SOCIAL AND LITERARY SATIRE
IN THE COMEDIES OF
TIRSO DE MOLINA

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Compared with tragedy, comedy has received little attention from literary critics. Spanish Golden Age comedy, in particular, is a field which for long has suffered from undeserved neglect. In this thesis, I attempt to study a limited, but, perhaps, vital aspect of the comic art of Tirso de Molina, who is undoubtedly the best comic playwright of the Golden Age.

The field of research was suggested to me by Professor A. A. Parker, who has with long-suffering patience supervised the work on this thesis through all its stages. I am indebted to him for criticism, at once tactful and illuminating, and innumerable suggestions as regards style and presentation of my arguments as well as the interpretation of the plays analyzed and their relation to the wider context of Golden Age drama and literature. His criticism has at every stage forced me to re-consider my interpretations and findings and modify them in the light of evidence which I had overlooked.

To Miss M. Crosland, who has also supervised this thesis, and who first introduced me, as an undergraduate, to Golden Age drama, I am equally indebted for criticism no less probing and valuable. Above all, it is due especially to her criticism that my arguments are more concise and more clearly formulated than they would otherwise have been.

I am also grateful to Professors J. E. Varey and A. B. Deyermound, who have read various chapters of this thesis, for their helpful and constructive suggestions. I must thank Dr. J. Lowe for having brought to my notice a point which I should otherwise have missed, and Mr. J. Age for several valuable references.
Needless to say, none of the above is in any way responsible for the views put forward in this thesis. I shall doubtless soon regret not having considered their suggestions more carefully.

Finally, thanks are due to the Scottish Education Department for having awarded me a Senior Scottish Studentship, which I held for the first two years of my period of study, and to the University of Edinburgh for the award of the Richard Brown Scholarship in 1965-1966.

Chapter Five of this thesis has been published in much the same form as an article in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, IV (1968), 374-386, under the title: 'Satire and Symbolism in the Structure of Tirso de Molina's *For el sótano y el torno*'. An off-print of this article is appended to the thesis as Appendix B.
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SUMMARY

CONTENTS. This thesis consists of fairly detailed analyses of the following plays:

- Amar por arte mayor
- El amor médico
- Antona García
- La celosa de sí misma
- Don Gil de las calzas verdes
- La elección por la virtud
- Esto sí que es negociar
- Marí-Hernández la gallega
- Marta la piadosa
- El melancólico
- La mujer por fuerza
- Por el sótano y el torno
- Ventura te dé Dios, hijo
- El vergonzoso en palacio

All the plays are definitely Tirso's, except Esto sí que es negociar and La mujer por fuerza. While these are not essential for the proof of my argument, they are included because they seem to contain characteristic features of Tirso's art.

The thesis is divided into two parts. The first comprises plays in which the conflict is essentially personal; the second, plays in which the personal conflict is part of a wider, social conflict between classes.

All. The main purpose has been to examine the part social and literary satire plays in the structure of Tirso's comedy, the term...
"satire" being used in its widest sense. While non-structural, topical satire is occasionally touched on, attention has been focused principally on Tirso's satirical treatment of literary and social conventions as dramatic nuclei for the construction of some of his best comedies.

There are two basic reasons for the examination of this aspect of Tirso's comic art: the first is to examine the validity of the traditional view that Tirso's comedies are immoral and carelessly constructed; the second, to test the hypothesis that if the comedies are regarded as satirically conceived, the traditional view would need some modification.

CONCLUSIONS. This theory seems to have been valid. This study has produced the following conclusions. First, the morality of Tirso's plays is not suspect. What has quite often been seen as a violation of moral standards turns out, on closer examination, to be an affirmation of true morality.

Secondly, Tirso's plays are not carelessly constructed. All the evidence indicates that he was constantly experimenting with problems of dramatic structure. The main structural element in his plays is wit rather than causality. The unorthodox nature of many of his structures can be explained if we see his plays as "anti-drama". Other characteristic features of his art are his developing technique (which covers style, situations, and themes), his use of irony, and his peculiar view of life which is a central aspect of his comedy and at the core of which is a keen sense of the absurd.

Finally, it is suggested that there are various ways in which Tirso can be seen as a bridge between Lope and Calderón. In style and themes, in his greater self-conscious attitude towards his art, and the resulting artificiality of his plays, Tirso moves away from
Lope towards Calderón. All this is effected with no loss of individuality or originality.
INTRODUCTION
Two lacunae are immediately apparent in the study of the Spanish drama of the Golden Age. The first is the absence of any systematic study of Golden Age comedy. The process of revaluation of the comedia, initiated by Professors A. A. Parker and E. M. Wilson, has tended to concern itself essentially with the tragedies. This, both within the tradition of literary criticism and also because of the natural preoccupation with the problems tragedy explores, is right and justifiable. However, as is the case with Elizabethan drama, an enormous number of the plays written in the Golden Age are comedies. While comedy has always been popular in the theatre, it has not been given much consideration by the critics, partly, no doubt, owing to the implicit traditional attitude that comedy does not merit serious consideration. Recently, however, there have been signs of a change in attitude among the critics.

The second of these lacunae is the absence of any systematic study of Tirsoan comedy. This, perhaps, is more puzzling. Tirso has been generally acknowledged as the best comic dramatist of the Golden Age. However, the criteria on which this judgment has been based are difficult to ascertain, for, apart from vague generalizations, no serious study of his comic art has been undertaken. Two extensive studies of Tirso exist. The earlier, by Muñoz Peña, purports to be both biographical and critical. The criticism, however, is largely descriptive, not analytical. The second, Sta. L. Gijón's El humor en Tirso de Molina, is limited in scope.

It must be admitted, from the outset, that there exist, in the way of any critical evaluation of Tirso's comedies, and, indeed, of most of his plays, enormous difficulties of a textual, biographical, as well as a bibliographical nature. For the purposes of this thesis, I have used the three volumes of Tirso's plays edited by Da. Blanca
The texts in these are not entirely satisfactory for several reasons. They contain, first, numerous printing errors. Secondly, they are not critical editions of the plays, but in the main reprints of Hartzenbusch's and Cotarelo's earlier editions. Their main advantages over these editions are those of availability and completeness. Thirdly, they preserve Hartzenbusch's scene divisions. These do not, of course, correspond to the English "scenes" or Spanish cuadros (which, in any case, are never indicated in the seventeenth-century editions), but to the French scènes or English "sub-scenes", which indicate the entrances or exits of characters. While I do not accept the validity or even desirability of such scene-divisions, all references in this thesis, for practical purposes and convenience, will be to Act, scene and page in Da. Blanca's edition. In the case of certain plays, I have consulted, where possible, other modern editions. Where these offer a correction of, or a more satisfactory reading than Da. Blanca's texts, I have followed them. Important deviations from Da. Blanca's texts have been recorded in the notes. I have occasionally altered the punctuation where this seemed desirable for easier comprehension, and have, of course, corrected obvious misprints. I have not attempted to compare the texts of existing modern editions with those of the seventeenth-century partes or sueltas or such manuscripts as exist. While I should have liked to do so, the limited time available to me has not allowed this. While some of my arguments, therefore, will almost inevitably be based, partly, if not wholly, on textual readings which may later turn out to be corrupt, I do not think that my main argument will be affected thereby.

Bibliographical problems also make a fair evaluation of Tirso's works difficult. In the first place, only a fraction of his work survives. Of the surviving works, almost the only ones which can
with certainty be considered his are some sueltas and those contained in the Primera, Tercera, Cuarta and Quinta Partes, and the Cigarrales de Toledo.

The Segunda parte is prefaced with an enigmatic statement. There are only two works in it, out of the four which Tirso claims to be exclusively his own, which can be identified as his, since the closing lines affirm his authorship. These are: Por el sótano y el torno and Amor y celos hacen discretos. The authorship of El condenado por desconfiado, a play long suspected to be a genuine work of Tirso's, seems to have been almost conclusively established by Dr. A. K. G. Paterson. The suggestion by Da. Blanca that all the plays in this parte are either wholly by Tirso or written by him in collaboration with another author seems to have been refuted by the discovery that one of them, at least, is not by Tirso. The question of authorship, therefore, is not solved with regard to a number of plays - including those found in sueltas or partes containing plays by or attributed to various authors. With two exceptions, the plays which I have chosen for analysis, are definitely Tirso's. The plays whose authorship is doubtful are Hasta si que es negociar and la mujer por fuerza. While it would not affect the validity of my main argument if it were subsequently discovered that Tirso had no part in their composition, I have chosen to examine them because it seems to me that they contain some elements which are characteristic of Tirso's work.6

Biographical data provide another and related, if slightly different, sort of difficulty. Such facts as are known about Tirso's life are few. This led, in the last century above all, to the creation of mythical stories about Tirso, most of them hardly contributing to a picture of a very moral man - at least, not in his youth. These stories have now been largely discredited, thanks to recent research,
but it is interesting to bear in mind that their justification was to be found mainly in the interpretation of Tirso's comedies, which many nineteenth-century critics considered immoral. While recent discoveries seem to have cleared Tirso of the charges of leading an immoral life, they have not simultaneously exonerated him from the charge of writing immoral plays, and they have also introduced fresh problems concerning both Tirso's life and the interpretation of his plays. While it is not my purpose to prove or disprove that Tirso was immoral or a hypocritical friar, my interpretation of some of his plays as satirical comedies would seem to weaken the charge that his comedies are immoral.

There is a traditional conflict of opinion with regard to Tirso's comedies. This has its origins in the views of Tirso's contemporaries and centres around two aspects of his plays: their technique and their morality. On both points we get not merely differing, but conflicting, even diametrically opposed views. Tirso's plays are both warmly praised and fiercely condemned for their technique and their morality. This conflict of opinion persists through the centuries and is, in some ways, still evident in recent criticism. Tirso and his plays undoubtedly constitute a topic which arouses strong passions. Leaving aside the clear element of polemical arguments ad hominem evident in so much of Tirsoan criticism, there is still a fundamental ambiguity in Tirso's works which is reflected in these conflicting views, and one aspect of which I shall explore in the main body of this thesis. But, first, it would be convenient to review very briefly existing Tirsoan criticism, paying special attention to these conflicting views.

In the seventeenth century, we find a curious situation. From Tirso's own statements, we learn that his plays were successful in the corrales. His drama earned the approval of certain persons such
as Calderón (whose admiration and debt to Tirso I shall discuss later in the thesis). Cervantes, at first an opponent of the Lopean comedia, seems to have praised Tirso equivocally, as Cotarelo notes.

There are a few other more or less favourable mentions of Tirso, none of them very important. What is more interesting is the fact that Tirso seems to have aroused enormous opposition to himself. He frequently refers in his works to the envy of others, their hostility towards him. Such hostility even existed within his own Order.

A good indication of this is the attitude of Lope to Tirso, which Miss K. L. Kennedy has been examining.

While Tirso always acknowledges his debt to Lope, we have some indication that Lope gave grudging praise to Tirso, but this was interested praise. As Miss Kennedy has argued, it was wrung from Lope by Tirso’s defence of his comedia in the Cigarrales. But Lope’s favourable attitude was short-lived, and seemed to have been confined to the period 1620–1622.

Lope’s attitude is normally at best equivocal, more often hostile. As Dámaso Alonso has said, Lope is envious of Tirso’s dramatic success. Tirso seems to refer explicitly to this in the third act of Antoña García:

Fíes vendese agora tanta
enviada a ingenios diversos
que hay hombre que haciendo versos
a los demás se adelanta;
y aunque más fama le den
es tal (la verdad os digo),
que niega el habla a su amigo
cada vez que escribe bien.

III.iii. p.439a.

Lope’s criticism of Don Gil seems to be on artistic grounds. But, as Dámaso Alonso points out, Tirso’s play is not as technically faulty as Lope seems to imply.
More serious were the criticisms levelled against the morality of Tirso's plays. These must be seen against the wider background of the moralists' criticism of the theatre. As Miss Kennedy has shown, most of this criticism was directed primarily against Lope, but it was, surprisingly, Tirso who, in 1625, was criticised by the Junta de Reformación for writing immoral plays. The reasons for this ban are still obscure; modern critics have suggested that it was politically motivated. This seems probable. But what is important is that it completes the two-pronged attack which has traditionally been made on Tirso and which has persisted through the centuries.

Tirso was himself aware of this. In his defence of the Lopean comedia in the Cigarrales de Toledo, a passage which, according to Miss Kennedy, may have been written in 1620-21, he attempts to deal with his critics. The passage has been regarded as one of the most brilliant defences of the comedia. I shall only draw attention to some of the main points Tirso makes.

This defence, as is well known, grows out of the critique of El vergonzoso en palacio. There are objections to the play on both moral and artistic grounds. As regards the former, the main criticism is directed against the characters of Serafina and Magdalena: "cuyas hijas pintó tan desenvueltas, que, contra las leyes de su honestidad, hicieron teatro de su poco recato la inmunidad de su jardín". (p.141). This criticism is part of a larger point concerning the historical, factual accuracy of the story. Tirso answers the more general point, stressing the difference between history and poetry: "¡Como si la licencia de Apolo se estrechase a la recolección histórica, y no pudiere fabricar, sobre cimientos de personas verdaderas, arquitecturas del ingenio fingidas!" (p.141). The argument here is that the story on
stage is no more than a story. Tirso does not specifically answer the objection made to the characterisation of the women. He may have thought that it was not a point worth answering. But he probably regretted not having done so a few years later: for it was precisely that aspect of his plays which the Junta de Reformación singled out for criticism and which it used as a pretext for forbidding him to write any more plays. As I shall show, it is a form of criticism which has survived into the twentieth century.

