horse and spills the wine. Her protector, Eusebio wields a huge stick; Antonio threatens her with his whip and does strike Eusebio who takes out his razor; Regina grabs the razor shrieking:

REGINA: ¡ No, démela usté, que quiero ser yo . . . yo . . .
la que lo mate!

---Cuadro III, Escena IV

Antonio rides away rapidly and there is a sudden shriek from the crowd--his horse has slipped and he is hurt. Regina brandishes the razor, keeps everybody away and shouts:

REGINA: ¡ Sus fiestas, su lujo, su dinero eran pa ustés;
su sangre es pa mí sola!

---Cuadro III, Escena IV

la perra que me mata . . .

---Quinto I. Escena II

On the morning of San Juan's soldier's death
return and learn of her infidelity. He and his friend
impute rather freely and, in a belittling and threaten-
ing mood, call on her father, demanding ransom. After
they leave, with a promise to return, Antonio rises up.
Both he and his horse are elegantly outfitted. Felipe
brings him a glass of wine--equivalent to announcing their
engagement. Regina steps forward to prevent his drinking
it, holds his hand and tells the wine is for another.
Felipe holds a huge stone; Antonio threatens her with
his whip and does strike Felipe who takes out his razor;
Regina grabs the razor and kills:

REGINA: ¡No, cámbala usted, que quiero ser yo . . . Yo . . .
la que lo mata!

---Quinto III. Escena IV

Antonio rises away rapidly and there is a sudden
shock from the crowd--his horse has slipped and he is
hurt. Regina brandishes the razor, keeps everybody away
and shouts:
REGINA: ¡Sea libre, sea libre, sea libre, sea libre, sea libre;
un hombre es por mí solo!

---Quinto III. Escena IV

Antonio revives and goes back to Regina. Eusebio is so surprised to see him alive he exclaims:

EUSEBIO: Pero ¿no te se parte el alma?

ANTONIO: ¡ Sí, señor! Pa ti, Regina; pa ti solo!

---Cuadro III, Escena IV

The ending would please any lover of melodrama:

SEÑOR EUSEBIO: Le pones una venda.

ANTONIO: (con viveza) ¡ No! me se ha caído la que tenía delante de los ojos y no quío más vendas. Regina, estaba loco . . .

There is a shriek inside the tavern and Señá Jenara, Eusebio's wife, comes out triumphantly with a lock of Felipa's hair in her hand. Not only has virtue been rewarded, vice has been punished!

Here, again, as a background for the melodramatic central theme with its sensational, sentimental, blood-curdling scenes, we have a traditional feast and a procession of popular types: the chulo, the flirt, the virtuous, sentimental girl, her loyal defeners, the deceived novio and his friend who drown their sorrows and then become belligerent.

But it is too similar to El Santo de la Isidra.

Antonio revives and goes back to work.

is so surprised to see him alive in prison;

ENRIQUE: Period to the rest of the

ANTONIO: I am, señor: I am, señor: I am, señor:

--- Antonio, Enrique

The ending would please the audience.

ENRIQUE: Is that all, señor?

ANTONIO: (con viveza) No, señor: no es todo.

delante de los ojos y no quisiera verlos.

estaba loco.

There is a scene in the story and the ending.

Enrique's wife, comes out of the house with a look of

Felipa's hair in her hand. The only thing that

wanted, vice has been returned.

Here, again, as a result of the conversation

central theme with the audience, Enrique, Enrique,

ourding scenes, we have a first scene, Enrique, Enrique,

session of popular report: Enrique, Enrique, Enrique,

virtuous, sentimental, Enrique, Enrique, Enrique,

ceived novela and his friends and Enrique, Enrique, Enrique,

then become boliviano.

But it is too similar to the ending in the story.

"Nunca segundas partes fueron buenas." La obra era un calco de la anterior, sin tener su gracia. Tipos y situaciones aparecían casi idénticos. Iguales actores la representaron.

La crítica señaló "el truco" y la copia. El público no se entusiasmó con el "refrito" y La Fiesta de San Antón quedó como un sainete más, de los que pasan sin pena ni gloria.⁹

Such was the verdict of Deleito y Piñuela.

In 1900 appeared Sandías y Melones. By this time Arniches had settled on a formula described perfectly by Deleito y Piñuela:

Se trataba de un sainete, con tipos populares, de diálogo chulesco y gracioso, con parte sentimental y solución feliz.¹⁰

The sentimental element predominates in this sainete and in Las Estrellas, La Pena Negra, and La Noche de Reyes.

Sandías y Melones takes its name from the cry of the street vendors, heard throughout the play.

Here, an ambitious and avaricious mother insists that her son desert the poor girl he loves to marry one of better economic position. Manolo, the hen-pecked son, would comply with her wishes although Amparo, the deserted sweetheart, is dying of a broken heart. Amparo's mother has

⁹ Ibid., p. 293

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 564

"Muchos sagrados partes fueron destruidas."
La obra era un reflejo de la anterior, sin
tener su esencia. Tipos y situaciones que
eran casi idénticas. Igualas a las de
representación.

La obra se había "al fin" y la copia.
El público no se enteró de que el "reflexo"
y la Fiesta de San Juan quedé como un reflejo
de los que había sido antes.

Such was the variety of beliefs and rituals.

In 1900 appeared Santos y Molinos. By this time

Amichas had settled on a formula described perfectly

by Delato y Pineda:

Se trataba de un reflejo, con tipos puros,
fases, de diálogos sencillos y sencillos, con
parte sentimental y sentimental.

The sentimental element predominates in this episode

and in the Natalia. In Pana Pana, and in Los de la

Santos y Molinos takes the name from the eye of the

street vendors, heard throughout the play.

Here, an addition and a variation of the last

has not been the poor girl he loves to marry one of his

for economic position. Natalia, the poor girl, would

comply with her wishes although angry, the devoted

heart, is dying of a broken heart. Anger's mother has

9 Idia, p. 203

10 Idia, p. 204

other ideas. Like a ferocious beast she fights for her young. The neighbors take sides; when one kindly neighbor warns her:

EL VECINO: Bueno, hay que reflexionar que usted no tiene derecho.

SEÑA HILARIA: ¡ Las Madres cuando no tienen derecho tienen uñas !

---Cuadro I, Escena VII

The most emotional scene is that in which Amparo hears Manolo singing. His mother has chosen for him a novia who lives in the same building as Amparo. There is a party in the patio and the strains of Manolo's song reach the ears of Amparo at the window above:

Parece que te he olvidado
Mas nunca te olvidaré
(Expresión de alegría infinita
en la cara de Amparo)
Que tú serás siempre, Julia,
la reina de mi querer.
(Expresión de angustia y dolor
en Amparo)

---Cuadro II, Escena Unica

One of the partisans of Amparo breaks up, not only the party, but the watermelon which was to serve for refreshments, by dropping a jug of water into the patio. A fight follows.

In another emotional scene Señá Hilaria begs Manolo

other ideas. Like a farolito, these ideas are
young. The neighbors take ideas; when one is old, one
has more than one.

REVEREND: Bueno, they are traditional and have no
doubt.

SEN. HERRERA: I see that you are not interested in
this.

---The most emotional scene in the play is
when the people are singing. The people are singing
songs who lives in the same way as the people. There
is a party in the middle of the night. The people
sing reach the end of the night. The people sing:

Paro no es la primavera
No es el verano
(Expresión de alegría)
en la noche
Que es la noche, la noche
la noche de la noche
(Expresión de alegría y dolor
en la noche)

---The people are singing
One of the problems of the people is the night
the party, but the celebration which was to have for the
freshmen, by dropping a lot of water on the party.
A light follows
In another emotional scene the people sing:

to return to her daughter who has become very sad and frail and she threatens him:

SEÑA HILARIA: Si me mataís a mi hija, ¡no se va sola!

---Cuadro III, Escena VII

When little weak Amparo interrupts their conversation, she is magnificent:

AMPARO: Mucho te he querío, no he sabío quererte más, ni mejor. Dispénsame. Lo he hecho engañada.

¡Equivocadamente te había tomado por un hombre!

(con amarga ironía).

--- Cuadro III, Escena VIII

A reformed and chastened Manolo goes back to Amparo, ready to forsake Julia's fortune and work to earn his living. Even his mother decides to make the best of it.

Deleite y Piñuela objects that these conversions aren't very convincing to a spectator of reflection, but the gallery loves them and it is the gallery that Arniches aims to please.

In his Types of Farce Comedy, Robert Metcalf Smith calls melodrama "Farce's sentimental sister."¹¹ This definition is perfectly suited to Las Estrellas (1904). The

¹¹ Robert Metcalf Smith, Types of Farce Comedy, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1928), p. 495

to return to her daughter who has become very sad and

trill and she threatens him:

SENÁ KILARIA: Si me matas a mi hijo, me vas matar.

---Guedes III, Scene VII

When little weak Amparo interrupts their conversa-

tion, she is magnificent:

AMPARO: Como te he querido, no he sido generoso con,

ni mayor. Disculpame. Lo he hecho engañado.

¡Reivocadamente te hablo como por un hombre!

(con amarga ironía).

---Guedes III, Scene VIII

A reformed and chastened Amelio goes back to Amparo,

ready to forsake Julia's fortune and work to earn his

living. Even his mother decides to make the best of it.

Deleite y triunfo objects that these conversions

aren't very convincing to a spectator of reflection, but

the gallery loves them and so is the gallery that Amichas

aims to please.

In his Types of Fanny Comedy, Robert Mottall Smith

calls melodrama "Fanny's sentimental sister." This defini-

tion is perfectly suited to San Esteban (1904). The

Robert Mottall Smith, Types of Fanny Comedy, New York:
Farrar-Ross, Inc., 1903, p. 202

play is simple, highly entertaining, and extremely sentimental. Prudencio, a barber who is anything but prudent, encouraged by his friend Pepe who has a daughter on the stage in Paris, persuades his daughter to leave her job at the dressmaker's to become a dancer and singer; he persuades his son to leave his job at the print shop to become a bullfighter. He even mortgages his barber shop to finance these projects, and leaves home when his wife objects. Antonita's debut is a miserable failure; she is booed and taken off the stage after a ridiculous exhibition. Her mother, who has opposed the whole project is waiting outside the theater. Here we have a truly sentimental monologue following a scene of rudely comic character.

SEÑÁ FELICIANA: ¡ Los minutos se me hacen siglos! ¡ Ay, Jesús Nazareno de mi alma, Dios quiera que haiga gustao esa chica! ¡ Su padre me creerá tan tranquila roncando en la cama, le conozco; y llevo un diita que no sé cómo me tengo en pie! . . . Porque yo lo odio; odio eso de ercenarios y de públicos, bien lo sabe la Virgen Santísima, pero así de que recibí el recaó de que la chica debutaba esta noche, le puse dos velas a la Virgen, le recé un rosario y

play is simple, highly emotional, and intensely
mental. Prudent, a Frenchman who is a student of
encouraged by his friend, he is a student of
stage in Paris, he becomes a student of
at the Gressmann's, he becomes a student of
becomes a student of the Gressmann's, he becomes
to finance these projects, he becomes a student of
objects. Antonio's name is a student of the
is based and taken off the name of a student of
billion. Her mother, who has been a student of
is waiting outside the theater. There we have a
sentimental romance following a scene of tragic
character.

SEÑAL FELICIANA: ¿Los nombres de los actores?
Joaquín Martínez de la Cruz, María del Carmen,
Gustavo San Martín, y los otros que han
participado en la obra. ¿Los nombres de los
que no sé cómo se llaman en esta obra?
ellos; ellos son los actores y los otros
lo sabe la Virgen santísima, pero así es
el caso de que la obra se llama "La Virgen"
que los actores a la Virgen, la Virgen de

le pedí . . . ¡paece mentira que se lo pidiera yo! . . . ¡Le pedí que la aplaudiesen, que la llenasen el ercenario de flores, de coronas, de too lo mejor que haiga en el mundo! ¡ No por mí, bien lo sabe Dios! ¡ Por ella, na más que por ella, por su bien y por su alegría! ¡ Hija de mi alma!

---Cuadro III, Escena I

Poor, miserable Antonita wants nothing but the comfort of her mother's arms, so she and Prudencio start home. Near the house they meet a bruised and disillusioned Casildo--his bullfighting, too, has been a wretched failure. Prudencio isn't too happy, either: his dreams have turned out to be nightmares, and he is afraid to go home.

Feliciano finds them all at the door of the house when the sereno opens for her. She welcomes them with open arms. The last scene is delightful:

SEÑÁ FELICIANA: ¡ Pobrecitos míos! (a Prudencio, que permanece callado.) ¡ Y tú, alucinao, pobre loco, lo ves? (Teniendo abrazados a sus hijos) ¡ Lo estás viendo! ¡ Has visto las estrellas?

CASILDO: ¡ Yo las he visto, madre!

ANTONITA: ¡ Y yo casi, casi! . . .

... la bestia... ¡que me mira con los ojos
... la bestia que se agachaba, que se
... llaman al momento de hacer, de conocer, de
... too lo mejor que hay en el mundo! ¡No por mí,
... Dios lo sabe bien! ¡Por ella, por ella que
... ella, por su bien y por su alegría! ¡Hija de mi
... alma!

---Quinto III. Escena I

... Poor, miserable Antonio wants nothing but the con-
fort of her mother's arms, so she and Prudencia start
home. Near the house they meet a priest and dis-
tressed Calisto--his pallid face, too, has been a
wretched failure. Prudencia isn't too happy, either;
his dreams have turned out to be nightmares, and he is
afraid to go home.

Pellona finds them all at the door of the house
when the sereno opens for her. The women then with
open arms. The last scene is delightful:
SEÑA PELLONA: ¡Pobrecitos míos! (a Prudencia, que
permanece callada.) ¡Y tú, alacena, pobre loco,
lo ves? (También abrazados a sus hijos) ¡Lo oyes
vamos! ¿Has visto las estrellas?

CALISTO: ¡Yo las he visto, mamá!

ANTONITA: ¡Y yo casi, casi!...

SEÑÁ FELICIANA: Adentro, hijos míos. (Con dulzura)
Entrad a ese rincón de casa que llamabais triste
y oscuro, porque vosotros, ¡Pobrecitos! No
sabíais que el cariño y el trabajo son alegría
y claridad, Adentro . . .

¡Ya son míos! ¡Y curaos de su locura!
¡Gracias a Dios!

---Cuadro IV, Escena VI

Equally sentimental, but sensational rather than
amusing is La Pena Negra, (1906). It even lacks a happy
ending, something very unusual in a play by Arniches.
True, tragedy is averted, nobody is murdered, but the
illusion of hope so characteristic of Arniches' sainetes
is woefully lacking.

The play takes its name from the refrain sung dur-
ing the play and again at the end:

¡Es la penita más grande
Querer y que no te quieran;
Quien quiere sin esperanza
Conoce la pena negra!

Lucila is broken hearted because her cousin, Sera-
fín, has left home to live with Carmen. But Carmen scorns
him for Senor Valeriano. Taunted by Ladislao, Serafín
tries to kill Carmen. Lucila stops him:

SERAFÍN: ¡A qué has venido?

LUCILA: ¡Pues a llamarte asesino y cobarde!

SENÁ FELICIANA: Adentro, al momento. (Se va)
Bates a una tienda de cosas que llamamos trillo
y escuro, porque nosotros, ¡buenos!
asaltan que el cerro y el trillo son malos
y colados, Adentro...
¡Ya son malos! ¡Y curran de un hombre!
¡Gritas a Dios!

---Cambio IV, Escena IV
Español sentimental, but sensation I rather than
amusing is La Pasa Pasa, (1908). It even looks a little
ending, something very unusual in a play of this kind.
True, tragedy is averted, nobody is murdered, but the
illusion of hope or characteristics of tragedy, sentimental
is woefully lacking.

The play takes its name from the title more than
the play and again at the end:
¡La Pasa Pasa es grande!
¡Gloria y que no se quite!
¡Gloria que sea sin cesar!
¡Gloria la pasa grande!

Lucila is broken hearted because her cousin, Fern-
án, has left home to live with Carmen. The father accuses
him for being Valeriano. Tainted by Lucila's gossip,
tries to kill Carmen. Lucila knows him:
SERAFÍN: ¿A qué has venido?
LUCILA: ¡Pasa a llamarte asesino y cobarde!

SERAFÍN: ¡A mí!

LUCILA: ¡A ti! . . . ¡Que querías asesinar a una mujer!

SERAFÍN: ¡Tengo derecho!

LUCILA: ¿Derecho a matar? ¡A matar a una mujer porque no te quiere? . . . ¡Mentira! . . .

Alguna vez en la vida hay que oír a la razón, aunque moleste. El hombre no tiene derecho a matar a una mujer nunca, Serafín, nunca; ni aunque le engañe . . . ¿Queréis que la mujer sea una esclava? . . . bueno; pero entonces lo menos que se può hacer es dejarla que escoja la cadena que más le guste.

¿No te parece?

SERAFÍN: Yo no sé de eso que me dices; pero oye, Lucila (con amargura): ¿Cómo vive uno viendo su querer en otros brazos?

LUCILA: ¡Ay, mu remalamente, chico! Eso sí que lo sé yo por esperencia.

---Cuadro III, Escena IV

Although La Noche de Reyes is really a zarzuela rather than a sainete, it is too good an example of the sentimental melodrama to be ignored.

Andrés has gone without lunches and beers to save sufficient money to buy a guitar because Lucía has suggested it. When he goes to serenade her, a bully, Sabino,

SERAFIN: A mi!
 LUCILA: A ti! . . .
 SERAFIN: Tengo deseos!
 LUCILA: ¿Deseos a meter? A meter a una mujer que
 no te gustes? . . .
 Algunas veces en la vida hay que ser un poco
 holista. El hombre no debe ser un ser
 mujer nunca. Ser un hombre; el hombre es el
 . . .
 pero cuando se trata de una mujer, el hombre
 debe ser un ser mujer.
 LUCILA: Yo no sé de lo que estás hablando, pero
 (con énfasis) a veces uno quiere ser mujer.
 LUCILA: Ay, me reírás, pero yo lo sé
 yo por experiencia.
 --Acto II, Escena IV--
 Although La Mujer de Hoy is really a comedy
 rather than a satire, it is too good an example of the
 sentimental melodrama to be taken seriously.
 André has gone without money and even to give
 sufficient money to buy a glass of beer. Lucila has
 rested it. When he goes to rest, he is a bit of a

snatches it from him, plays it and sings under Lucía's window, and then smashes it. Andrés in a rage wounds Sabino and flees.