But perhaps the main reason for Tirso's not having answered that specific charge was his eagerness to defend the artistic principles of the comedia. This is the main substance of the apology.

The criticisms of the comedia follow the wellknown lines of those of the Neo-Aristotelian theorists. I shall not analyse closely Tirso's reply: what I am principally interested in is his full and conscious awareness of the differences between the "rules" of the comedia and those of the Neo-Classicists, his justification of the rules of the former, and his assertion that the classical form of drama is primitive and can - indeed, must - be improved by experimentation. That is to say, the comedia is a superior dramatic form. Even making allowances for the polemical aspect of this defence, we note Tirso's conscious attitude towards the comedia. His is no longer Lope's half-defensive, half-cynical view: "Que si él, en muchas partes de sus escritos, dice que el no guardar el arte antiguo lo hace por conformarse con el gusto de la plebe - que nunca consintió el freno de las leyes y preceptos -; dícelo por su natural modestía y porque no atribuya la malicia ignorante a arrogancia lo que es política perfección." (p. 145). "Clearly, we must accept that Tirso's art is conscious, deliberate, and artistic.

Almost no one, however, defended Tirso's art with the same passion
as he defended the Lopean _comedia_. The decree of 1625 seems to have put a brake (perhaps not wholly complete) on Tirso's writing of plays. This did not prevent him and his nephew from publishing five _partes_ of his _comedia_. In the introductions, we still get glimpses of the aggressive Tirso. Most of the _aprobaciones_ seem mere formalities. A notable exception is that by Calderón to the _quinta parte_, which I shall discuss in the body of my thesis. It is clear that Calderón admired Tirso: he praises him for his art and his morality. By the time of his death, Tirso seems to have been forgotten by the literary world. 18

Much of the eighteenth century is characterised by a contempt for the seventeenth-century _comedia_, which, by the French Neo-classical standards then prevailing in Spain, was regarded as a monument of bad taste. Through political circumstances, French chauvinism had imposed itself on Spanish taste. With the tide running against the Spanish _comedia_, Tirso falls into a period of virtual oblivion. The champions of the new francophile school direct their attacks mainly against Lope and Calderón. Luzán does not even deign to mention Tirso.

While the tide is running strongly against the _comedia_ in the eighteenth century, there is an undercurrent which foreshadows its return to favour in the nineteenth century. This may be due in part to the less hostile attitude of the eighteenth century German critics to Spanish and English drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or, rather, Lessing's acute critique of French Neo-Classical drama. 19 In Spain, however, the revival of interest in Tirso among the reading public is due to book-sellers and printers rather than academics and literary critics. The explanation for this is not clear. The most important name, of course, is that of Dña. Teresa de Guzmán,
who between 1733 and 1736/7 published 33 comedias and one auto as cualtas. This undoubtedly helped to create a more favourable attitude towards the comedias. A product of the new atmosphere was Hipho, who was much less hostile to the comedias. However, as Miss McClelland points out, he does not appear to have known Tirso.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the revival of interest in Tirso is accelerated, and by the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Tirso is a firm favourite with theatre-goers and critics, as Bushee has shown. Because of the political climate, politically tendentious plays were not allowed to be performed, (or, at least, such plays could be regarded as tendentious - La vida en sueño, La prudencia en la mujer, etc). The emphasis is therefore on comedy. Modern Tirsoian criticism, then, begins with Spanish Romanticism. The critics of this period, of whom the most important is Hartzenbusch, display a great fondness for Tirso's comedias. They are particularly attracted by his wit (using this word in the modern sense). They recognise Tirso's mastery of language, his gifts of characterisation. But they never tire of drawing attention to what they regard as the obscenities in his plays, the immoral behaviour of his characters, and his technical incompetence. In other words, the two basic charges against Tirso are re-affirmed. Furthermore, these critics assumed that the immorality of his plays was a reflection of the immoral life Tirso himself led. The lack of biographical data on Tirso's life did not help the situation. The general attitude of the nineteenth-century critics towards Tirso is summed up in Muñoz Peña's lengthy study. He has nothing to add to the existing views on Tirso the man. The critical section of his study repeats the views of earlier nineteenth-century critics: the lack of decorum in Tirso, the unsatisfactory
nature of his dramatic technique. Furthermore, most of his criticism is descriptive rather than analytical. Where he does attempt an analytical evaluation of the plays, he adds nothing to the existing views; he merely elaborates on them.

The competition for which Muñoz Peña wrote his work is the starting point of contemporary criticism. Cotarelo y Mori produces valuable information about Tirso’s life and works. What really arouses interest is the claim made by Da. Blanca de los Ríos that Tirso was the illegitimate son of the Duke of Osuna. Her theory has been disputed and is no longer very seriously considered, owing to the complete lack of supporting evidence.

However, Da. Blanca has made other valuable contributions to Tirsoan studies. Some of her findings help to refute conclusively the stories invented in the nineteenth century about Tirso’s misspent youth. She has discovered various documents relating to Tirso’s life and work. She has surveyed existing Tirsoan criticism and added to it. Her views on Tirso’s dramatic technique follow Hartzenbusch’s closely. What is interesting is her division of Tirso’s plays into various cycles or periods. The last one she calls the "teatro de oposición", in which she sees a clear political intent. This point is being developed by other critics. She links this with the Junta de Reformación’s condemnation of Tirso. Interesting, too, is her view that Tirso’s late plays are "Calderonian". She also explores the relationship between Tirso and other contemporary authors such as Lope and Cervantes. Her theory that Tirso and Cervantes carry on a sustained polemic in their works does not seem completely convincing. On the other hand, her theory that Lope and Tirso, after a period of friendship, fall out is being developed by Miss R. L. Kennedy, who sees the network of inter-relationships between Tirso and
other authors of the day as very important. Most of Da. Blanca's findings are incorporated into her edition, in three volumes, of Tirso's plays. There are, perhaps, two main drawbacks to her critical work. First, it is not methodically arranged. (Had she lived to revise her work, this fault would undoubtedly have been eliminated.) Secondly, she often relies on intuition and a vivid imagination to fill in gaps or to support her hypotheses, and then tends to present her theories as facts. As a result, it is very difficult to separate the grain from the chaff: to do so, indeed, would require many years' labour. However, it must be said that her intuition has not always led to wrong conclusions. At times, while we may disagree with the methods by which she is led to such conclusions, we are forced to admit that the conclusions themselves are not wholly erroneous.

This century has witnessed a spate of work by other critics. Most of it has been concerned with biographical and bibliographical aspects of Tirso, and much of it has been done in the United States. Professor Hesse's bibliography is, of course, the fundamental tool of all contemporary research. Professors R. L. Kennedy and G. H. Wade have done very valuable work. It appears, as a result, that Tirso moved among the upper classes, which lends support to the theory that his plays contain political and, perhaps, moral criticism of political leaders. Professor Wade, for example, has followed up Rouqué's theory that the Cigarrales de Toledo is a sort of roman à clef and that most, if not all, of the characters can be identified. The same seems to be true of a number of Tirso's plays.

Some aspects of the relationship between Tirso's plays and the social, political, literary and moral climate of the time are being explored by Miss R. L. Kennedy. Using social and political events as a guide, she has been able to date a number of Tirso's plays.
Perhaps the only curious feature of her dating is the fact that so many plays can be assigned to the period 1620-1623. But Miss Kennedy herself admits that these may be dates of revision rather than of composition.

Miss Kennedy's examination of the political implications of Tirso's plays is of great importance. She has shown, in a fundamental study, the topical political import of *la prudencia en la mujer*, developing a suggestion first made by Da. Blanca.34 In a later study, she has shown how Tirso's use of literary satire in a play is, ultimately, politically motivated.35 Her promised book will certainly be a landmark in Tirsoan criticism.

On the other hand, comparatively little literary criticism of Tirso's work is being done. Some valuable editions have been prepared, but these are mainly of Tirso's "serious" plays, i.e., tragedies and historical plays. Only very recently have critics turned seriausly to his comedies. The general trend, however, is towards a revaluation of Tirso's dramatic art. A. Castro, and more recently, Casalduero have put forward the suggestion that the text of *El burlador* is by no means as corrupt nor the play itself as carelessly constructed as was once thought.36 An examination of some other aspects of this play suggest that a considerable amount of care went into its composition.37 *El condendado por desconfiado* has been shown to be an extremely subtle work dramatically.38

Some work has been done on Tirso's comedies. Casalduero's brilliant analysis of *El vergonzoso en palacio* reveals that it is a much more subtle play than had been thought. Some interesting work has been done on other comedies. What seems to me a difficulty gratuitously added to the analysis of Tirso's comic art has been
the attempt by a number of critics to apply criteria of Baroque art to Tirso's plays. This is not undesirable in itself, of course. What does, however, lead to difficulties is the attempt to make Tirso's comedies conform to theories of Baroque art laid down a priori. An extreme example of this is Peyton's article, in which he argues that Tirso's art is Baroque because it deflates all idealistic values and because it stresses more earthly and earthy points. This, I think, is an overstatement of the case. Tirso deflates falsely idealistic values; but nowhere can I discern a deflation of love or other genuine ideals such as Peyton asserts exists in Tirso. Rules of Baroque art are also applied to Tirso's Don Gil de las calzas verdes. But, as I point out in my analysis, this approach somewhat distorts the point of the play. On the other hand, Casalduero also regards Tirso's art as Baroque; but this epithet is not applied a priori, but a posteriori, and its meaning to a large extent defined from his analyses of specific plays.

The only work of any length devoted specifically to Tirso's comedies is L. Gijón's monograph: El humor en Tirso de Molina. This contains a very valuable summary of various theories of comedy in the introduction. She is undoubtedly right in stating that there is no vindictive, bitter satire in Tirso. Although, as will be realised, her definition of satire is very restricted, she does at times imply that there is some satirical content in Tirso. This is seen, for example, in her very apt and witty description of Juana of Don Gil as an "Antitenorio". Her remarks on the "Antitenorio" in Tirso's plays are illuminating as regards Tirso's view of women, a view examined from another angle in her article: 'Concepto del honor y de la mujer en Tirso de Molina'.

In El humor, she also makes some other interesting observations. Her view of Antona Garcia, for example, is sympathetic: she points
out that Tirso is deliberately uniting in Antona elements which are at first sight disparate. She also points out that Mario Hernández la valleta contains a subplot which is a close and systematic parody of the main plot.

Sta. Gijón concludes that Tirso's view of life is sane and healthy. It is not her intention, of course, to present us with a coherent picture of Tirso's art. Her basic approach is descriptive and, to a certain extent, historical rather than analytical. Thus, although she does not attempt a systematic and thorough interpretation of the data collected, her book is a valuable register of certain very pertinent aspects of Tirso's plays.

All these approaches are valuable directly or indirectly. They point to a long-overdue revaluation of Tirso's comedy. They indicate that Tirso is not a slipshod, but a highly conscious craftsman.

However, some vestiges of the earlier view still survive. An interesting example is M. Fenna's book He tries to defend Da. Blanca's thesis of Tirso's illegitimacy with a number of arguments, some plausible, others perhaps over-ingenious. When factual evidence is inconclusive, he tries to find support in what he regards as the twisted moral values in Tirso's plays, and especially in carta la piadosa. I have argued that the values in this comedy are not twisted or perverted. Ultimately, Fenna's argument is circular. Tirso was a resentful friar because of his illegitimacy which forced him into a monastery; therefore he wrote plays such as carta la piadosa; therefore he was illegitimate. But it is interesting that Fenna, granted a few points, can make a superficially plausible case. There would seem to be a conflict of values in Tirso's plays: on the one hand, he consigns offenders to hell-fire more often perhaps than any other Golden Age dramatist; on the other, he writes such "sacrilegious" plays as carta la piadosa.
It is easy to see what a psychoanalytical critic would make of this. My contention, however, is that Tirso's plays do not call for such tortuous interpretations. They are straight-forward enough if we do not attempt to make them mean what we think they ought to mean. The main difficulty they offer, from the point of view of theme as well as of structure, is due to the subtlety of Tirso's art.

That is why I propose, in this thesis, to consider the structural function of social and literary satire in a number of Tirso's comedies. Thus, while incidental and largely topical satire will be considered where it seems to contribute towards an understanding of a play, my primary concern will be with the organic function of satire. Furthermore, my main interest is not in Tirso's satire of moral, social and literary foibles or trends per se, (an aspect of his comedies which has long been recognised), but rather in his satirical treatment of social and literary conventions for dramatic ends.

The hypothesis which I wish to test is this: that if we consider the satirical implications of Tirso's comedies, they present a sane, coherent view of the world, and that view is presented with consummate skill.

I should make it clear here that I propose to use the term "satire" in its widest sense. Tirso himself claims, that he does not satirise individuals:

FORTUGUÉS 30: ¿Catirizás?
CASTELLANO 70: No se hallará que presuma de mí que muerda mi pluma a nadie, antes sí miráis lo que he impreso y lo que he escrito, por modo y estilo nuevo solemnizo a quien no debo buenas obras. (43)

As Mr. Kennedy has observed, Tirso doubtless had in mind "formal" satires, i.e., long invectives against definite persons. As I shall show, there are passages in some of his plays which seem to be directed
against particular persons, but it is true to say that none of his plays (and no Golden Age play until, perhaps, after Calderón) can be seen as sustained personal invective.\(^4\) What is certain is that some of his best plays centre around the ridicule of a social or literary convention.

The ways in which such conventions are ridiculed are various. Normally Tirso concentrates on absurd situations which are produced by the adherence of certain individuals to these conventions. In this way, the absurdity of the conventions is made plain. Burlesque, wit, and at times the mere presentation of individuals in a bad light are frequently encountered in Tirso.

In so far as Tirso's plays centre around the ridicule of certain conventions, I shall consider them satiric. It will be clear also that in the social sphere the plays contain a "thesis" or a "point", namely that moral values should be man's guide in his relationships with others. But his point is never made with didactic seriousness or with moral indignation. In the literary sphere, Tirso's satire depends on an implicit contrast with conventional literary devices, figures, and structures.

It is often assumed that satire can be clearly distinguished from comedy. But, as has been pointed out, some of the basic theories of comedy which stress its corrective nature really refer to its satirical intent.\(^4\) Bergson's theory of laughter as a social corrective implies that comedy which provokes such laughter is satiric.\(^4\) As Sutherland has pointed out, satire can be regarded as a branch of rhetoric: its aim is to persuade people to accept the satirist's point of view. In so far as Tirso's ridicule of conventions is intended to convince his audience of the validity of his point of view, he is a satirist.
Potts has an interesting discussion on the differences between comedy and satire. He stresses that the two have much in common, but that, ultimately, they are irreconcilable. This is so because the satirist's viewpoint is entirely subjective. He is a baffled idealist and his standpoint is the ideal. The standpoint of the comic writer is, on the other hand, the norm. The discrepancy between what is and what ought to be is much greater for the satirist who tends to present a deformed or exaggerated picture of the world he sees. This is, in general, an acceptable viewpoint, although it is perhaps too limited for the more subtle varieties of satire. In Tirso's late plays, he seems to have moved towards a more subtle, more complex view of the world, and his comedies are correspondingly more subtle and complex. It is fairly easy to see what or whom he ridicules in his earlier plays. In his later ones, the picture is not so clear. Everything is presented in the light of an irony which is ultimately turned on to the audience itself.

Finally, I should like to review a few theories of comedy which Tirso's plays at times illustrate. Bergson's theory of laughter and Meredith's essay on comedy are well known. A. Nicoll has suggested that most comedies are constructed on situations which are based on one or both of these theories; namely, the mate-hunt situation, and the criticism of a mechanical approach to life. The latter contains, generally, a social problem. These two situations will be found in the majority of the plays analysed.

Professor R. C. Jones has proposed an interesting theory about Golden Age comedy, which I shall refer to as the cathartic theory. His argument is that comedies present instances of social and moral disorder. By experiencing these vicariously, the audience is purged of the temptation to execute them in real life. Thus the existing
moral and social order are re-affirmed and strengthened. This is an ingenious theory, and is ultimately based upon a view of drama as ritual. But I am not convinced that it can validly be applied to all Golden Age drama, and not to such plays of Tirso's as *Don Gil* and *Marta la piadosa*. Even if one were to accept the Aristotelian theory of tragic catharsis as valid, there is no necessary reason for supposing that the aim of comedy is the same. The intellectual bias of comedy surely requires a more critical attitude on the part of the audience. But the validity of Professor Jones' application of this theory to Tirso's comedies depends, ultimately, on the person or persons against whom the laughter of the audience is directed. Prof. Jones would see these as Juana and Marta. In my analyses, as will be seen, I argue that the butt of ridicule is really those members of society who, by following social conventions blindly, introduce moral and social chaos into the lives of men and the workings of society. We do not, I think, laugh at Juana and Marta so much as with them. If we are at first inclined to find Juana's male disguise and Marta's beata costume ridiculous and productive of chaos, our attitude soon changes when we consider that the chaos they produce is only an apparent chaos which, by the paradox of comedy, is really intended to restore order and sanity where conventional society has produced chaos and confusion. What is being upheld is an ideal order.

As I point out, Tirso, like Shakespeare, does not normally ridicule women: in his plays, women uphold order and morality; they do not undermine them. In the context of seventeenth-century society (and even of society in general), the ideal moral order does not exist. The existing, prevailing order is unsatisfactory. The assertion of the ideal order, therefore, is not intended to reinforce the stability of the existing order but rather is a threat to it. Golden Age, drama
is, I suggest, more questioning, more problematic, more "subversive" (within limits) than is generally thought.\textsuperscript{53} That Tirso's plays were seen as subversive seems to be borne out by the decree of the Junta de Reformación. They are directly critical of society. And Tirso had to pay the penalty which, as Elliott points out, awaits the satirist in society.\textsuperscript{54}

A view of comedy which is supported to a large extent by Tirso's plays is that put forward by W. Kerr.\textsuperscript{55} If tragedy, according to Kerr, is "an investigation of the possibilities of human freedom" (p.121), comedy is the counter-weight which draws attention to man's limitations. Thus, tragedy is ultimately optimistic, whereas comedy is ultimately pessimistic. The paradoxical nature of Kerr's views seems, nevertheless, justified. We laugh in comedy because it is the only alternative to weeping. Tragedy and comedy between them, then, present a complete picture of human existence. Tragedy historically and existentially, as Kerr stresses, comes first: man is preoccupied with what he can do. Comedy comes afterwards to point out what man cannot do. It is thus, to a certain extent, parasitic, depending on the view tragedy contains, but it is nevertheless, necessary.

Which brings me to a word on Golden Age comedy itself. Kerr's definition seems to provide a useful criterion for distinguishing between tragedy and comedy. But, as he points out, some forms of comedy approximate to tragedy, and to the extent that they do so they are "greater" and more serious forms of comedy. In such forms of comedy, the dividing line between tragedy and comedy is blurred. I do not suggest that all Golden Age comedy is great, but it is a fact that the comedia blurs the distinction between the tragic and the comic, just as Elizabethan drama does. This produces what I call the
"ambiguous tonality" of the *comedia*, in which a delicate balance is maintained between the comic and the tragic. What ultimately determines whether the ending will be "happy" or not is whether there occurs an irreparable violation of the moral law. The ending, then, is another factor which distinguishes comedy from tragedy. This is not so in all drama, but I shall use it as a rough guide in this thesis. Beyond that, there are no sure criteria. My selection of plays is therefore to a large extent empirical. I have avoided examining plays with "unhappy" endings, and, with one exception (La elección por la virtud), historical and religious or hagiographical plays. I have chosen to analyse La elección por la virtud because it is an early play and also because Tirso's treatment of the theme and structure in it is interesting. I have not considered Antona García a strictly historical play because of the freedom with which Tirso handles the historical facts about the heroine, and also because the theme of the play is, I think, neither historical nor political, but moral and social.
PART ONE

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS
SECTION ONE

PERSON AND PERSONA IN TIRSO'S COMEDY OF THE ABSURD
CHAPTER ONE

DON GIL DE LAS CALZAS VERDES.

THE REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM OF A DRAMATIC DEVICE.
The three plays which I propose to consider in this initial section are: Don Gil de las calzas verdes, La celosa de sí misma, and El amor médico.

They may be conveniently examined as a group for various reasons, notwithstanding the fact that Don Gil is separated from the other two by some seven years.

First, they all have in common the use of disguise as a central feature of the plot-structure. The convenience of disguise as a dramatic device has been discussed by V. O. Freeburg. Basically, the assumption of disguise serves to complicate the plot; its abandonment unravels the complication. It has often been noted that disguise, and, in particular, male disguise, is one of Tirso's favourite dramatic devices. One might be inclined to draw the conclusion that Tirso tends to use convenient and elementary devices in the structuring of a plot, were it not for the fact that these three plays show how he rings the changes on what is basically a naïve dramatic device. Tirso's unconventional use of disguise, therefore, would indicate that he was interested in exploring its dramatic possibilities.

Disguise occurs in two forms in these plays: the woman disguised as a man (the so-called "female-page" figure) is central to Don Gil; the veiled woman, or tapada, to La celosa. In El amor médico, both figures occur. In these three plays, disguise cannot be regarded purely as a technical device; it is also a means by which Tirso explores the problem of identity and personality. Yet this philosophical and psychological exploration cannot be divorced from Tirso's exploration of the dramatic possibilities and implications on the technical level. The two levels are inter-related and complementary.

Closely associated with Tirso's unconventional use of disguise is
the unorthodox construction of his plots. Again, these three plays provide us with fascinating examples of Tirso's experiments in dramatic form. I shall attempt to show that the traditional view that Tirso is indifferent to the niceties of dramatic technique is based on a failure to see the originality of his dramatic structures. The three plays are three different solutions, each satisfactory in itself, to problems in dramatic form.

These plays also allow us to identify some of the characteristics of Tirso's comedies. There is, first of all, his fondness for absurd situations. This is demonstrated especially clearly in La celosa de sí misma, where the absurdity starts with the title. That the absurd situations are normally the result of a satirical handling of dramatic and social conventions is brought out by all three of the plays. In the satirical handling of his material, Tirso's ironic view of life plays a large part.

Another feature of Tirso's art is his development technique, by which he re-works or develops in some works situations, motifs, etc., found in other plays. It may be reasonably assumed that in a number of instances, at least, a play, A, which contains a more extensive development of a situation which exists in embryonic form in another, B, is probably later than B. While recognising the possibility that what may be taken as an embryo may in fact be a reference in short-hand to an earlier, more elaborately developed situation, we may admit the (limited) value of this technique as an aid to establishing the chronology (or, at least, the inter-relationship) of some of Tirso's plays. In any case, its importance for a study of his dramatic technique is self-evident.

Finally, the plays are interesting for the light they cast on certain theories of comedy. Professor R. O. Jones has seen a number
of Golden Age comedies, Don Gil and El amor médico among them, as "vacaciones morales". The view that comedy aims at strengthening and reinforcing our sense of moral and social order by allowing us vicarious indulgence in disorderly behaviour owes much to the Aristotelian theory of the tragic catharsis. A closer look at the above-mentioned comedies, however, would seem to cast some doubt on the ultimate validity of this theory when applied indiscriminately to Golden Age comedy. On the other hand, W. Kerr's theory of comedy, which concentrates on comedy as an element in the tragedy-comedy complex and its function in philosophical terms seems to throw considerable light on El amor médico. As regards the basic situations on which these comedies are built, A. Nicoll's view still seems valid. He sees two basic elements in comedy: the first, the mate-hunt; the second, the conflict between society and the individual. These two elements are related to the theories proposed by Meredith and Bergson. In many comedies, as Nicoll points out, these two elements may be found combined. This is true of the comedies which will be analysed in this thesis.

This group of plays, then, provides a convenient introduction to my study of some of Tirso's comedies. They are among his best works and thus illustrate important aspects and problems of his dramatic art.

In an article which attempts to view Don Gil de las calzas verdes as an example of baroque dramatic art, Hesse and McCrery have claimed that there is an incompatibility between the ending of the play and the action which leads up to it: "La repentina admisión de verdadero amor de doña Juana por don Martín al final de la comedia es el resultado
lógico de la acción, pero no especialmente de la acción en las tablas. To explain this tension, they suggest that Tirso is here employing what they term "forma interior", i.e., the dramatic objectification in opposite terms of inner feelings. Thus, Juana's vengeance is really an expression of her wounded love. A traditional, outer form is used to express a human, psychological problem.

The article is interesting in that it represents an attempt to interpret Tirso's comedy in the light of theories of baroque art applied to literature. It is valuable in that it draws attention to two very important aspects of the play: the ending and the structure. These are features of Tirso's dramatic art which have been traditionally singled out for severe criticism, and which, I hope to show, are features which are crucial to the understanding of the Tirsoan art form.

It is obvious, however, that much remains to be done, for it seems that the interpretation offered in this article is in some ways unsatisfactory. I do not propose to discuss whether Tirso's art-form is baroque or not, but I should like to examine the structure of the play more closely. This will make it clear that Juana's declaration of love is not — indeed, cannot — be the logical result of the action: the play does not set out to prove that Juana loves Martín. Her love for him is never called into question, and if this fact is taken into account, the interpretation of the play by these critics may need some modification. Nor is the nature of Juana's "vengeance" properly analysed.

Secondly, once it is seen that there is no tension between the stage action and the psychic action, the postulation of a consequent "forma interior" is invalidated. In fact, this term tells us very little about the real structure of this play. It does, indeed,
draw attention to the presence of the so-called "third dimension", i.e., psychological analysis, in Tirso's play. Tirso's portrayal of feminine psychology is skilful and profound: Juana's love has indeed suffered a severe blow. But we are not meant primarily to think that the formal action of the play is to be seen as a translation of Juana's offended love into apparent vindictiveness. Juana, significantly, never allows her emotions to get the better of her in the play: the lesson taught her by the events preceding the action proper has been well learnt.