Seven years later, on Twelfth Night, Andrés returns from prison. Lucía has married Sabino but he neglects her and she is alone with her child. It is a cold, dark, cheerless night and Andrés, wrapped in his cloak, creeps past the row of shabby houses. He is on his way to Lucía's to kill her. En route he talks to himself:

ANDRÉS: ¡No es la venganza! (Pausa.) Ni mi pobre guitarra, rota como mi vida antes de su primera canción: ni mi triste casucha, desmoroná y sola como la encuentro; ni mi madre, muerta como la lloro, ni mi juventud sin alegría, quizás que no me moviera contra ti . . . ¡No es la venganza, no! ¡Es el querer! ¡Este querer maldito que aún vive en mí, aún vive en mí, y que quiere tu vida, no porque no eres mía, sino pa que no seas suya! (Pausa. Con ira reconcentrada, y luego con furia creciente, va exaltándose hasta el desvarío frenético.) ¡Ella! ¡Mi afán y mi sueño, mi deseo y mi alegría! . . . ¡Ella pa otro? ¡No! . . . Pa otro, mientras yo estuviese entre hierros y paredes. ¡Ahora estoy libre! ¡Lo juré y voy a cumplirlo! ¡Ella en otros brazos! . . . ¡Y quizás

smashes it from him, plays it and sings under Lucía's
window, and then smashes it. Andrés in a rage wounds
Sabino and flies.

Seven years later, on Twelfth Night, Andrés returns
from prison. Lucía has married Sabino but he neglects
her and she is alone with her child. It is a cold, dark,
chiaroscuro night and Andrés, wrapped in his cloak, creeps
past the row of shabby houses. He is on his way to
Lucía's to kill her. En route he falls to himself:
ANDRÉS: ¡No es la venganza! (Pausa.) ¡Ni mi dolor
gustativo, todo como ni vida antes de su primer
candor: ni mi triste casaca, desmoronada y sola
como la enconchada; ni mi madre, muerta como la
llova, ni mi juventud sin alegría, perdida que
no me moviera contra ti. . . ¡No es la venganza,
no! ¡Es el dolor! ¡Este dolor maldito que aún
vive en mí, aún vive en mí, y que defiere la vida,
no porque no eres más, sino por que no seas más!
(Pausa. Con ira reconcentrada, y luego con furia
creciente, va exclamando hasta el desvanecido final
triste.) ¡Ella! ¡Mi alma y mi sueño, mi deseo y
mi alegría! . . . ¡Ella por otro? ¡No! . . . Por
otro, mientras yo estuviese entre hijos y par-
ientes. ¡Ahora estoy libre! ¡No más y voy a com-
plirme! ¡Ella es otro hermano! . . . ¡Y quizás

ahora? . . . ¡No, ni un minuto más! (Tentándose la ropa como un loco). ¡Mi navaja! ¡Aquí . . . pronto . . .

---Cuadro IV, Escena IV

At Lucía's door he sees a pair of tiny shoes set out for the kings to fill. And he hears Lucía singing a lullaby to her child:

ANDRÉS: (con profundo desaliento) ¡Ay, yo no sé qué angustia y qué desmayo me da esa voz! . . . ¡Tarde llegaste, Andrés! . . . ¡No, no puedo matarla! ¡Por donde un niño espera su alegría no entra la muerte! (con resolución y amargura) ¡Ea, sí, lejos! . . . ¡Lejos de aquí! . . . ¡Adiós, Lucía, adiós pa siempre! . . . Y tú, pobre creatura, duermes tranquilo, y mañana; cuando despiertes, ríes de gozo al buscar tus zapatitos, porque mira el regalo que te dejan los Reyes . . . (Deja la navaja abierta sobre los zapatos) ¡La vida de tu madre!

---Cuadro IV, Escena IV

Arniches' next two melodramatic sainetes definitely set out to teach a lesson; each one states a moral in the subtitle: El Amigo Melquiades o por la boca muere el pez, (1914), and El Chico de las Peñuelas o no hay

abstain . . . like, of an ancient . . .
in rope (as in London) . . .
present . . .

--- Chapter IV ---

As Lucia's door is . . .
one for the king to . . .
a liability to her . . .
ADDRESS: (con . . .)
augusta y . . .
Iglesia, . . .
Iber d'Almeida . . .
museo: (con . . .)
Iglesia de . . .
pe . . .
transcrito, y . . .
como el . . .
que se . . .
se . . .

--- Chapter IV ---

Ante . . .
set out to . . .
the subtitle: . . .
el . . .

mal como el de la envidia. (1915) Arniches, in a letter to Don Julio Cejador stated that he aspired with his sainetes and farces "a estimular las condiciones generosas del pueblo y hacerle odiosos los malos instintos."¹²

It is possible that a more mature Arniches had outgrown the género chico whose aim was to amuse the public and now wanted to "entertain and instruct."

In El Amigo Melquiades we have, not one villain, but two: Serafín el Pinturero and his friend, Melquiades. We also have two heroines: foolish Nieves who is ready to spurn the love of a poor but honest suitor because she is dazzled by the flashy clothes and sophisticated manners of Serafín; and fat, lovable, clever Benita who is more than a match for the two villains. She sets out to bring Nieves to her senses, and to outwit the two villains after she overhears Melquiades' plans. He tells Serafín that since the only obstacle to his successful courtship of Nieves is Benita, he'll court her and flatter her. Then, when Serafín has won Nieves, he'll desert Benita. He even invites his friends to drink to the success of his plan. Benita overhears, and she leads him on. She

¹² Julio Cejador y Frauca, op. cit., Vol X, p. 126

mal como el de la envidia. (1915) Amichon, in a letter to Don Julio Gajador stated that he agreed with his analysis and forces "a estimular las condiciones generales del pueblo y hacerle olvidar las malas condiciones." It is possible that a more mature Amichon had outgrown the genero chico whose aim was to amuse the public and now wanted to "entertain and instruct."

In El Amigo Melquias we have, not one villain, but two: Gerardo el Buitrero and his friend, Melquias. We also have two heroines: Lucila Nieves who is ready to spare the love of a poor but honest author because she is dazzled by the flashy clothes and sophisticated manners of Gerardo; and fat, lovable, clever Benita who is more than a match for the two villains. She sets out to bring Nieves to her senses, and to outwit the two villain after she overhears Melquias' plans. He tells Gerardo that since the only obstacle to his successful courtship of Nieves is Benita, he'll court her and defeat her. Then when Gerardo has won Nieves, he'll desert Benita. He even invites his friends to drink to the success of his plan. Benita overhears, and she leads him on. She

imposes on him, persuades him to carry her laundry and, most important of all, she gets him to talk and learns that Serafín's money and elegant clothes are provided by Paca la Fiera who has been supporting him for fourteen years and has borne him five children.

The second cuadro opens with a weird scene. In a dark, secluded spot, two old crones tell Nieves' fortune. The scene is lighted only by occasional flashes of lightning. They tell her there are two men in her life: one is rich, the other really loves her.

She meets Serafín and he takes her to the Vaiven, a low-class dance hall. There she writes her mother that she has decided to leave home to go with Serafín. While they are dancing, Benita arrives with Paca la Fiera and her children. Paca confronts him, and with her are the five children carrying their baptismal certificates, indisputable proof that Serafín has recognized them. Nieves is convinced. Serafín, furious, accuses Paca of denouncing him, but Benita serenely announces that it was Melquiades who talked too much, and Serafín begins to beat him.

Not content with one moral, Arniches adds another-- a warning to other girls like Nieves:

imposed on him, persuaded him to carry her laundry and, most important of all, she gave him the little and large that Gertrude's money and elegant clothes and provided by Face in Paris who has been supporting him for twenty years and has borne him five children.

The second chapter opens with a weird scene. In a dark, deserted spot, two old women tell Mervin's fortune. The scene is lighted only by occasional flashes of lightning. They tell her there are two men in her life: one is rich, the other really loves her.

She meets Gertrude and he takes her to the ball, a low-class dance hall. There she writes her mother that she has decided to leave home to go with Gertrude. While they are dancing, Benita arrives with Face in Paris and her children. Face confronts him, and with her are the five children carrying their baptismal certificates, indisputable proof that Gertrude has recognized them. Mervin is convinced. Gertrude, Mervin, Mervin's Face of dancing, ing him, but Benita solemnly announces that it was Mervin who talked too much, and Gertrude begins to beat him.

Not content with one moral, Andersen adds another--

a warning to other girls like Mervin:

Y que sirva este escarmiento
Pa ser humildes y honradas.

---Cuadro III, Escena VII

El Chico de las Peñuelas is directed against the evils wrought by envy. Josefa, Sole's mother, refuses to let her attend a party because "¿Y qué tenemos nosotras que ver con la alegría de nadie?"

The party starts out as a gay affair. Hilario is happy because Paco and his father have come to ask the hand of his daughter in marriage. He is also happy because Valentina, a widow, has promised to marry him. Suddenly he changes. He stops the music and dancing and sends everybody home. He refuses to explain even to Paco and his father, who are hurt, humiliated, and completely baffled. Encarna and Valentina, too are mystified, but Valentina declares that envy has entered the house.

She is right--Hilario has received an anonymous letter stating that, before the death of her husband, Valentina had had an affair with Barnabé, Paco's father.

Paco is preparing for his first big bullfight. Barnabé is horrified to learn that the bull has been changed: Paco is to fight a bull far too ferocious for a novice. It seems that Hilario has told the manager that he is no

Y que alive este...
Pa ser humillado...

--- 1911-12 ---

El Chico de las Faldas is depicted as
evil wrought by envy. He is
to let her attend a party...
that she can be...
The party starts out as a...
happy because Paço and his...
hand of his daughter in...
cause Valentina, a widow, has...
deny he changes. He...
sends everybody home. He...
and his father, who are...
baffled. Encarna and...
Valentina declares that...
She is right--Hilario...
her stating that, before...
time had had an affair...
Paço is preparing for...
made is horrified to...
Paço is to fight a bull...
It seems that Hilario...

longer interested in Paco. The manager assumes that he would like to see Paco humiliated so he plots against him.

Paco puts up a brave fight but he is wounded. Encarna goes to him and refuses to return home without him and Valentina. They realize that the letter was the work of the jealous Josefa.

Sole is ashamed and asks if she'll still be allowed to work for them. Valentina suggests a perfect punishment for Josefa:

VALENTINA: Tú ties que ganarte allí una peseta pa llevársela a tu madre. Que no hay peor castigo pa un envidioso que tener que vivir del bien que ha querido destrozar.

---Cuadro III, Escena VII

Of Arniches' longer sainetes, only two are worthy of mention here: Rositas de Olor (1924), and El Último Mono (1926). These are sainetes in three acts, and the charm of the short, sprightly sainete is gone. The melodramatic themes, however, are much in evidence--he is still painting black villains, and virtuous heroes; he continues to delight his audiences with the sentimental and the sensational; virtue is still triumphant.

In Rositas de Olor the heroine is Sole, the beautiful illegitimate daughter of a wealthy man. She has left her grandparents' home to live with a chulo and has had a child. As the play begins, she has been deserted and has gone back to selling roses to earn her living, singing, "Rositas de Olor y que bonitas . . . " Her grandparents welcome her back; so does their tenant, Salvador, who has fallen in love with her picture. He, too, is an unfortunate. He has been too active in trying to right labor injustices and is a fugitive from justice. He and Sole fall in love.

Paco comes to try to win her back. This time he promises to marry her, for, unknown to her, she has inherited her father's fortune. She refuses to listen to his pleading, so he tries to kidnap their child, knowing that Sole will agree to anything to get him back. But Sole's astute grandfather tricks Paco's accomplice into stealing the wrong baby at a picnic.

The third act opens with a sinister atmosphere. Sole's grandparents are sneaking through the dark streets of the worst quarter of Madrid where they are trying to keep her hidden from Paco. The old crone who opens the door tells them Sole isn't there. Salvador appears and informs them that she is seeing Paco again, and that he plans to catch them together and kill them.

In Hostes de Olay the heroine is a girl, the daughter of a wealthy man, who has been brought to her grandparents' home to live with a girl and her mother. As the play begins, she has been married and has gone back to selling roses to some poor people. ing, "Hostes de Olay" the heroine is a girl, the daughter of a wealthy man, who has been brought to her grandparents' home to live with a girl and her mother. As the play begins, she has been married and has gone back to selling roses to some poor people. ing, "Hostes de Olay" the heroine is a girl, the daughter of a wealthy man, who has been brought to her grandparents' home to live with a girl and her mother. As the play begins, she has been married and has gone back to selling roses to some poor people.

Sole falls in love. Paso comes to try to win her back. She then promises to marry her. For unknown to her, she has inherited her father's fortune. She refuses to listen to his pleading, so he tries to kidnap her. She then tells that she will agree to anything to get her back. But Sole's estate grandfather finds her a accomplice in stealing the wrong half of the fortune.

The third act opens with a similar kidnapping. Sole's grandparents are seeking through the dark streets of the worst quarter of Madrid where they are trying to find her hidden from Paso. The old couple who owns the hostess then Sole isn't there. They try to get her and then find that she is seeing Paso again, and when he offers to marry them together and kill them.

Sole appears, and then Paco. She is overheard leading him into a promise of marriage and of undying love. She then tells him that since he wants her and not her money, she has put it into a trust fund for their son. Paco is furious. In the confusion that follows, Sole and Salvador take the baby and escape--to make their home in Argentina.

In El Último Mono, el Chico de la Tienda, Bibiano is the errand boy in a department store. He is abused by everybody except Maravillas, the proprietor's daughter. She even defies her novio, Leoncio, and her father, Nemesio, to protect him. Bibiano idolizes her.

Bibiano learns that Leoncio and Asunción, Nemesio's fiancée are plotting against them. They plan to ruin Nemesio by persuading him to mortgage his business. They have arranged to obtain the mortgage, to foreclose, and to get married. Bibiano swears to denounce them.

Just as Nemesio is about to sign the final papers, Bibiano appears and denounces the traitors. They say it is a trick of Petra--that she is jealous of Asunción. Leoncio would willingly murder Bibiano and when Bibiano tries to escape he runs into Cirila who supports his story. Nemesio demands an explanation but Leoncio and

Sola appears, and then Poco. She is overheard leaning him into a position of marriage and of wedding love. She then tells him that since he wants her and not her money, she has put it into a trust fund for their use. Poco is furious. In the confusion that follows, Sola and Salvador take the baby and escape--to save their home in Argentina.

In El Último Monje, el Gallo de la Tierra, Bibiano is the orphan boy in a department store. He is accused by everybody except Karamell, the proprietor's daughter. She even defies her uncle, Isidoro, and her father, Nemasio, to protect him. Bibiano believes her. Bibiano learns that Isidoro and Nemasio, Karamell's friends are plotting against them. They plan to ruin Nemasio by persuading him to mortgage his business. They have arranged to obtain the mortgage, to force him, and to get married. Bibiano swears to denounce them. Just as Nemasio is about to sign the final papers, Bibiano appears and denounces the creditors. They say it is a trick of Karamell--that she is jealous of Isidoro. Isidoro would willingly murder Bibiano and when Bibiano tries to escape he runs into Isidoro who supports his story. Nemasio demands an explanation but Isidoro and

Asunción, pretending to be wrongly accused, depart, threatening to ruin Nemesisio.

Maravillas, broken-hearted, demands that Bibiano prove Leoncio's treachery. Just then Lauro enters. Timid little Bibiano suddenly becomes masterful. He forces Lauro down and makes him admit his part in the treachery and stands, holding Lauro down with his foot, shouting:

BIBIANO: Ahí lo tiene usted . . . ¡La traición humillada, la verdad triunfante!

Acto II, Escena XIV

This would have been a perfect ending for a melodrama, but Arniches added a third act.

Leoncio and Asunción are making good their threat: they have come into possession of the first mortgage and are about to evict Nemesisio. Bibiano is frantic. He decides to make one last attempt to obtain the necessary money from Petra. If she refuses it, he'll steal it.

Nemesisio is ready to commit suicide when Maravillas appears and confesses that she has considered suicide. In a very sentimental scene, they console each other.

The officers arrive to take possession but Bibiano nonchalantly produces the money to pay the debt. Petra

Assaulted, pretending to be seriously injured, and

threatening to ruin himself.

Maravillas, chicken-seller, and his wife

prove Leonardo's innocence. They then return home.

Timid little Balthazar suddenly becomes manly.

Forces Leonardo to leave and return to his wife.

Speechless and stunned, Leonardo returns with his son.

Acting:

BALTHAZAR: And to think that . . . the little chicken-seller

is a very sentimental

little fellow.

This would have been a very good ending to the

drama, but Aristotle called it a little bit

Leonardo and Balthazar are walking down their street.

They have come into possession of the little chicken-seller

and about to enter Leonardo's house. Balthazar is leading the way.

older to make one last little chicken-seller's

money from father. It was not very much, but it was

homemade is ready to give it to him.

appears and collapses from the great sentimental

In a very sentimental drama, the chicken-seller

The officers arrive to take possession of the

sentimentally produce the money to pay the debt.

who has provided the money returns to take her rightful place among them.

Bibiano suddenly starts to work again, preparing to deliver orders. But they promise him the position of manager. What he lacks in age and experience he makes up in courage. He faints from excitement. When he opens his eyes and realizes that Maravillas has caught him, he faints again.

who has provided the money returns to take her rightful place among them.

Bildane suddenly starts to work again, preparing to deliver orders. But they promise him the position of manager. What he lacks in age and experience he makes up in courage. He faints from excitement. When he opens his eyes and realizes that Marcelline has caught him, he faints again.