There is, however, an unusual structural pattern in Don Gil, the identification of which would help us to understand the play itself as well as the Tirsoan dramatic structure more fully, for Tirso experiments constantly with the art form which he receives from Lope. This pattern is hinted at in a later article by Hesse, in which he analyses the complexity of the play, clearly disentangling the various strands of action which form the complex plot, and subtly analysing the motivations of the characters and the themes around which the play is constructed. He draws our attention to the fact that there is a "play" (Doña Juana's machinations) within the drama (Juana's pursuit of the unfaithful Martín). This is a vital point, but its implications are not fully developed by Hesse. His article, moreover, follows too closely the approach employed in the previous one: the vengeance-love opposition, for example, is taken too far.

Surprisingly, perhaps, a central feature of the structure of the play, not considered in the articles mentioned, has not been properly analysed yet: this is the conventional dramatic device of the female page. Doña Carmen Bravo-Villasante has drawn attention to the multiplication of the figure of Don Gil in the play and notes that the various actions hinge on the use of disguise. But her analysis does
not go very far. Valbuena Prat has referred to the elements of parody contained in the play. He does not develop his statement, but it is vital for a full appreciation of the comedy, and we shall return to it later.

Tirso's fondness for ringing the changes on conventional dramatic devices will become apparent as our study of his plays progresses. It will also be noted that these changes usually contain an element of the grotesque, which is itself often an indication of a satirical intention. The mujer vestida de hombre is a figure who recurs over and over again in Tirso's plays, and he hardly ever uses her in the conventional way.

Don Gil de las calzas verdes is a marvellous example of Tirso's unconventional use of "la disfrazada de hombre". Juana, to begin with, is not strictly a female page. In fact, she stresses she is no page when she takes Caramanchel into her service:

[Juana:] porque desde hoy te recibo en mi servicio.
Caramanchel: ¡Lenguaje nuevo! ¿Quién ha visto paje con lacayo?
Juana: Yo no vivo sino sólo de mi hacienda, ni paje en mi vida fui: vengo a pretender aquí un hábito o encomienda;
I.ii. p.1718a. (8)

Her declaration provokes an incredulous reaction in Caramanchel, and he counters with words which contain the germ of the situation to be developed in the comedy:

Caramanchel: Ninguno ha habido de los amos que he tenido ni poeta ni capón; parece olas lo postrero,
I.ii. p.1718a.

There is, first, a hint of the tendency of the comedia to satirise its own conventions, which is further developed in the course of the play: no woman disguised as a man, Tirso seems to be saying, can ever
convincingly pass herself off as one - especially if she does not pretend to be a page; thus the attention of the audience is constantly drawn to the artificiality of the situation on stage. Closely linked to this is the note of ambiguous sexuality introduced at the very beginning, a factor which is going to play an important part in the comedy, and which is part of the grotesque effect achieved by the multiplication of the Gil figure.

The effect on the structure of the play is evident. It has been said that the plot is perhaps the most complex in the whole of Golden Age drama. In spite of the apparent slips pointed out by Wade, one can only be amazed by the complexity of the mind which produced the play.9

The basic outline, however, is simple enough. Juana disguises herself as a man in order to pursue and win back her fickle lover. This she succeeds in doing thanks to her machinations. Thus the basic situation and its outcome are conventional.

The real complexity of the play, as Hesse has pointed out, lies in the development of the plot, the means by which Juana brings Martin to heel, or, as Hesse puts it, the "play" within the drama. This is where the originality of the comedy lies. The underlying pattern of the play consists of an initial split into three main strands of action (real or narrated) which converge in the third act. An analysis of these strands of action has been made by Hesse. It seems, however, that something more can be added to it. On closer analysis, the structure of the play appears strikingly original and the close connexion between form and content in this play becomes evident.

Secondly, it will be necessary to try and analyse the reasons for the complexity of the structure.
It seems to me that Hesse's statement that Don Gil is cast in the form of a play within a drama can be developed fruitfully. The structure of the play, in fact, can be accurately compared to a set of three Chinese boxes or a series of three concentric circles of diminishing radii whose focal point is to be found in that scene in the third act where we are presented with four Gil's in succession.

The outer box or frame is provided by the Juana-Martín-Inés situation. Martín's morally irresponsible action is parodied in the second frame by the situation created by Juana in the Gil-Inés-Juan intrigue. The first link between the two frames is the ambiguous Gil figure who is Gil de Albornoz (Martín) in the first, and Gil de las calzas verdes (Juana) in the second. The second link is the fact that Juana-Gil is a parody of Martín-Gil, i.e., Juana is holding the mirror up to Martín. The travesty of Martín's actions is emphasised by the enlarging of the intrigue to include Clara. This is, so to speak, parody by augmentation. A third frame is provided by the Elvira-Miguel-Inés intrigue. The Gil figure provides a double link between this frame and the others: first, Miguel is impersonating the 'real' Don Gil, while the latter has been flirting with Elvira, who bears an amazing resemblance to him. The links and resemblances are not as extravagant as they may at first seem. Elvira is Juana herself in her wholly feminine aspect. Miguel is, likewise, Martín, but in his less flattering aspect, i.e., the fickle, unprincipled Martín who repudiated the obligations owed to Juana by the Martín who loved her. Secondly, the Gil figure seems to acquire somewhat greater individuality by being presented as someone who is neither Martín (who impersonates him) nor Juana-Elvira (whom he loves). But Gil's love for Elvira and his "almost" perfect resemblance to her make it clear that Gil and Elvira are only two different aspects of Juana.
The dramatic situation is thus quite extraordinary. We get, first, the tendency in the *comedia* to embody facets of character in dramatic figures (cf. the ghost in *El caballero de Olmedo* - part ghost, part Alonso's fears). But we also get a situation akin to one in modern drama which Dr. Bradbrook has referred to as different personalities trading under the same name. In Tirso, we get different aspects of the one personality assuming different names as if they were individual and separate entities. The parallel, however, must not be pushed too far, although we shall meet similar situations again in Tirso. Tirso is aware of the conflicting aspects of an individual's character, but he does not, as Peyton would have us think, imply a disintegration of character. The integrality of the character is not yet called into question, as it is in the literature of our times.

To recapitulate briefly, the structure of the play resembles a set of Chinese boxes with a definite focal point in the third act. There is a series of definite links, essentially psychological in nature, between the different boxes. But to understand the part this structure plays in the comedy, we must examine the actions of the characters.

Martín's abandonment of Juana, whom he had promised to marry, is the starting point of the play. His action betrays an attitude of callous irresponsibility: though conscious of his obligations towards Juana (who he has been told is pregnant), he finds the lure of the rich Inés too strong to resist:

`que el interés
y beldad de doña Inés
excusan la culpa mía.`

II.ix. p.1735a

But this weakness is only one aspect of a spineless character.

Martín is at first an unresisting puppet in the hands of his father, and
it is perhaps for this reason that his punishment is not more severe.

In fact, it is on the shoulders of Martín's and Inés's fathers that the brunt of the moral responsibility falls. The part played by these parents is not fully recognised by Doña Esmeralda Gijón in her analysis of the play. Martin's father, from what we are told of his conduct (for he does not appear on stage), is a thoroughly despicable person. Driven by his lust for money, he encourages Martín to abandon Juana and go to Madrid as Don Gil de Albornoz in order to marry Doña Inés. Juana describes his attitude thus:

\[
y\text{y aunque sabe que nací}
\begin{array}{c}
si no tan rica, tan noble, 
\text{el oro, que es sangre vil,}
\text{que califica intereses,}
\text{un portillo supo abrir}
\end{array}
\text{en su codicia. ¡Qué mucho,}
\text{siendo él viejo, y yo, infeliz!}
\text{Ofrecióse un casamiento}
\text{de una doña Inés, que aquí,}
\text{con setenta mil ducados,}
\text{se hace adorar y aplaudir.}
\]

Don Andrés thus fails in his paternal duties, for he actually sets out to teach his son to be irresponsible by making the latter a party to his own unscrupulous plans:

\[
\text{[MARTÍN (reading his father's letter):] } "\ldots \text{si en ella [la casa de Juana] están confusos, no lo ando yo menos, temiendo os haya seguido y impida lo que tan bien nos está }\ldots"
\]

II.x. p. 1714b

It is not that he is unaware of Martín's obligations to Juana; he admits he is not in his letter to Don Pedro:

\[
\text{[PEDRÓ (reading Andrés's letter):] } "\ldots [Martín] ha dado palabra a una dama desta ciudad, noble y hermosa, pero pobre; y ya vos veis en los tiempos presentes lo que pronostican hermosuras sin hacienda }\ldots"
\]

I.iii. p. 1719a

Furthermore, he is deliberately deceiving his friend, Don Pedro, for the Don Gil he offers as a husband to Inés is none other than his son, Martín, who, he asserts, is pledged to marry Juana.
Don Pedro, Inés's father, is also an unworthy parent. Inés herself condemns him:

Si la codicia civil,  
que a toda vejez infama,  
te vence, mira que es vil defecto.  
I.v. p.1721b

His greed and, more important, his acceptance of the social conventions of the time by which money and class are regarded as the normal criteria in arranged marriages blind him to the fact that it is wrong to marry off his daughter to a man he does not know, especially since he is aware that Inés already loves Juan. When Inés attempts to offer resistance, he adopts a tyrannical attitude. Ironically, folly is made to frustrate itself in this comedy. It is cupidity which leads Andrés to deceive Pedro, and greed and social conformity which make Pedro take Andrés at his word, and which fail to arouse Pedro's suspicion at the unlikely name of Gil or to the possibility that the second Gil may also be a humbug. Thus does Juana get the chance to prevent the marriage.

It is clear that the attitudes of Don Andrés and Don Pedro are unreasonable and immoral. Their plans, according to the conventions of the comedia, are thus doomed to frustration. Generally, it is the children themselves who circumvent unreasonable parental opposition in order to fulfill their love, but in this play, Martín passively accepts his father's suggestion, while Inés, after an initial show of rebellion, is soon head over heels in love with Don Gil - as she thinks.

So, while the ultimate moral responsibility lies with their parents, Martín and Inés are both guilty of irresponsibility in an immediate sense. Martín is a pathetic, passive, spineless and immature creature. He has no real understanding of the nature of love and its responsibilities. Nor is he free from a certain cynicism,
as is seen in II.viii, when he agrees to fight a duel with Don Juan over Inés - a month after his marriage to the latter. This cynical attitude is extended to his treatment of Juana:

He is to be punished for this as well as for failing to stand up to his father, and his pathetic attempt to shift the whole responsibility on to the shoulders on Don Andrés in III.i is of no avail. Inés, on the other hand, is to be punished for her fickleness. She, too, reveals her immaturity when she fails to show that she is fully aware of her obligations to Juan. As we shall see, it is essential to take into account this aspect of Inés's character if we are properly to understand the structure of the play.

Juana's counter-measures against Martín initiate the action of the play. She disguises herself as a man in order to pursue Martín and win him back because she loves him. This is made quite clear in her speech in II.i. Her aim is basically to thwart Martín's plans and force him to marry her:

This aim remains constant throughout the play; Juana reaffirms her intention later in the play:
This curing of Martín, which is bringing him back to his senses, is what Juana refers to when she says immediately afterwards:

La mujer
venga agravios desta suerte.
III.iv. p. 1747b

Thus it seems that Hesse and McCrory interpret the word "vengeance" wrongly. Juana's enredos are not examples principally of real or apparent vindictive revenge; they are intended to foil Martín's plans and to awaken his conscience. Thus there is no real conflict between the action of the play and the ending: the latter is a logical and inevitable result of the former. Martín, at the end of the play, is made to realise that he can no longer evade his responsibilities by flight, disguise, or cynicism. All possible avenues of escape are blocked to him: the only way out is by marrying Juana. Let us see how Martín is forced to marry the woman he abandoned.

While Juana's use of male disguise and her winning back Martín in the end are conventional dramatic situations, an unconventional feature is the multiplication of the Gil figure. This is the characteristic feature of the play. Valbuena's statement, which I referred to earlier, hints at this:

un determinadas formas, Tirso juega con la intriga,
y compone una especie de "ballet" maravilloso, de
gracia y malicia, pintoresco en las costumbres de
ciudad y de aldea, en que la trama inverosímil se
combina con la parodia de motivos usuales en el drama
de honor o caracteres. Quizá el ejemplo más interesante
sea el de Don Gil de las calzas verdes.

In fact, it is the conventional use of male disguise by offended heroines which is parodied in this play. Juana's assumption of male disguise - perfectly motivated in her case (at least in terms of the dramatic conventions of the age) - leads to the assumption of her false personality by three other characters in the play. The result is a ludicrous conglomeration of four Gils in the final act.
The initial event which sets off this chain reaction is, of course, Juana's disguising herself as Don Gil. However, we must not forget that Don Gil de las calzas verdes is actually an usurper of the identity of the "real" Don Gil de Albornoz (which is Martín's assumed personality). In other words, Juana supplants Martín's deception with another deception (thus parodying it): she usurps his assumed personality. Her immediate aim is to forestall Martín and prevent him from courting Inés. However, so successful is Juana's plan that not only does Martín find that his false personality has been usurped and that he, the real Don Gil, is regarded as the spurious version, but he himself is led to assume the personality of the usurper of his assumed personality by wearing green breeches, i.e., he is forced to repudiate his own self. This is one aspect of the absurd position into which the spineless Martín is forced.

The destruction of the identity of the "real" Don Gil de Albornoz is carried a step further in the Elvira episode. Here he is presented as a usurper of the identity of Don Gil de las calzas verdes, who now claims to be the "real" Gil de Albornoz. This false Gil is Don Miguel, a false friend of a certain Don Martín. Don Miguel, as has been pointed out, is not entirely an invention: he is really the less flattering aspect of Martín. The immediate effect of Elvira's story is to alienate Martín even further from Inés, who now regards Don Miguel as a thoroughly unprincipled man, and, furthermore, one whom she cannot marry, since he is pledged to Elvira.

There are two further points which we need to note about this episode. The first has been referred to already: the Gil figure is here made more independent. But as it is only a shadow, a fiction, it may be identified with Juana (this is convenient for the perpetration of irresponsible actions which serve to frustrate Martín's plans),
or with Martín (who must bear the consequences of those actions),
or with anyone else (Clara, Juan), and therefore - with the help of
wit - with no one at all! Secondly, there is a further change of sex
in Juana's new persona, Elvira. The first change, which takes place
in the second of these Chinese boxes, is from female to male (or
pseudo-male), i.e., from Juana to Gil. The third box, which further
complicates the situation, paradoxically provides a truer reflection
of it, not only in the identities (real or feigned) of Juana, Martin
and Gil, but also in the sexes of these characters. Gil, it is to be
noted, who loves and resembled Elvira, is thus bi-sexual, hermaphroditic.
We get therefore a dramatic situation in which one action is reflected,
as in a mirror, in another, which is reflected in yet another, each
successive reflection being a deformation revealing a different aspect
of the problem. The Chinese boxes structure is the obvious vehicle
for such a plan.

However, Juana realises that Inés cannot be allowed to fall too
deeply in love with Don Gil de las calzasverdes and the latter's
promiscuous exploits coupled with the exploitation of the ambiguous
nature of Inés's love (which we shall discuss shortly) are used to
keep Inés at bay. At the same time, Juana foresees Martín's attempt
to identify himself with Don Gil de las calzasverdes, and so she
perpetrates a number of acts, the consequences of which will have to be
borne by Martín. At the end of the play a number of persons are
thirsting for Martín's blood: Fabio and Decio, who think Don Gil
wounded Juan; Celio and Antonio, who intend to compel Don Gil to marry
Clara; and, finally, Don Diego, who will be revenged on Martín for the
murder of Juana. Martín, naturally, helps to condemn himself by wearing
green breeches, and he finds himself unable to disclaim responsibility
for Don Gil's actions. Juana, however, is in total control of the
situation: her intention is not to place Martin's life in jeopardy.
He is to be forced into a corner and made to realise his own folly.
He cannot escape his responsibilities by assuming a false identity.
Martin, in fact, as Hesse and Sta. Gijón have pointed out, is presented
with a brilliant travesty of his own actions. His assumed identity is
usurped and replaced by another identity (nominally the same), which is
foisted upon him willy-nilly, and which he cannot disclaim. His trick
has been turned against him and he becomes a victim of his own game.
This is underlined by the fact that he, Don Gil de Albornoz, is
frustrated by Don Gil de las calzas verdes, with whom, in the course
of the play, he has identified himself.

Martin, moreover, is not the only character who repudiates his
own identity to assume that of Don Gil. Juan and Clara also declare
in the third act that they are Don Gil. One result of this multi¬
plication of Gil is to reduce to absurdity the personality of Don
Gil. Personality is of necessity something individual. Thus the
multiplication of the Gil personality is a denial of its existence.
The Gil figure is shown up for what it is - a deceitful mask. And a
mask can be worn by anyone.

The result is that Martin is completely checkmated. Not only
is his false personality usurped and shattered by being reduced to
absurdity, but apparently he is also to be held to account for the
irresponsibility of the usurper's actions. But though Martin's
attitude has been an irresponsible one, he has been prevented in spite
of himself - thanks to Juana - from actually infringing the moral
law, i.e., from marrying Inés. So Juana's machinations have not only
served to ridicule and chasten Martin, but also to save him from
himself and from his unprincipled father. Therefore, after being
taught a lesson, he is saved from more severe punishment. Juana's revelation of her identity ends the confusion, and order is restored by the marriages at the end.

The secondary implications of the unusual use of the device of the disguised woman still remain to be examined. Da. Esmeralda Gijón has very neatly described Juana as the Antitenorio. This description is apt as far as it goes, but one may add that Juana could with equal fitness be described as an Antitenoria. 16

The play is not only an attack on the moral irresponsibility of men in their relations with women. We have already seen that the unprincipled behaviour of Don Andrés and Don Pedro serves as the moral background to the play's action. This lack of moral standards is reflected in the children, and the comedy thus deals with the irresponsible and frivolous attitudes of women as well. In fact, the question of responsibility in personal relations is the general moral theme of the play.

Along with Martín, both Inés and Clara are ridiculed for their fickleness in Don Gil de las calzas verdes. Inés abandons Juan to turn to Don Gil, and Clara falls in love with Gil at first sight. The portrayal of Inés in particular is highly ironical. In I.iv, she affirms her love for Juan:

Tú solamente has de ser
mi esposo;

I.iv. p. 1721a

When her father insists that she leave Juan and marry Don Gil, she, unlike Martín, grows rebellious. She warns her father that he would be wrong to marry her off for financial considerations. Her contempt for Don Gil is unbounded:

¿Don Gil?
¿Marido de villancico?
¡Gil! ¡Jesús! No me lo nombres; ponle un cayado y pellico.

I.v. p. 1721b.
And again:

¿Con Gil me quieren casar?
¿Soy yo Teresa? ¡Ay de mí!

I.v. p.1722a.

In the huerta del Duque, however, Inés performs a volte-face. She falls in love with Don Gil even before knowing his name, and when she discovers she is in love with the only lately-despised Don Gil, she no longer looks with contempt upon the pastoral name:

Ya por el don Gil me muero,
que es un brinquillo el don Gil.

I.viii. p.1724b

And she even confesses to Clara:

Más quiero el pie de don Gil
que la mano de un monarca.

I.ix. p.1726a

When Juan accuses her of fickleness, she finds it to her glory to proclaim that la donna è mobile:

La hermosura
del mundo tanto es mayor
cuanto es la naturaleza
más varía en él; y así quiero
ser mudable, porque espero
tener así más belleza. (17)
II.ii. p.1730a

This impudent rationalisation of fickleness betrays moral irresponsibility and emotional immaturity. This last is stressed when in Act III she is courted by four Gils in succession (one of them is actually Juan). She is perplexed and cannot tell in her blindness (symbolised by the night) which of them is the Gil she loves. She is obsessed by the figure of Don Gil, but is no longer sure who exactly Don Gil is. She does not know whom she loves precisely because the Don Gil she loves is neither a man nor, in fact, a real person.

Nor does it seem as if we are meant to excuse Inés on the grounds that she is young and inexperienced. Young she may be, but she is certainly not naïve. She carries on a secret affair with Juan and when
her father overhears her promising to marry him, she can brazen it out. She, like Martín, is not without cynicism: she exploits Juan's love for her in order to try and rid herself of the odious Gil de Albornoz and also to protect at the same time her beloved Gil de las calzas verdos:

El que de casa te ha echado
es un don Gil muy barbado,
a quien aborrezco yo;
pero quiero casar
con él mi padre, y es fuerza
que, por darle gusto, tuerza
mi inclinación. Si a matar
estotro don Gil te atreves,
de Albornoz tiene el renombre,
y aunque dicen que es muy hombre,
como amor y ánimo llevas,
el premio a mi cuenta escribe.

II.i. p.1730a-b.

It is only Martín's own cynicism (as has been pointed out) which saves him. Inés's request to Juan also reveals in her a streak of wanton cruelty. It is not only evident in her heartless jilting of Juan and her cynical exploitation of his love for her, but also in her desire to have the bearded Gil murdered and her willingness to expose Juan to being killed. And, in Act III, when she learns that Don Gil de las calzas verdos has been "unfaithful" to her, she has no scruples in thinking of repeating her offer to Juan, on condition that he murder the other Gil this time:

A don Juan
que mi amor celoso siente,
he de decir que lo mate,
y me casaré con él.

III.iii. p.1746b

Inés's portrait is, on the whole, an unflattering one.19

The multiplication of the Gil figure proves that Don Gil is really a chimera. Inés is ridiculed for pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp, and the disintegration of Don Gil is meant to punish her by leaving her frustrated. She has to return to Juan chastened and punished for her fickleness. She, too, has to be made aware of the responsibilities which
love and a personal relationship entail.

There is another element, which we must take into account in the analysis of the characters of Inés and Clara. The nature of Inés's love for Don Gil and of her friendship for Elvira is ambiguous. When Gil-Martín is introduced to Inés, she reacts violently; he cannot be her Don Gil:

¿Don Gil tan lleno de barbas?
Es el don Gil que yo adoro
un Gilito de esmeraldas.
I.x. p.1726b

This does not seem to be merely, as Hesse puts it, an expression of her aesthetic scorn. There is a hint of a lesbian element in Inés's character. This is emphasised by the ambiguous nature of her friendship for Elvira. As Juana explains to Quintana, Inés is a great friend of Elvira's:

porque afirma quiere bien
a un galán de quien retrato
soy vivo, y que en mi presencia
la aflige menos la ausencia
de su proceder ingrato.
II.i. p.1728b

Elvira is thus a Gil-substitute for Inés who affirms this shortly afterwards:

que anuque no puedo negar
que te amo, porque pareces
a quien adoro, mereces
por ti sola enamorar
a un Adonis, a un Narciso
y al sol que tus ojos viere.
II.v. p.1731a.

These words, to say the least, appear ambiguous. They are hardly words one would expect one woman to address to another. More significant is the use of "Narciso". Since Narcissus can only love himself, it is thus a female Narcissus, i.e., a woman, who Inés thinks may fall in love with Elvira. But if the use of "Adonis" and three nouns in the masculine mean anything, this woman must be a manly one,
i.e., a lesbian. There is also the further complexity that there is such a Narcissus, viz., Don Gil, who is Álvira. But here we enter the realm of absurdity, where the Neo-Platonic concept of like loving like can lead us.

In the third act, too, Juana makes use of her knowledge of Inés's psychology to get out of an uncomfortable situation. For a moment, Juana seems to have overreached herself. Inés sees Gil courting Clara just after she learns from Caramanchel of his affair with Álvira. In her jealousy, she threatens to ruin Juana's game completely. Juana sees the danger might arise of her actually forcing a marriage between Inés and Martín, but she manages to keep her wits. She finds it easy to persuade Inés that she is not Gil but Álvira, and Inés's speech is a revealing one:

\begin{quote}
   \textit{Aní se ha de hacer, vestirte en tu traje puedes; que con él podremos ver cómo te entalla y te inclina. Ven, y pondráste un vestido de los míos; que imagina mi amor en ese fingido que eres hombre, y no vecina.}
   
   ...(Aparte) \textit{¡Qué varonil mujer! Por más que repara mi amor, dice que es don Gil en la voz, presencia y cara.}
\end{quote}

III.vii. p.1751a

Doña Clara also seems to share Inés's "aesthetic" appreciation of Don Gil:

\begin{quote}
   \textit{Un ángel de cristal es el rapaz; cual sombra sigo su talle airoso y gentil.}
   
   I.viii. p.1724b
\end{quote}

She is a rival of Inés's for the attentions of Don Gil who plays off the two women against each other. In the third act, we see that Clara is so obsessed with her love for Don Gil that she assumes the identity and dress of the man with whom she is in love - a further reductio.
ad absurdum of Neo-Platonic theory. The case of Serafina in *El vergonzoso en palacio* immediately comes to mind. These two women reveal not only narcissism but also lesbianism in their behaviour, for it is clear that what they find attractive in Don Gil is precisely what is obvious to Caramanchel from the start — his effeminacy. These psychological irregularities in both Inés and Clare are ridiculed when the man they are pursuing turns out to be a real woman. Underlying their frivolity (and, in the case of Inés, her moral irresponsibility) is a psychological abnormality. They are made aware of this and “cured” by being forced to recognise the absurdity of their attitudes.

To sum up, then, we may say that the play satirises a frivolous, irresponsible, unprincipled and, ultimately, immoral attitude towards life. The ultimate blame for the social and moral chaos in the play lies with the unprincipled parents, Don Andrés and Don Pedro, who are willing victims of their own cupidity and selfishness and of social conventions. The tyrannical, unreasonable attitude on the part of the parents is wrong; therefore their plans are frustrated.

But Tirso does not use the parents’ guilt to absolve the children of all blame. For Tirso, the moral law is the ultimate guide of the individual, and when it comes into conflict with parental authority or social conventions, the latter must be defied so that the moral law can be upheld. In Martín and Inés, the same problem is put from two different angles: Martín acquiesces in his father’s immoral plan; Inés, at first rebellious, also submits to her father’s wishes, but for a different reason. Tirso insists that both are wrong. Therefore both have to endure frustration and ridicule.

The above analysis now makes the structure of the play more understandable. The situations which provide the dramatic conflict
of the comedy are themselves basic to the *comedia* as a whole. Juana's pursuit and recapture of the fickle Martín is a typical variation of the traditional mate-hunt in which the woman outwits the man. This provides material for the action. The problem it illustrates is a variation of the traditional clash between the individual and society, between what is naturally right and what is conventionally stipulated. Juana has to overcome Don Andrés's opposition as well as to save Martín from becoming the victim of social conventions owing to his own moral inertia.