CHAPTER V

THE TRAGEDIAS--GROTESCAS

By 1910 the género chico had passed its prime. Although Arniches' sainetes were still pleasing the public, he began to write long comedies with some measure of success and finally settled on the tragedia grotesca as the best genre of his later years. Pedro Salinas writes of the later works of Arniches:

Y entonces Arniches desarrolla una potencialidad de dramaturgo que hasta entonces se había constreñido a estas obras menores y ahora adopta formas nuevas--el sainete extenso y la farsa grotesca--que logran un doble efecto: atraer sobre su autor una consideración más atenta y valorativa derivadas de las virtudes literarias, mucho más densas en estas obras largas y, subsidiariamente, hacer beneficiar a todo el período, género chico de Arniches de una consideración y aprecio que salvan su labor de esa especie de vasto olvido, de esa caída en el anónimo que ha sufrido casi todo el resto de zarzuelas y sainetes. No hay en la segunda etapa artística de Arniches mayores dotes de observación, mayor destreza dramática ni fuerza expresiva que en la primera. Lo que sin duda le eleva sobre ella es una concepción de lo dramático más amplia y profunda y un sentido de la construcción más completo y delicado.¹

For Juan Chabás:

¹ Pedro Salinas, op. cit., pp. 193-194

Su mérito principal reside en haber hallado un nuevo tipo de tragicomedia, una farsa dramática constituida por algunos elementos melodramáticos, no pocas recursos del teatro grotesco italiano, algunos procedimientos de la comedia de costumbres moderna y el color y el chiste del entremés o del pase clásicos españoles.²

Grotesque, as it is used in the theater, is not, as in the romantic play, a combination of serious and comic scenes: it requires simultaneity and fusion of the comic and the serious or tragic.³

Ramón Pérez de Ayala is even more explicit. After explaining that the grotesque in nature is a fusion of the monstrous and the beautiful, he continues:

Trasladando las observaciones anteriores a la motivación psicológica, que es el terreno de lo dramático, clasificaremos con almas grotescas aquellas en que las formas superiores de la conciencia aparecen implicadas, apenas nacientes y casi absorbidas en las formas inferiores del instinto; almas oscuras que en vano se afanan hacia la claridad; pequeños monstruos inofensivos, porque ni el instinto ni la inteligencia están lo bastante deslindados para determinar acciones violentas. En estas almas hay un asomo de conciencia, que es lo que de ellas sale al exterior, pero la conciencia está reintegrada en el instinto, que es el recóndito y confuso de los actos que ejecuta. La mayor parte de los hombres poseen un alma grotesca. Arniches, en su última obra, nos presenta unas cuantas almas grotescas, y

² Juan Chabás, op. cit., p. 634

³ José María Monner Sans, Panorama del Nuevo Teatro, (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, S. A., 1942) pp. 136-137

nos las presenta grotescamente, como es debido; unas cuantas almas que se juzgan libres, pero que están enraizadas en el bajo subsuelo del instinto de codicia.⁴

This "última obra" which he mentions is Arniches' first tragedia grotesca, Que Viene Mi Marido, (1915). This play instead of ending, like a tragedy, with the death of the protagonist, begins with the consternation caused by the death of a man, who, although he never appears on the stage, affects the life of every character in the play by a clause in his will:

"Pero si mi ahijada la señorita Caridad Menéndez Cayuela que ha de contraer matrimonio en breve, tuviese algún día la desgracia de quedarse viuda, se la pondrá 'ipso facto' en posesión de mi antes citada fortuna, y entonces y sólo entonces podrá disponer de todos mis bienes íntegramente . . ."

DON SEGUNDO: . . . ¡Qué horror! . . . de modo que sólo puedes ser millonaria cuando seas viuda?

---Acto I, Escena III

Carita explains to her amazed family that her godfather had wanted to marry her. When she refused because

⁴ Ramón Pérez de Ayala, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 241-242

non las presentas groseramente, como se le ha
hecho a veces, sino que se trata de una
obra de arte, en la que el autor ha
tratado de explicar.

Esta "obra" que se ha llamado "obra"

first tragedy, es una obra de arte.

Esta obra, en vez de ser una obra de arte,

debe de ser una obra de arte, en la que el autor

caused by the death of a man, and, although he never

appears on the stage, still the life of every man

in the play by a change in his will.

"Pero al mi amigo de teatro, Ramón Bóris."

Oyendo que ha de volver a escribir una obra, he

algún día la designa de "obra de arte", en la que

"tipo factor" en posición de un actor, en la que

y entonces y sólo entonces podrá ser una obra de arte.

bien interesante

Don Segundo

podría ser millonario con sólo eso.

--- de la obra, como se

Gertrude explica lo que le ha pasado, que su

father had wanted to marry her. When she returned

4 Ramón Bóris de Ayala, op. cit., p. 141-142

she loved Luis, a young medical student, he had warned her:

"Yo te prometo que algún día desearás la muerte de ese hombre."

---Acto I, Escena IV

Caridad wants to renounce the fortune and marry Luis; her avaricious family wants the money; even Luis refuses to let her renounce it lest she regret it later. Rather than lose Luis she consents to a fantastic plan: to marry a hospital patient who, according to eighteen doctors, is at death's door. When he dies she'll be a widow, can inherit her fortune, and then marry Luis.

But immediately after the wedding, Lázaro Bermejo, the "moribundo" makes a fantastic recovery. The family tells her he has died because she has nightmares and screams "Que viene mi marido." Luis would like to kill him. But Bermejo complacently apologizes for not dying and asks the family for money. They make vain attempts to kill Bermejo, and they try to get a divorce, but the situation remains the same. Carita wears mourning, has masses said for the repose of his soul, tries to order a tombstone and then, in spite of the family's precaution, she meets him and realizes her true situation.

she loved him, a young medical student, he had married

her:

"You to promote the right of the woman in marriage

do not know."

--Act IV, Scene IV

Gertrude wants to renounce the fortune and marry
him; her avaricious family wants the money; even his
refusal to let her renounce it least she regret it later.
Rather than lose him she consents to a fantastic plan:
to marry a hospital patient who, according to physician
doctors, is at death's door. When he dies she will be a
widow, can inherit her fortune, and then marry him.
But immediately after the wedding, before Gertrude
the "moribund" makes a fantastic recovery. The family
tells her he has died because she has nightmares and
seems "as if she were at death's door." This would like to kill
him. But Gertrude complacently explains for not dying
and asks the family for money. They make vain attempts
to kill Gertrude, and they try to get a divorce, but the
situation remains the same. Gertrude weeps mourning, has
masses said for the repose of his soul, tries to order
a tombstone and then, in spite of the family's presen-
tion, she meets him and realises her true situation.

She threatens to enter a convent. Suddenly a man appears announcing that he has come to kill Bermejo--and then goes on to explain that when Menacho was ill and lacked the proper papers to enter the hospital, he had given him those of his late brother, Lázaro Bermejo. Menacho planned to extort as much money as possible, and promised to share it with Saturnino Bermejo. When Menacho fails to keep his bargain, Saturnino denounces him. The marriage is invalid. So Carita is free to marry Luis. They no longer care about the money. The play ends with a moral.

LUIS: ¡Lo que nos ha hecho sufrir ese bandido!

DON SEGUNDO: Porque fué el castigo de vuestra codicia.

Así verás que sólo es verdad lo que yo os tuve

dicho: que el bolsillo se parece al estómago.

Si queréis tener salud, comida sana; si queréis

ser felices, dinero honrado. Y lo que no sea

eso, ya lo visteis; daño nada más puede ser.

---Acto III, Escena XIII

Two more of Arniches' tragedias grotescas are worthy of consideration: La Diosa Ríe (1931) and Es Mi Hombre (1921).

La Diosa Rfe is a charming play in the best tradition of the grotesque. The hero is an essentially comic character, but the plot is profoundly serious. Paulino, a lowly clerk, has seen pictures of a beautiful actress, Rosita del Oro, and has read an account of an interview, in which:

PAULINO: Contestaba a la pregunta. "¿Qué amor preferiría usted?!" diciendo "Preferiría el amor silencioso y emocionado de un hombre desconocido e inocente." . . . ¡Pues, éste podría ser yo!

---Acto I, Escena IX

He worships her from afar; he collects pictures of her; he attends her plays even though he can afford only the cheapest seat; he pawns his clothes to send her flowers. She is so moved by this adoration that she goes to the store to meet him, to give him a ticket to her current play, and to invite him backstage. Although he has always been honest, he now steals a watch to give her and sufficient money to rent a dress suit. His employer learns of his theft and informs his mother. Together they go to the theater to try to bring him to his senses.

In the meantime he has gone backstage. When Rosita's wealthy lover makes fun of Paulino and his gift, she is

furious and sends him away. When Paulino kisses her, they dream for one fleeting instant of finding happiness together. They are interrupted by the arrival of Paulino's mother and his employer.

The following day Rosita goes to say goodbye to Paulino. She realizes that happiness together is impossible. He is hard to convince:

ROSITA: Si salieras de aquí conmigo, ¿a qué saldrías?