She achieves her aim in two main stages. In the first, she presents a parody of Martín's action. This gives us the two inner boxes of the play's structure. In the second step, Martín is made to realize what the possible consequences of his irresponsible action could be. This necessitates the identification of Don Gil with Martín, which is effected by the disintegration of the false Gil figure at the climax of the play.

This comes late in the third act where we are presented with four Gils. If the test of a true personality is its uniqueness, Don Gil cannot pass this test. There are a number of points which can be noted here. The appearance of four Gils - all of them spurious, for the "real" Gil, Gil de Albornoz, has renounced his identity in favour of that of the usurping Gil de las calzas Verdes - is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the device of the female page, for three of the characters are using this conventional device quite gratuitously.

What underlines the grotesque absurdity of the situation is the fact that two of these Gils, Juan and Martín, without realizing it, are pretending to be a woman pretending to be a man - and to do this Martín has had to repudiate himself twice over!

With this collision of Gils, the figure is shattered. The various false Gils disperse - Juana, Juan and Clara -,
and Martín, the original Gil, now in green breeches, is left as the scapegoat for the sins of all the Giles, only, however, to be rescued by Juana when he finds himself unable to disclaim responsibility. Once he accepts responsibility for his actions as Martín, harmony is restored.

The long opening speech by Caramanchel in I.ii, traditionally seen as serving at best only to inject additional humour into the play, is now revealed as a brilliant, wittily satirical introduction to the comedy. The satirical note is sounded at the beginning and is developed in the course of the play. The moral failings of Caramanchel's masters are a prelude to the moral failings of Martín, Inés and their respective fathers. But there is not only a betrayal of responsibility in Caramanchel's masters. Concomitant with it is their hypocrisy: they are all humbugs, seeming to be what they are not, profiting from the advantages which they derive from their masks, their personae. Caramanchel cannot tolerate them. Juana, too, unmasks Martín, the sordid motivations of Andrés and Pedro, the emotional immaturity and callousness of Inés. There is one further point: Caramanchel wants a master whom he can serve: the master's moral integrity and physical presence are as important to him as his food and pay. When Juana meets him, he is looking for a suitable master:

_Buso un amo;
que si el cielo los llovera
y las chincheas se tornaran
amos, si amos pregonaran
por las calles, si estuviera
Madrid de anos espedrado
y ciego yo los picara,
nunca en uno tropezara,
según soy de desdichado._

I.ii. p. 1716a

But, like Lazarillo, he is fated to go from bad to worse. He finds
a master who provides him with food and money; but the master's moral integrity is doubtful, although Caramanchel never stops wondering whether Gil's integrity can indeed be doubtful. Worse, Caramanchel's master is a non-master: he is invisible most of the time, and, at the end, turns out to be neither a man nor a hermaphrodite, but a woman. The connexion with the central situation in the play via the problem of identity is obvious.

Thus a conventional dramatic device is ridiculed, and this ridicule also embraces a social convention which is both unnatural and immoral. Social and literary satire, then, are linked in this play, as in so many others by Tirso.

While it is clear that the theme of the play (social responsibility) is at the bottom a serious one, it is not treated in a grave way. The comic aspect is provided by the literary satire. It is the lightness and subtlety with which Tirso handles his theme which allows us to laugh when Martín says: "La muerte tuve tragada" (III.xxii. p.1761b). In fact, the makings of tragedy are contained in the subject of the play. Juana herself very nearly pushes Inés into Martín's arms in III.vii. More seriously, Inés, on two occasions, tries to have Martín and then Juana killed, inciting the violently jealous Juan to murder them. It is no surprise that the irresponsibility of the kind displayed by Martín, when raised to a power so high that it becomes a disintegrating force which seriously threatens the whole moral and social order leads to tragedy in Al burlador de Sevilla. The preoccupations of Spanish comedy are akin to those of Spanish tragedy. Hence the ambiguous tonality of the comedia. It is the moral element in human behaviour which ultimately tips the scales in favour of a tragic or comic ending. Don Gil is a comedy because in it irresponsibility is prevented from turning into immorality.
The above analysis, it is hoped, has brought out the relationship between form and content by showing that the play combines satire of a social convention with satire of a dramatic one. The analysis would be incomplete, however, without a brief reference to some stylistic features, for language is one of the most important aspects of comedy. There are two stylistic aspects which interest us in particular, as they are concerned with vital aspects of the play: the first is the witty exploration of the green symbolism in the play; the second is Tirso's clever use of language to underline certain traits of character. We shall examine the latter phenomenon first.

The basic situation of the play arises from an attempt by Andrés and Pedro to marry Martín to Inés on the grounds that the match is a sound one financially. Marriage, a holy sacrament, is thus converted into a purely business transaction which ignores human emotions and individual responsibilities: Inés does not want to leave the man she loves, Juan, to marry an unknown person; Martín is pledged to marry Juana. The latter, in her metaphors, reveals the sordid financial basis of the arranged marriage in her speech:

Enamórate de óidas
don Miguel de ti: al poder
de tu dote lo atribuye,
que ya amor es mercader;
y atropellando amistades,
obligaciones, duelo y fe
de don Gil, le hurtó las cartas
y el nombre, porque con él
disfrazándose, a esta corte
vino, pienso que no ha un mes,
veniéndose por don Gil;
te ha pedido por mujer.
Yo, que sigo como sombra
sus pasos, vine tras él,
sembrando por los caminos
quejas, que vendré a coger
colmadas de desengaños,
que es caudal del bien querer.

II.v. p. 1732a.
In the second act, Juana, as Elvira, stresses the debased nature of love as a transaction; when love is equated with a business transaction, it conforms to the treacherous laws of the insecure financial world:

Correspondió a los principios, porque la voluntad es cambio, que entra caudaloso, pero no tarda en romper. Llegó nuestro amor al punto acostumbrado, que fue a pagar yo lo contado, fiada en su prometer. Diome palabra de esposo... Mal haya la simple, amén, que no escamienta en palabras, cuando tantas rotas vel

II.v. p.1731b.

Martín's love is directed towards money. His credit is ensured by his father's "cartas de favor":

[Juana:] 

y el interés
de tu dote apetecible
alas le puso a los pies.
Díole cartas de favor
el viejo, y quiso con él
partirse al punto a esta corte,
nueva imagen de Babel. (22)
II.v. p.1732a.

In these passages, the stylistic equation of love and money is obvious and serves to establish the correspondence between the two. Thus a more subtle use of the equation is possible in passages where the characters use financial terms to express their emotions. The criteria of their scale of values are thus cleverly exposed. A good example is the scene in which Pedro eagerly welcomes Martín-Gil:

Señor, señor, mil veces bien venido
para alegar a esta casa vuestra;
que para comprobar lo que he leído
sobre el valor que vuestro talle muestra.

I.iii. p.1739a.

Gil's "valor" is, of course, the "diez mil ducados de renta" which Andrés refers to in his letter to Pedro.
The word-play is intensified to an impudent level immediately afterwards, as both Martín and Pedro, waxing eloquent, shower on each other hypocritical compliments. The heightening of emotion leads to an effort on the part of both to find the most exalted and accurate terms to express their feelings, their hopes, their values. The terms they hit upon eloquently reveal their real motivations and thoughts:

**MARTÍN:** Comenzáis de manera a aventajaros en hacerme merced, quí, temeroso, señor don Pedro, de poder pagaros aun en palabras (que en el generoso son prendas de valor), para envidiaros, en obras y en palabras victorioso, agradezco callando ...

```
.........
aunque si os informáis, de los cabellos quedará mi esperanza, que codicia lograr abrazos y cumplir deseos, abreviendo noticias y rodeos.
```

**PEDRO:** No tengo yo en tan poco de mi amigo el crédito y estima, que no sobre su firma sola, sin buscar testigo por quien vuestro valor aíentes cobre. Negociado tenía para conmigo; y aunque un hidalgo fuérais tan pobre como el que más, a doña Inés os diera, si don Andrés por vos intercediera.


Pedro, not chastened by the discovery that the first Gil de Albornoz was a fraud, extends an equally warm welcome to Juana-Gil, and the latter takes up the word-play:

**PEDRO:** Aquí otra vez me encomienda don Andrés la conclusión de vuestra bula, y que entienda la mucha satisfacción de vuestra sangre y hacienda ...

```
.....
muchu gano en conoceros.
```

**INÉS:** Y yo deshago sospechas, porque me inclina vuestro amor.

**JUANA:** Con ese os pago.

II.xiv. p. 1740b.
This word-play pervades the comedy and accounts for a large part of the comic effect. Inés’s defence of Juan is a subtle appeal to her father’s scale of values:

\[
y \text{ no pierden, siendo así,}
nada en que don Juan pretenda
ser tu yerno, si el valor
sabes que ilustra su hacienda.
\]

I.v. p.1721a.

Juan, too, has to buy Inés’s love by killing the bearded Gil:

\[
\text{Pues si con su muerte merca}
\text{mi fe tu amor, el laurel}
\text{ya mi cabeza previene;}
\text{que te hago voto solene}
\text{que pueden doblar por él.}
\]

II.ii. p.1730b.

Money in the play is all-powerful, and, with typical Tirsoan humour, is shown to have the power of faith and religion to perform miracles. Juana, with the help of money, finds out all she needs to know when she first arrives in Madrid, and has suborned one of the servants:

\[
\text{En casa de mi opuesta he ya obligado}
a quien me avise siempre; darle quiero
gracias destos milagros al dinero.
\]

I.vi. p.1722a.

Money, too, secures Pedro’s acceptance of Gil: the “milagros” are, of course, his money:

\[
\text{Milagros, don Gil, han sido}
deca presencia bizarra.
Negociado habéis por vos;
\]

I.x. p.1726a.

And money can even resurrect the dead:

\[
\text{JUANA: Habéisme vuelto}
\text{el alma al cuerpo.}
\]

\[
\text{INÉS: dicho es!}
\]

II.xv. p.1741a.

The result is that even an apparently harmless, stock expression acquires overtones of corrupted values:
CLARA: No lo muestra la frecuencia
de doña Inés, que os recrea
y es todo vuestro interés.

JUANA: ¿Yo a doña Inés, mi bien?

III.vi. p.1748a-b.

The above quotations exemplify what we shall see as one of Tirso's
typical tricks, namely, the use of language to underline or point
up a ridiculous situation. A factual absurdity is reflected in a
stylistic absurdity. Take, for example, the name of Gil. It is
absolutely inconceivable (at least within the dramatic tradition) that
a genuine hidalgo should bear the name of Gil: Inés points this out to
her father, who, however, brushes her objection aside; there are other
ways of telling a man's worth apart from his name:

INÉS: ¿Don Gil?
¿Marido de villancico?
¡Gil! ¡Jesús! No me lo nombres:
ponle un cayado y pellico.

FABRO: No repares en los nombres
cuando el dueño es noble y rico.

I.v. p.1721b.

And yet Inés is right. Soon afterwards, she repeats her point of
view to Juana-Gil, before being told that she is speaking to Gil.
Carmanchel drives the point home: *gil*, after all, is an adjunct, a
suffix, to things rustic or feminine: *pergil*, *torongil*, *cenogil*:

JUANA: ¿Don Gil de qué?
INÉS: ¿Qué sé yo?
¿Puede haber más que un don Gil
en todo el mundo?
JUANA: ¿Tan vil
es el nombre?
INÉS: ¡Unión creyó
que un don fuera guarnición
de un Gil, que siendo azagal
anda rociando azudal
de villancico en canción?
CARAH.: El nombre es digno de estima,
a pagar de mi dinero;
y si no ...
JUANA: Calla prosoro.
CARAH.: Gil es mi amo, y es la prima
y el bordón de todo el nombre;
y en *gil* se rematan mil.
que hay peregil, torongil,  
chenogil, porque se asombre  
el mundo de cuán sutil  
es, cuando rompe cambray;  
y hasta en Valladolid hay  
la puerta de Teresa Gil. (23)  

I.viii. pp. 1723b-1724a

Thus is Inés made all the more ridiculous when she straightway falls  
in love with Don Gil de las calzas verdes, just as cupidity had  
blinded her father, her passion blinds her, too, to points which  
she had seen and which are emphasised by Caramanchel.

A similar, but more obvious, use of metaphor, occurs in the  
third act when Inés, in the throes of her love for Gil, seems to  
discover that he is unfaithful to her. Not merely does Caramanchel  
suggest that she is an asno, but the sensual nature of her love is  
made obvious when, under the stress of overpowering emotion, she, too,  
reveals in telling metaphor that her love is appetite, i.e., desire:

INÉS: Alcahuete, ¿te de dar voces?  
¿He de hacer que os den mil coces?

CARAM.: Dos da un asno, que no mil.

INÉS: ¡Qué regalado papel!  
A su dueño se parece,  
ten infame que apetece  
las sobras de don Miguel.  
¡Doña Inés le da disgusto!  
¡Válgame Dios! ¿Ya empalago?  
¿Manjar soy que satisfago  
antes que me pruebe el gusto?  
¿Tan bueno es el de su ilvira  
que su apetito provoca?

CARAM.: No es la miel para la boca  
del . . . et caetera. (24)

III.ii. p. 1746a-b.

But it is in the play on the symbolic connotations of the word  
verde that we find the fullest development of the above two points,  
viz., the fact that Don Gil is a contradiction in terms and can refer  
to no man and the fact that Inés's love is base, sensual desire.  

From the structural point of view, verde is a recurrent leitmotif  
which serves to reinforce the play's unity. Juana, by transferring her
"calzas verdes" to Martín, simultaneously transfers to him the responsibility for his actions from which he cannot escape:

ANTONIO:  Buena estaba
MARTÍN:  la excusa! ¿No sois don Gil?
ANTONIO:  Así en la corte me llaman;
MARTÍN:  mas no el de las calzas verdes.
ANTONIO:  ¿No son verdes esas calzas?
CELIO:   O habéis de perder la vida,
o cumplir palabras dadas.

But it will appear obvious that the green breeches symbolise more than one thing in this comedy.

Traditionally, in the Golden Age, green is the colour of hope. In the play, it is expressly associated with hope. Inés's and Pedro's hopes are fulfilled with the appearance of Don Gil:

PEDRO:  No vería
Inés:  yo al don Gil de las calzas, Inés, verdes?

[Inés:]  Pero ¿no es éste, Cielos? Haga alarde con su presencia la esperanza mía.

This symbolism is consistent with Juana's aim: she hopes to win back Martín; to do this, she disguises herself as a man, and the colour of her disguise symbolises the hope she has in the success of her plan.

But Clara, as well, sees the "calzas verdes" as symbolising her hope of marrying Don Gil. Her love, however, is a blind passion, and she tells us that she is by no means unpopular with the city gallants. She issues an invitation to Gil to visit her, and, in her speech, the spring-fertility-sex connotations are evident:

¿No? Tú es sabed que mi casa
es a la Red de San Luis;
is galanea, mas de mil;
as quien en mi gusto alcanza
el prome' por mas gentil,
es verde cual mi esperanza,
y es en el nome don Gil.

In fact, green symbolises hope because it is the colour of spring; and spring is lusty. So, too, is Don Gil:
INÉS: ¿Uno de unas calzas verdes?

JUANA: Y tan verdes como él, que es abril de la hermosura, y del donaire, Aranjuez.

II.v. p.1732b

The Diccionario de Autoridades gives this definition of verde:

"Metaphorically se llama el mozo, que está en el vigor, y fuerza de su edad, y lo dá a entender en las acciones." There is no doubt that this epithet, in both its senses (lusty, and, by extension, lustful), is eminently fitting for Don Gil de las calzas verdes.²⁷

Inés, Clara and Elvira are all the objects of his attention. But such behaviour is, like Martín's, far from being moral, and Caramanchel suggests as much:

But such behaviour seems as impossible as the combination of "Don" and "Gil". Caramanchel points out the puzzling contradiction:

And Inés seconds this declaration:
But there is, in fact, no contradiction. To return to the Dicc. de Aut., Verde "se aplica tambièn à las cosas, que están à los principios, y que les falta mucho para llegar à perfeccionarse." In fact, Don Gil is an immature man: emotionally, in that his affections are fickle (and in this Gil is a parody of Martín), and sexually, in that Gil is no man - as Inés unwittingly points out:

Padre de mis ojos,
don Gil no es hombre, es la gracia,
la sal, el donaire, el gusto,
que amor en sus cielos guarda:
I.x. p. 1726a.

Thus the wit of the paradox emerges: the man whose emotions are unstable, who tries to be a Don Juan, is in reality a sexually, because emotionally, immature person.

The immature Inés, therefore, without realising it, is engaging in word-play, of the full import of which she is not aware:

MARTÍN: ¿Qué don Gil o maldición
es éste?
PÉREZ: Don Gil el verde.
INÉS: Y el blanco de mi afición.
II.xviii. p. 1742b

Verde symbolises the object (blanco) on which Inés's hopes are centred; but her love is to be a "chaste" (i.e., nonsexual) one since blanco symbolises chastity. The paradox is confirmed in Juan's speech, the first line of which would make little sense unless its full symbolical implications were grasped:

Don Gil, el blanco o el verde,
ya se ha llegado la hora
tan deseada de mí,
y tan rehusada de vos.
III.xiv. p. 1755b.

Thus, when Clara appears in green breeches towards the end of the play, an amazing complexity of meaning is revealed in the following two lines:

Don Gil de las calzas soy
verdes, como mi esperanza
III.xvi. p. 1757a.
Here, verde has all three meanings: of hope - Clara's hope; lusty - Clara, by identifying herself with the immoral Gil condemns herself; and emotionally and sexually immature - her hopes are going to turn into uvas verdes.

We may note that Juana is the only one who comes out of the whole intrigue unscathed. Her hopes are fulfilled, her object attained, and thus the equation verde = hope is proved correct in her case. But this is because her intrigue was justifiable, her disguise equally so. The equation verde = hope proves false in the case of Inés, Clara and Martín, since it is in these that the equations verde = lusty, immoral, and verde = immature prove correct. Their hopes are frustrated because their fulfilment would mean the triumph of immorality and/or immaturity.

The demonstration that Don Gil is an immoral figure ought also to be seen in the light of contemporary views on the mujer vestida de hombre. This figure existed in real life and was not wholly confined to the stage. Transvestism, of course, has traditionally been regarded as sinful, as it obviously symbolises a confusion of the sexes. The ambiguous sexuality of Gil-Elvira scandalises the puritanical Caramanchel:

¡Jesús! ¿Qué es lo que estoy viendo?  
¡Don Gil con basquina y tocal!  
No os llevo más la mochila.  
¿De día, Gil; de noche, Gila?  
¡Oxte puto! Punto en boca.  
III.ix. p.1752b.

And he tells us of the punishment accorded to such persons:

Azotes dan en España  
por menos que eso. ¿Quién vio  
un hembri-macho, que afrenta  
a su linaje?  
III.ix. p.1752b

The implications of such a state are further developed and the Church's disapproval re-affirmed - "no es aprobado":
No quiero señor con saya
y calzás, hombre y mujer;
que querréis en mí tener
juntos lacayo y lacaya.
No más amo hermafrodita,
que comer carne y pescado
a un tiempo, no es aprobado.
III.ix. p.1752b.

This is an excellent opportunity for Tirso to deflate the
Neo-Platonic conception of love. With the help of wit, Tirso can
carry the Neo-Platonic premises to their logical conclusions: such a
love is narcissistic (Gil and Elvira are exact replicas of each
other) and potentially homosexual (like the original Platonic love) -
Elvira, like Inés and Clara, must love the effeminate aspect of Gil
and be loved by him:

[Juana:] ¿Pensáis que vuestro señor
sin causa me tiene amor?
Por parecéráme tanto
emplea en mí su esperanza.
Díselo tú, doña Inés.

Inés: Causa suelen decir que es
del amor la semejanza.

This is one justification for the exploding of the Gil figure.

Secondly, the dramatic device of male disguise was condemned by
the moralists of the XVIIc. The position of Tirso, the friar, is
curious: he does not seem to have shared the opinion of the moralists.
But it is his keen irony which justifies his stand. Juana's disguise
is justifiable: it is not only a convenient dramatic device (which
allows Tirso to give full reign to his sense of the absurd), but also
sociologically justifiable: to regain her honour, Juana has to invade
a masculine sphere of action (revenge for honour) and her wearing
breeches symbolises this.29 Clara's use of male disguise, however,
is quite unjustifiable (a woman does not win a man's love by being
masculine), and therefore immoral - in the real-life as well as the
theatrical situation —, and the destroying of the Gil figure (which achieves Juana's aim and leaves the others frustrated) frustrates this gratuitous use of the device.

To end, it is clear that in Don Gil de las calzas verdes an attack is made, on the one hand, on conventional social and moral behaviour, and, on the other, on a literary convention. The social satire stresses the need for a sense of social and moral responsibility, and this is achieved through the reductio ad absurdum of a dramatic device. These two aspects are thus united and reinforce the basic unity of the play. The satire itself is underlined by the brilliant use of wit and symbolism, stylistic features which are characteristic of Tirsian comedy. Finally, I have tried to show that the structure of the play is a distinctive one, being based on the Chinese boxes pattern. Tirso thus moves away from the mature Lopean structure and in this respect does not serve to link Lope to Calderón. The structure of this early play reappears in a late play of Tirso's, which Calderón must have admired. In this late play, Amor por arte mayor, Tirso's style is much more Calderonian than Lopean. It is therefore stylistically that Tirso serves as a bridge between Lope and Calderón. Symbol, conceit, image, all play a vital and increasingly important part in Tirso's plays. This is not to suggest that Tirso is to be seen merely as a bridge figure. The asyndetic structure of his plays (a structure which Lope rejects as he develops) allows him much greater freedom to experiment with, and exploit the structural possibilities of wit and symbol. This makes for an amazingly subtle form of play-writing, which produces some of the best comedies written in the Golden Age.
CHAPTER TWO

LA CELOSA DE SÍ MISMA,

THE FRUSTRATION OF THE TAPADA
La celosa de sí misma is without doubt one of Tirso's most remarkable plays, though, so far, a virtually unknown one. Hartzenbusch himself who, in his analysis of this play, remarks that: "El plan ... es el mejor de los que trazó la pluma de Fray Gabriel Téllez." The structure, indeed, is, as we shall see, elegantly, simply and economically planned. There are no superfluous characters; each is strictly functional. The style is witty and humorous, as is to be expected. The characters - and especially the heroine - are interestingly portrayed. At the same time, there are some features which at first sight seem to provide further proof of Tirso's reputed indifference to dramatic technique. The use of disguise is obviously unsuccessful in the play: one might argue that Tirso had yet again got himself into a sticky situation from which he extricated himself in his usual impudent manner. The final revelation of identity, too, would seem to be a needlessly long drawn-out process. However, a closer analysis of the play reveals that these features, far from being flaws, are the consequence of Tirso's studied manipulation of his material.

This play, like Por el sótano y el torno, with which it has a number of features in common, is set in Madrid. This is crucial, for, not merely does it ensure the Neo-Classical unity of place (a consideration which bothers the great comedia writers not in the least), but also provides the vastly more important unity of atmosphere. The exploitation of atmosphere in a definite setting is, when it occurs, of considerably dramatic significance in Tirso. The confusion of Madrid life in this play is very much like the Midsummer madness in Shakespeare's comedy. Melchor's opening words establish this atmosphere of confusion from the very beginning:

Bello lugar es Madrid.  
Qué agradable confusión!  

I.i. p.144a.
This motif is taken up by Ventura in his satirical description of the rapidity with which the faces of Madrid and of women, and the fortunes of men change:

[TELCHOR:] ¡Bizarras casas!  
VENTURA: Retozan  
los ojos del más galán, 
que en Madrid, sin ser Jordán, 
las más viejas se remozan.  
Casa hay aquí, si se alía 
y el dinero la trabuca, 
que anocheciendo caduca, 
sale a la mañana niña.  
Picaro entra aquí más roto 
que tostador de castañas, 
que fiado en las hazañas 
del dinero, su piloto, 
le muda la ropería, 
donde hijo pródigo vino, 
en un Conde palatino, 
tan presto que es tropelía.  
Dama hay aquí, si reparas 
en gracia del solimán, 
a quien en un hora dan 
sus salserillas diez caras.  
Como se vive de prisa, 
no te has de espantar si vieres 
metamorfosear mujeres, 
casas y ropas.  

I.i. p. 1441a-b.

This confused aspect of things is attributed to the rapid pace of life in Madrid. Sebastián's account of life in the Plaza Mayor in I.ii reinforces this view: there is no communication between members of society, perhaps because the various stages of existence - birth, marriage, death - have been telescoped into simultaneous events:

[SEBASTIÁN:] de modo que llegué a ver 
en una casa, en un día, 
bodas, entierros, y partos, 
llantos, risas, lutos, galas 
en tres inmediatas salas, 
y otros tres contiguos cuartos, 
sin que unos de otros supiesen, 
ni dentro una habitación, 
les diese esta confusión 
lugar que se conociesen.  

JERÓNIMO: está una pared aquí 
de la otra más distante 
que Valladolid de Gante.  

I.ii. p. 1443b.

To this confusion is added, as a matter of course, corruption,
Innocent husbands have to be imported into Madrid from the provinces:

JERÓNIMO: Esperamos de León
un deudo con quien procura
casar mi padre a mi hermana,
que maridos cortesanos
son traviesos y livianos.

Madrid has corrupted the values of its inhabitants: it is not a
city, but a dangerous sea on which merchants, seeking interés,
venture:

VENTURA: ¿Mar dices? Llámale así,
que ese apellido le da
quien se atreve a navegalle,
y advierte que es esta calle
la canal de Bahamá.
Cada tienda es la Bermuda;
cada mercader inglés
pechelingué u holandés, (6)
que a todo bajel desnuda.
Cada manto es un escollo.
Dios te libre de que encalle
la bolsa por esta calle.

The love of gold, that corrupter of morals, is again stressed later
on:

SEBASTIÁN: Tiene en sus calles
todos los vicios Madrid.
Haz cuenta que es una tienda
de toda mercadería.
Siendo así, ibuño sería
que aquí el interés no venda
testigos falsos!

ANGELA: Allana con ellos cuanto dinero tengo.

SEBASTIÁN: Más barato espero
negociar. Adiós, hermana.