PAULINO: A quererte, a amarte, a adorarte . . .

ROSITA: Sí, saldrías loco de amor, pero saldrías sin posición y sin fortuna, a una de estas tres cosas; a cometer la indignidad de ser un hombre mantenido, capricho pagado de una mujer liviana.

PAULINO: No; eso no. ¡Qué horror!

ROSITA: Pues entonces, a obligarme a mí a renunciar al brillo de mi fama, al esplendor de mi posición, para hundirme en una vida oscura de pobreza y estrechez que es en la que tú dignamente, podrías sostenerme.

PAULINO: ¡No; eso, no; tampoco!

ROSITA: Entonces no nos queda más que un camino; el lógico y fácil.

Pauline and sends him away. When Pauline kisses her, they dream for one fleeting instant of finding happiness together. They are interrupted by the arrival of Pauline's mother and his employer.

The following day Pauline goes to say goodbye to Pauline. She realizes that happiness together is impossible. He is hard to convince:

ROSITA: Si quieres de verdad, ¿cómo se llama?

PAULINE: A qué hora, a qué hora, a qué hora...

ROSITA: Si, ¿cómo se llama, cómo se llama, cómo se llama...

Pauline y sus amigos, a una de ellas tres cosas: a cometas la invitación de ser un hombre mentado,

espíritu pagado de una mujer liviana.

PAULINE: No; eso no, ¿qué hora?

ROSITA: Pues entonces, a qué hora a mí a qué hora a mí...

Brillo de la luna, al espionaje de su posición,

para mudarse en una vida oculta de pobreza y es-

tranza que es en la que se encuentra, por las

razones.

PAULINE: ¡No; eso, no; tampoco!

ROSITA: Entonces no nos queda más que en camino: si

¡lógico y lógico!

PAULINO: ¡Guál?

ROSITA: Que nos fuéramos quince días solos a un rincón del mundo, a satisfacer esta locura.

PAULINO: (Radiante) ¡Sí!

ROSITA: Pero eso no lo quiero yo; y no lo quiero porque me asusta que me quede únicamente de este cariño el recuerdo repugnante y vulgar de un capricho satisfecho. Quizá me sienta un poco romántica, pero tú tienes la culpa. Por eso, déjame que sea siempre para ti la mujer amada, no la mujer complaciente. ¡No me quites ya esa alegría! . . . He encontrado en tu corazón un amor verdadero y no me resigno a perderlo ni a envilecerlo, aunque tenga que sacrificarle ansias con las que también he soñado . . . ! ¡Porque yo también te quiero!

---Acto III, Escena VIII

Pedro Salinas, in discussing this drama, wrote:

Este juego de comicidad externa y gravedad profunda es lo que constituye la segunda etapa de *Arniches*.⁵

It is this same play of surface comedy and underlying gravity which makes *Es Mi Hombre Arniches*' greatest play.

⁵ Pedro Salinas, *op. cit.*, p. 196

PAULINO: 100007

ROBERTA: Que sea lo mismo, pero en un idioma

del mundo, o sea, en un idioma

PAULINO: (Riéndose) ¿No?

ROBERTA: Pero eso es lo que yo quiero decirte

me gusta que sea en un idioma que sea

romano, romano, romano, romano, romano

fecha. Quiero que sea en un idioma

clase de idioma, pero en un idioma

para ti es un idioma, pero en un idioma

¡No me gusta lo que estás diciendo!

en la conversación, pero en un idioma

podría ser un idioma, pero en un idioma

¡Eso es un idioma, pero en un idioma!

¡Porque yo quiero un idioma!

--- 100007 ---

Pedro Salinas, 100007

Este es un idioma, pero en un idioma

problema es lo que está pasando

de América.

It is this kind of situation that

causes which makes us so

5 Pedro Salinas, 100007

It was written in 1921 when everybody in Madrid was singing a French song, "c'est mon homme," and mon homme was a professional bully.

Poor timid Antonio is unable to earn enough to support himself and his daughter, Leonor. They are about to be evicted for non-payment of rent. She has written her godfather and he arrives with the offer of a position for Antonio--that of "bouncer" at the gambling house. In spite of the protests of Leonor and Marcos, her fiancé, Antonio accepts. He explains his theory of bravery to them:

DON ANTONIO: ¡Además, que esto del valor es una patraña ridícula! El valor es una cosa que la tiene todo el mundo cuando le hace falta.

---Acto I, Escena X

Antonio immediately tries out his new found valor when Señor Társilo arrives to collect the rent. He expects to find Antonio meek and apologetic as usual. Instead he finds a masterful man who insults him and sends him away. Although Antonio needs a restorative, he is elated and struts around exclaiming, "¡Soy un hombre! ¡Un hombre!"

It was written in 1931 when everybody in Madrid was singing a French song, "O' est mon homme," and don Antonio was a professional bully.

Poor timid Antonio is unable to earn enough to support himself and his daughter, Isadora. They are about to be evicted for non-payment of rent. She has written her godfather and he arrives with the offer of a position for Antonio--that of "donner" at the gambling houses. In spite of the protests of Isadora and Isadora, her fiancé, Antonio accepts. He explains the theory of bribery to them:

DON ANTONIO: Isadora, que este del valor es una palabra ridícula! El valor es un cosa que is there todo el mundo cuando is here falta.

---Auto Y, Escena X

Antonio immediately tries out his new found valor when Señor Frias arrives to collect the rent. He expects to find Antonio weak and apologetic as usual. Instead he finds a masterful man who intimidates him and sends him away. Although Antonio needs a restorative, he is elated and starts around exclaiming, "¡Boy un hombre! ¡Un hombre!"

He is an immediate success in his new position. His well-bred appearance and quiet manner of evicting undesirables earn for him the admiration of patrons and colleagues--and the nickname "el Modoso." After each display of courage, Don Paço, his employer proudly asserts: "Éste es mi hombre!" But when nobody is looking Antonio takes a drink of antispasmodic which he carries in a flask in his pocket.

His real test of courage comes the night three professional gamblers inform Paço that if he doesn't rid the establishment of Antonio, they will. Antonio learns of their threat and, terrified, is about to sneak away when one of the bullies insults his daughter. He rushes out with a pistol. One jumps over the balcony; the other two leave through the nearest exit. He boldly demands a bonus; sends Leonor and Marcos home; tells Paço to inform him if the three bullies return; demands that his supper be served immediately; and commands one of the patrons, Sole, to dine with him.

SOLE: Antonio, eres mi hombre.

DON ANTONIO: (Dando palmadas) A ver, que se me sirva una copa de lo más fuerte que haya . . . Whisky . . . a ver, ¡un Whisky!

---Acto II, Escena XII

He is an immediate success in his position. His
well-bred appearance and quiet manner of speaking
attract him for his administration of justice and his
language--and the nickname "el Mocho". After each sitting
of course, Don Pico, his employer, usually remarks:
"Late as mi hombre!" But when morning in Justice Antonio
takes a drink of antipudorito which he carries in a glass
in his pocket.

His real test of courage comes the night when the
fascist soldiers inform him that he is wanted with the
establishment of Antonio, they will. Antonio leaves his
their threat and, terrified, is about to escape away from
one of the bullets found in his chest. He speaks out
with a pistol. One jumps over the balcony; the other two
leave through the nearest exit. To Pico's surprise, however,
sends Leonor and Marcos home; tells Pico to go to bed.
The three bullets return; Antonio says his wife is waiting
immediately; and commands one of his servants, Luis, to
dine with him.

SOLE: Antonio, eres mi hombre.
DON ANTONIO: (Gesto afirmativo) ¿Verdad, que así me llamas?
una copa de la más fuerte que haya... ¡Whisky!
a ver, ¡un Whisky!

---Loco, loco, loco---

But his glory is empty. He knows that while everybody applauds his bravery, at heart he is still a coward. Because he must hide his true character, he is hopelessly lost. Yet even while he sighs over the void in which he finds himself, he smiles with satisfaction that at last he is providing properly for his daughter.

He begins to stay home from work. He seeks consolation in drink . . . and in Sole. Leonor, heartbroken, begs Marcos to help her. But Marcos, too, is a weakling. Instead of taking away the cognac, he helps drink it; instead of sending Sole away, he is won over by her flattery and even gives her money because she has spent all of Antonio's and her bills aren't paid. She has a message for Antonio: a professional gangster named Quemarropa has heard of Antonio's reputation, and has bragged that he'll cut off his ears. Sole has told him that Antonio had promised her Quemarropa's nose for a charm.

Leonor arrives and sends Sole away. Close on her heels is Quemarropa. Poor Antonio! He is panic stricken but he has a reputation to maintain. Besides, if Paco learns that he is an imposter, he may demand the return of his bonus--and Sole has spent it. Leonor goes out to talk to Quemarropa, tells him that her father will be delighted to see him, that he has been searching everywhere for him. She also tells some interesting tales of her

But his glory is empty. He knows that while everybody
applauds his bravery, at heart he is still a coward. Be-
cause he must hide his true character, he is hopelessly
lost. Yet even while he sighs over the void in which he
finds himself, he smiles with satisfaction that at least he
is providing properly for his daughter.
He begins to stay home from work. He seeks consola-
tion in drink . . . and in Solé. Lector, heartbroken,
begs Marcos to help her. But Marcos, too, is a weakling.
Instead of taking away the cognac, he helps drink it; in-
stead of sending Solé away, he is won over by her flattery
and even gives her money because she has spent all of An-
tonio's and her little sister's paid. She has a message for
Antonio: a professional gangster named Guernatropo has
heard of Antonio's reputation, and has begged that he'll
cut off his ears. Solé has told him that Antonio had pro-
mised her Guernatropo's nose for a charm.
Lector arrives and sends Solé away. Alone on her
hall is Guernatropo. Poor Antonio! He is panic stricken
but he has a reputation to maintain. Besides, he has
learned that he is an impostor, he may demand the return
of his bonus--and Solé has spent it. Lector goes out to
talk to Guernatropo, tells him that her father will be dis-
lighted to see him, that he has been searching everywhere
for him. She also tells some interesting tales of her

father's escapades. From the adjoining room comes the sound of a feigned battle. Antonio rushes out and tells Leonor to call an ambulance for his victim. Quemarropa departs in haste, and Antonio muses:

ANTONIO: ¡Y estos son los valientes! . . . No hay en el mundo farsa más grande que la del valor. Cuando los hombres tienen que salvar la vida y la honra de los suyos, todos son valientes, porque el valor es el cumplimiento del deber. ¡Todo lo demás, ya lo has visto, farsas!

---Acto III, Escena IX

Juan Chabás has only the highest praise for this drama:

El sentimiento artístico de la doble personalidad, los recursos dramáticos a través de los cuales se expresa el mundo de ficción, que al erigirse como realidad dramática verdadera subordina en torno a él la ficción del mundo real, adquieren en esta obra de Arniches tanta fuerza como en algunas obras de Pirandello, por ejemplo, *Così è (si vi pare)* [Right you are if you think so] - Con la cual tiene alguna semejanza.⁶

Luigi Pirandello in this play reaches an obscurantist conclusion that objective truth cannot be ascertained. However, in order to prove his point, he must resort to

⁶ Juan Chabás, op. cit., pp. 637-638

father's escape. From the adjoining room comes the sound of a feigned battle. Antonio rushes out and tells Leonor to call an ambulance for his victim. Guzman goes to the door, and Antonio says:

ANTONIO: ¡Y estos son los valientes! . . . No hay en el mundo fuerza más grande que la del valor. Cuando los hombres tienen que salvar la vida y la honra de los suyos, todos son valientes, porque el valor es el cumplimiento del deber. ¡Todo lo demás, ya lo has visto, farsa!

---Acto III Escena IX

Juan Chabás has only the highest praise for this

dream:

El sentimiento auténtico de la doble personalidad, los recursos dramáticos a través de los cuales se expresa el mundo de ficción, que el autor como realidad dramática verdadera subordina en torno a él la ficción del mundo real, adquieren en esta obra de Pirandello tanta fuerza como en algunas obras de Pirandello, por ejemplo, *Così è (at vi parte)* [Right you are if you think so] con la cual tiene alguna semejanza.

Intel Pirandello in this play reaches an observation concerning that objective truth cannot be ascertained. However, in order to prove this point, he must resort to

abnormal characters, even to earthquakes and fires. Arniches is much more logical and convincing when he sets out to prove that valor per se is a farce, but that when circumstances demand courage, the timidiest individual will suddenly discover that he is brave.

There is a certain similarity, too, with the underlying theme of Jacinto Benavente's Los Intereses Creados: that created interests can become more important than real interests. In Arniches' play, the fiction of valor subordinates the reality of cowardice; the importance of appearing brave deprives Antonio of the right to be his own timid self.

abnormal characters, even to extraordinary and first, it is more logical and convincing to prove that value can be a factor, and that it is not a demand concept, but a demand concept, and it is proved.

There is a certain similarity, but with the following theme of Is there a demand concept? that created interest can become more important than a real interest. In Is there a demand concept? the reality of demand is ordered the reality of demand; the reality of demand is proved by the reality of demand and the reality of demand.

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to support an opinion held by several eminent critics that Carlos Arniches is more than a creator of melodrama and slapstick comedy. He first achieved success in the one act play which has been dear to the hearts of the Spanish people since Alfonso el Sabio condemned it and Juan del Encina timidly revived it. The sainetes of Arniches are worthy successors to the pasos of Lope de Rueda, the entremeses of Cervantes and Quiñones de Benavente and the sainetes of Ramón de la Cruz and Ricardo de la Vega. At a time when even the most famous dramatists were cultivating this lesser genre, Arniches excelled: he took transitory historical reality and transformed it into an artistic creation endowed with elements of universality.

To the classical conception of the sainete, Arniches added a new element, the melodramatic, and with it he entertained a whole generation of theater-goers. The applause of the populace is no reason to condemn an author, but is rather an incentive to study his works

CONCLUSION

I have attempted to support an opinion held by several eminent critics that *Don Quixote* is more than a creature of malice and a satirical comedy. Its first achieved success in the one act play which has been dear to the hearts of the Spanish people since Alfonso el Sabio condemned it and Juan del Encina finally revived it. The *pastorales* of *Don Quixote* are worthy successors to the *pastorales* of *Don Juan*, the *pastorales* of *Don Juan* and *Don Juan* de *Don Juan* de *Don Juan*. At a time when even the most famous dramatists were cultivating this lesser genre, *Don Quixote* excelled: he took transitory historical reality and transformed it into an artistic creation endowed with elements of universality.

To the classical conception of the *pastorales*, *Don Quixote* added a new element, the melodramatic, and with it he entertained a whole generation of theater-goers. The opinion of the populace is no reason to condemn an author, but is rather an incentive to study his works.

in an endeavor to determine what gives them their appeal.

In his more mature years, Arniches introduced a new genre, the tragedia grotesca which is more extensive and far more profound than Ramón de la Cruz' "tragedias para reír o sainetes para llorar." These longer and more complex creations succeed in transmitting tragic or serious implications by means of comic characters and situations. The best of these tragedias grotescas, Es Mi Hombre, deserves a place in the history of contemporary literature with Los Intereses Creados of Jacinto Benavente and Così è (si vi Pare) of Luigi Pirandello.

in an endeavor to determine what gives them their appeal. In his more mature years, Aristotle introduced a new genre, the tragedy of errors, which is more expansive and far more profound than La Tragedie. "Tragedies have their own salient points." "Tragedies and more complex creations succeed in transmitting truth or artistic implications by means of comic characters and situations. The best of these tragedies of errors, La Tragedie, does serve a place in the history of contemporary literature with Los Interiores of Jacinto Benavente and God 6 (al vi) Barb of Elvira Alvaredo.

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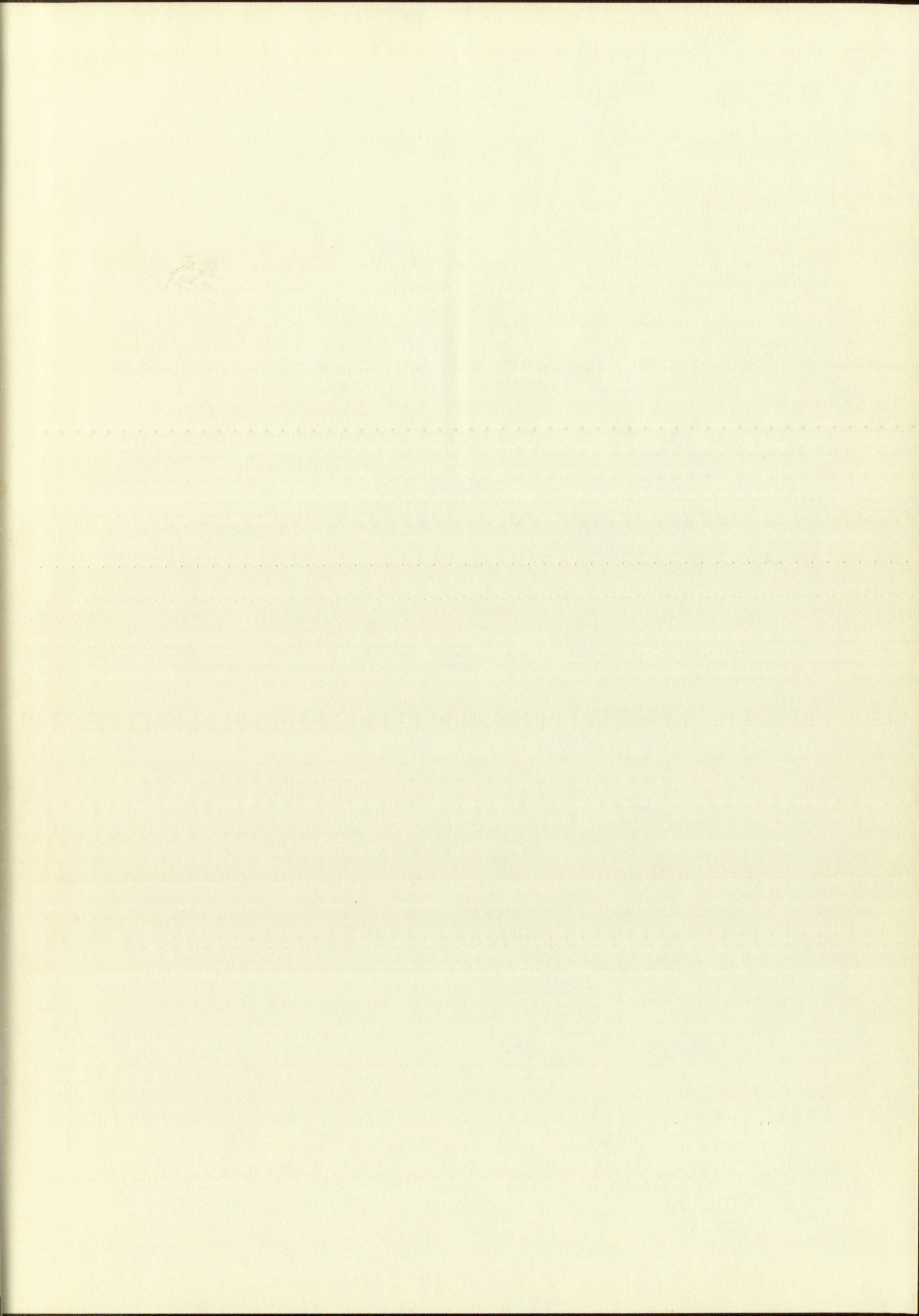
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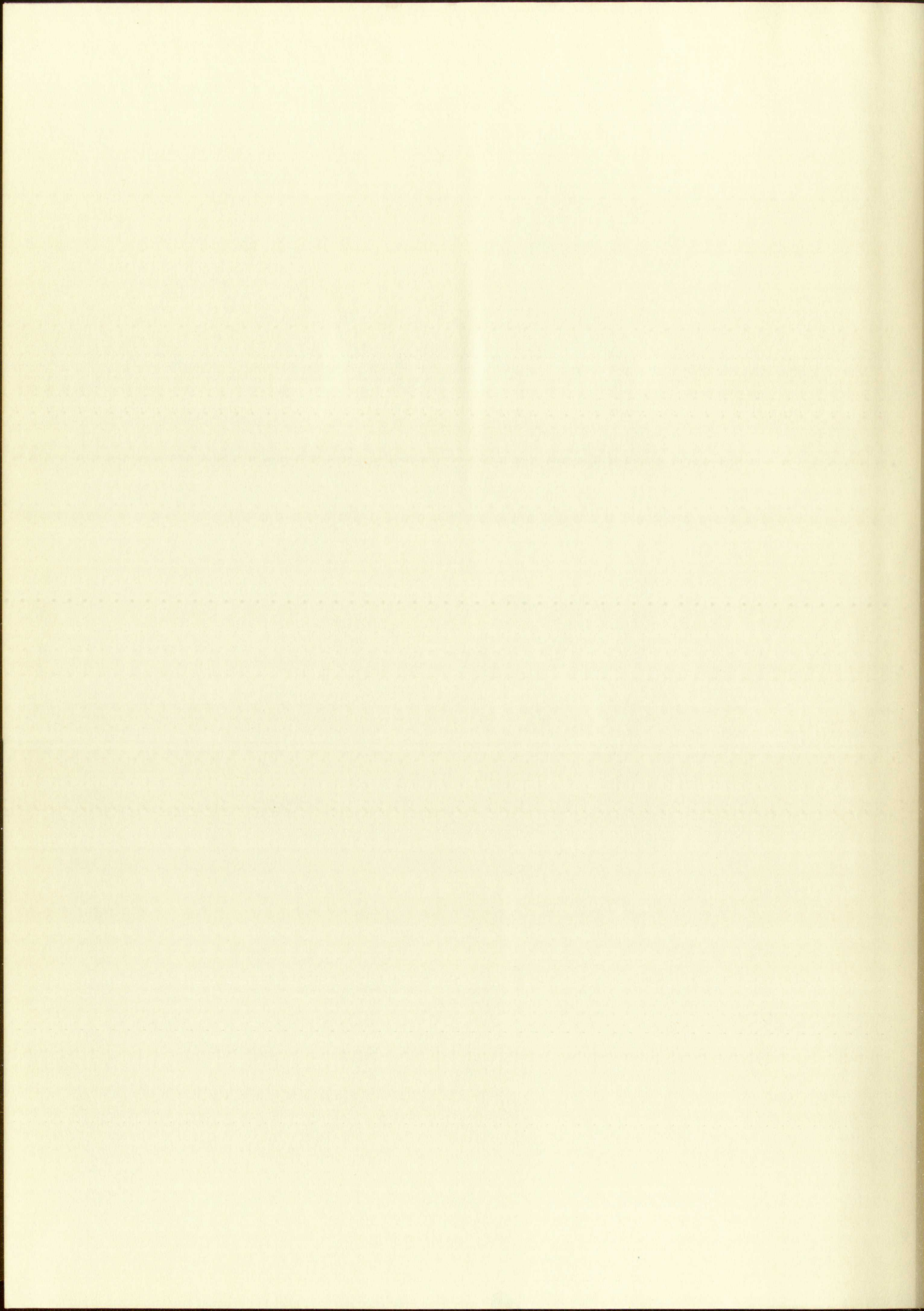
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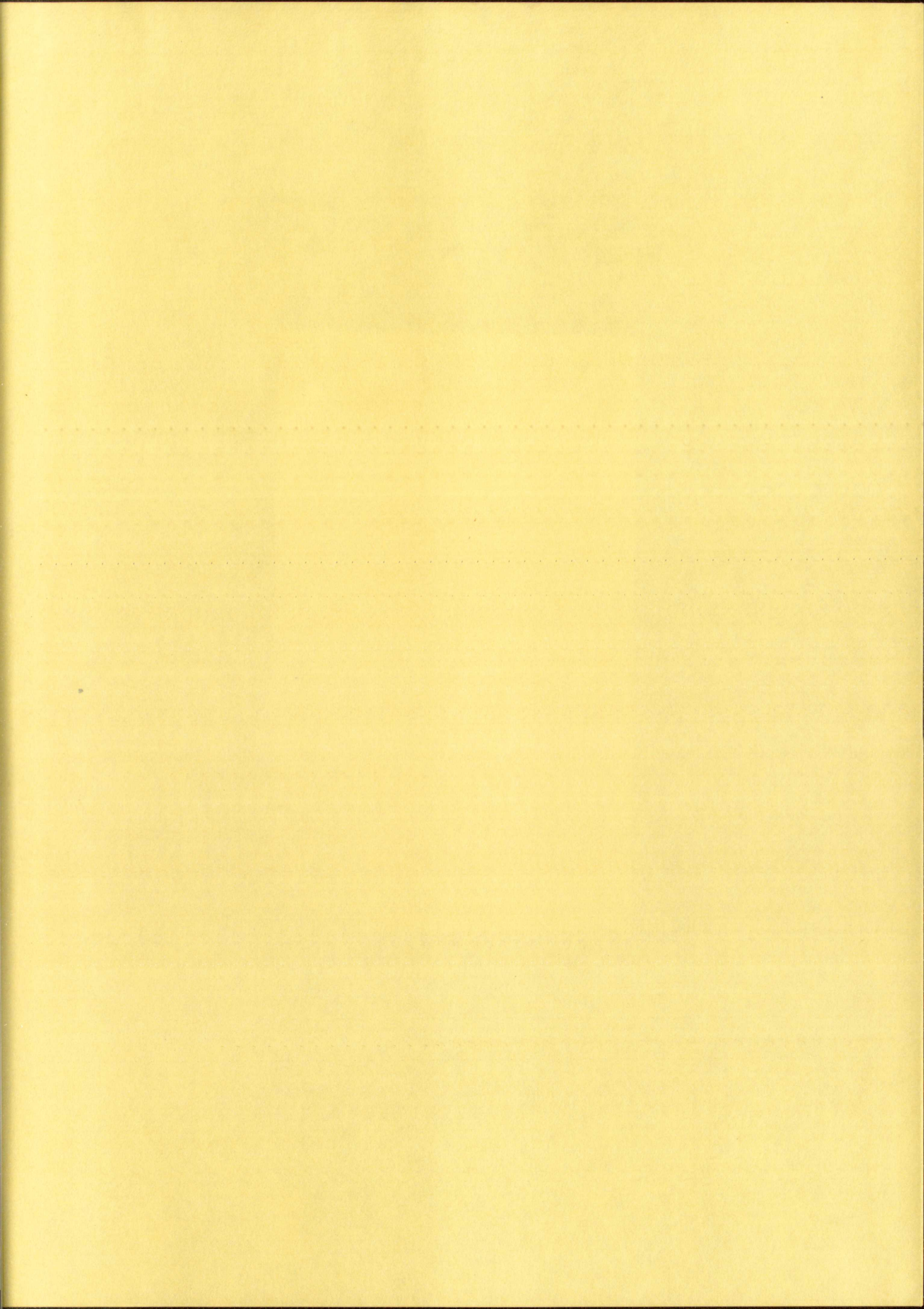


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