Into this setting of corruption (which will be illustrated by
Sebastián's - and, to a lesser extent, Angela's - intrigues in the
secondary action) and confusion (which the heroine, Magdalena, will
provide) is thrown the naive, idealistic provincial, Melchor. And the
resultant confusion in the plot will be worthy of the capital city.

At the same time, we must bear in mind that all this confusion stems from apparent changes in things, and it is money and cosmetics which produce these optical illusions. There is thus an intermediate agent which changes the aspect of things, without, however, changing the nature of those things themselves. The art of producing such changes in appearances is called tropelía. This is going to be the dominant theme in the play. The word itself is first mentioned by Ventura when he discusses the fast-changing appearances of things and persons in Madrid: "tan presto que es tropelía" (I.i. p.1441b).

Its first recorded appearance, as Corominas informs us, is in La picara Justina, and in the early seventeenth century it alternates between the meanings of legerdemain and the magical art which changes the appearance of things. It is in this latter sense, as Corominas reminds us, that Cervantes uses it in this Coloquio de los perros:

có que eres persona racional, y te veo en semejanza de perro, si ya no es que esto se hace con aquella ciencia que llaman tropelía, que hace parecer una cosa por otra." (8)

In La celosa Tirso seems to combine both meanings in his exploration of the concept. I shall now analyse the structure of the play to show how the tropelía theme is worked out in it.

As we have seen in Don Gil, the gratuitous use of disguise ends in failure in the case of Clara. Where it has a valid dramatic function, however, as in the case of the heroine, Juana, it succeeds. The female-page device, therefore, is partly successful and partly unsuccessful in Don Gil. In La celosa de sí misma, on the other hand, disguise (the manto of the mujer tapada) is employed gratuitously by the heroine, Magdalena, and fails. Its more orthodox use by Magdalena's rival, Angela, also ends in failure. It is on this central failure of
the device that Tirso constructs his play.

There are two strands of action in La colosa de sí misma, the development of each being governed by the principle of causality. The main one deals with the fortunes of Melchor and Magdalena. The secondary action deals with the ambitions and schemes of Sebastián and his coy sister, Angela. The two intrigues form a neat contrast to each other, for, while the main action wanders among the absurdities of love created by the imagination, the secondary action finds its feet trailing in the mud of interes, from which it is lifted only by the exercise of Angela's imagination, itself fired by love. But, at the same time, the situations and their developments in both strands of the action are largely interdependent. So closely linked are the actions that their trajectories converge inevitably, and clash in Act III, and it is the impinging of the secondary action on the principal which leads to a solution of the apparently insoluble problem posed in the latter. The implications to be drawn from this structural pattern are of considerable interest for the study of Tirsian comedy.

The main intrigue, which exemplifies the unconventional use of the device of the mujer tapada is undoubtedly the more complex. As if to harmonise with the prevailing atmosphere of confusion and corrupted values, it contains a parody of the two basic comic situations referred to in the introduction to this section, viz., the individual-society conflict and the hunt for a mate. The inversion of these conventional situations is brought about by tropelía.

There exists - or seems to exist - for Melchor a clash between the individual's wishes and the dictates of society. His father has sent him to Madrid

... a casar
con sesenta mil ducados.
I.i. p.1442a.
But he himself declares:

que aunque el dinero es hermoso,
yo no tengo de casarme,
si no fuera con belleza
y virtud: esto es notorio.
I.i. pp. 1442b-1443a.

So, no sooner does he arrive in Madrid, than, while attending Mass, he falls in love - ironically - with a hand!

From the psychological point of view, this is more realistic than any idealistic spontaneous combustion of souls. Ventura's comment stresses the physical nature of this love:

La primera vez es esta
que entró el amor por grosura;
I.iii. p. 1447a.

H. A. Peyton sees Melchor's description of the hand as a manifestation of sensuality, and, therefore, as evidence of the typically baroque disintegration of traditional idealistic love values. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that Tirso's treatment of love implies a disintegration of traditional literary conceits engendered by the courtly and Neo-Platonic traditions, since it would be extremely hazardous to suppose that the baroque age, more than any other, was characterised by a preponderance of sensuality over love (if, indeed, such a distinction can be validly made).

What is evident, however, is the fact that there is an element of morbidity in Melchor's love. He loves, not a woman, but a hand:

[MELCHOR:] ¿Ay qué mano! ¡Qué belleza!
¡Qué blancura! ¡Qué donaire!
¡Qué hoyuelos! ¡Qué tez, qué venas!
¡Ay qué dedos tan hermosos!
I.iii. p. 1445b.

This is a case not of love, then, but almost of a perversion: the hand seems to have been converted into a fetish, and Melchor's description of it arouses our sense of ridicule by its very absurdity. The description, perfectly apt if it referred to a face, is absurd.
when it is applied to a hand. Ventura stressed the absurdity in his immediate burlesque of Melchor's description:

¡Ay qué uñas aguilénas!
¡Ay qué bello rápido, rápido!
¡Ay qué garras monederas!

I.iii. p.1445b.

Melchor argues that the beauty of the hand must indicate beauty of countenance (an argument a priori, not devoid of Neo-Platonic overtones):

La sabia Naturaleza
distribuyó proporciones,
en sus fábricas discreta.
Mano de tal perfección
fuera culpable indecencia
que airviese de instrumento
a cara menos perfeta.

I.iii. p.1447a.

This is immediately defeated by Ventura's empirically based anecdote about the negress in the same scene, which further stresses the absurdity of Melchor's position.

This absurdity reaches its height in I.x, when Melchor fails to recognize Magdalena's hand as the object of his heart's desire, notwithstanding Ventura's arguments and protestations:

MELCHOR: Esta [mano de Magdalena] es asco, es un carbón,
es en su comparación
el yeso junto al cristal.
A sus divinos despojos
no hay igualidad.

I.x. p.1457a.

Doña Blanca de los Ríos describes the situation perfectly:

Y era lo grande que, cuando en su prometida encontró
a su amada, empeñóse en repararlas a las dos y en desdénar
a la verdadera por la imaginada. ¿Qué humano es y cuánta
poesía contiene este deleitoso error! la Quimera
interpuesta entre un alma y la realidad. El goce de
oponerse a lo correinte de lo previsto, lo ordinario,
lo vulgar y mejor aún a lo impuesto." (10).

Melchor has, in fact, actually succeeded in converting into a reality a possible clash between himself and society (which, though expected,
never materialises), by creating an obstacle in his own imagination. (One might almost say that by refusing to identify Magdalena - the bride chosen for him - with his beloved tanada he insists on making himself the victim of a traditional dramatic - and social - convention). The clash is thus partly between Melchor and himself. The situation is not merely romantic, but absurd: a chimera stands in the way of Melchor's happiness, and it is in part a chimera of his own creation.

The difficulties created by Melchor's attitude are regarded by Doña Blanca as the central core of the play. However, one fact leads me to shift the emphasis slightly, and that is the fact that the chimera is not entirely of Melchor's own creating, and is also more material than Doña Blanca supposes. Melchor fails to recognise his beloved hand because, as he explains to Ventura:

La mano que a mí me ha muerto
de una vuelta se adornaba
de roed,

I.X. p.1457a.

Leaving aside Ventura's puns, which have a comic value of their own, we realise that this net stands between the hand Melchor loves and Magdalena's hand as he sees it. Similarly, a manto stands between Magdalena and the mysterious owner of the hand with which Melchor fell in love at first sight. The tropelía motif thus stands at the centre of the complication of the main action.

The confusion is raised to a still higher power later on when we see that the manto stands between Magdalena and her own self. She, too, has created an obstacle which is going to lead her into self-conflict. This clash, more intense than Melchor's, stems from feminine coquetry in the first place, and, in the second, from a woman's inevitable desire to satisfy herself of her lover's constancy. A closer look at the heroine would be rewarding.
Magdalena's manipulation of her glove and veil is at first sheer feminine coquetry. As Melchor confesses in I.iii, it was the repeated actions of withdrawing the hand from the glove and again concealing it that first attracted his attention in church. It is a psychological commonplace that interest in the female body is increased by semi-disclosure, a partial revelation, the point of maximum interest being the frontier between the concealed and the revealed. The effect of the sight of Magdalena's hand on Melchor, therefore, can be compared to the effect produced in less sophisticated times by a glimpse of the female ankle. Furthermore, we are given to understand that the display and concealment of the hand were possibly calculated. Magdalena seems to have been aware of Melchor's not uninterested presence:

[Melchor:] Tenía hasta el pecho el manto y santiguóse cubierta; pudo ser de verme así transformado en su belleza.

I.iii. p.1446a.

Our suspicions are confirmed when the gambit is repeated:

Melchor: Dadme una señá.

Magdalena: Esta mano.

Melchor: Ay aurora hermosa!

Magdalena: Adiós.


Magdalena, then, is carrying on a mild flirtation with an unknown stranger, who is, of course, her betrothed. As we learn, she is more than mildly attracted to him:

[Magdalena:] Luego ... ¿tú piensas que ignoro que no fue él el robdor del usurpado favor que me restituyó en oro?

Quinché: Para mí no hay dudar deso.

Magdalena: Fues de tanta eficacia es connigo, no el interés, la acción mí, que te confieno que hechizo para mí ha sido.

I.viii. p.1455a-b.

What her initial surprise is when she sees her betrothed we can only
guess at. There is little doubt, however, that she realises that
she has had a lucky escape, as the following half-teasing speech to
Melchor demonstrates, by revealing her own relief — and sense of
‘guilt’:

[MAGDALENA:] Si como os mostré una mano
ayer, menos advertida,
os permitiera cebar
en mi rostro vuestra vista,
qué burlada que quedara,
siendo después conocida,
y ocasionando en mi ofensa
pesados motes y risas!
Bien haya quien hizo mantos.
II.iv. p. 1465b.

Melchor’s turning out to be the attractive stranger not only
increases Magdalena’s love for him, but, unfortunately for her,
raises doubts in her mind:

mi amor es ya desatino,
pues sin él, morir espero.
Mas ¿con qué es puridad
rendiré mi voluntad
a quien, con tan fácil fe,
la primera mujer que ve
triunfa de su voluntad?
Hombre que a darme la mano
viene aquí desde León,
y es tan mutable y liviano
que a la primera ocasión,
liberal y cortesano,
a un manto rinde despojos
y a una mano el ama ofrece,
¿no quieres que me dé enojos?
II.i. p. 1459b.

The irony of this speech is not to be missed, however, for Magdalena
is herself guilty of losing her heart to the (then) unknown stranger.
It is perhaps this unacknowledged feeling of guilt which forces her
to try and test Melchor’s constancy by assuming a dual identity. So,
the tapada device, first used as an instrument of coquetry, is now to
be employed by Magdalena to reassure herself. In II.iv.v, Magdalena
realises that Melchor will remain true to his tapada, and is
determined to give Magdalena up for her. As a result, she rewards him
by revealing to him one eye after the other. This is surely the earliest representation on stage of an embryonic strip-tease! But there are unfortunate complications.

The first stems from Magdalena's discovery that Melchor is to remain faithful, but to his unknown tapada and not to her. She makes him promise to give up Magdalena and come to her house to live. This is in itself absurd, since we know that Magdalena and the tapada are the same person. But, on reflection, we realise what is happening: Magdalena is not merely playing a practical joke on him; she is actually becoming "celosa de sí misma", i.e., her own rival. On the psychological level we get a personality split: this is confirmed when she rewards Melchor for loving her and hating Magdalena: she has identified one aspect of herself with the tapada. But this is not all.

In II.v, we get an amusing case of mutual deception. Santillana invents an identity for the tapada in order to deceive Ventura:

Estafar a un paje destos
es hazaña peregrina.
Los cuatro reales me tocan.
Desta vez le doy papilla.

II.v. p.1465a-b.

Santillana's ingenuity goes unrewarded, of course, but here the deception remains on the level of farce. What is more intriguing is that out of this farcical episode a new complication is built. Magdalena allows herself to be carried away in her confused state of mind and accepts - at least tacitly - the identity offered to her shadow self. Her double becomes more concrete. And yet Magdalena continues her reckless game.

In II.ix, she analyses the situation. She is the object of a love-hate relationship. A veil has actually managed to make her appear to be two persons. The tragedy of it is that the veil is what controls
Helchor’s emotional reaction. She loves Helchor and wants him to love her. He, however, can only love her when she is veiled, and consequently, she can only communicate on an emotional level with him when she is the Condesa:

MAGDALENA: Esto pasa: Yo, Quiñones, soy amada aborrecida, desdénada y pretendida. Hiera mis contradicciones; Cubierta, doy ocasiones a su pasión amorosa; vista, soy fea y odiosa; enamoro y desobligo; y compitiendo contigo, de mi misma estoy celosa.

II.ix. p.1470b.

She reacts to this situation by developing a split in her personality. She is forced to play a dual rôle when her emotional needs would compel her to maintain her integrity as a personality. This dual rôle is going to influence her relationship with Helchor:

[MAGDALENA:] Premiaréle por ue intenta pagar firme mi esperanza, y entonces daré venganza a su injurioso rigor, porque el desdén y el favor paguen firmeza y mudanza. Yo le querré eternamente, y eternamente también se vengará mi desdén de lo que en el suyo sienta.

II.ix. p.1471a-b.

Thus the situation is an ambiguous one for Magdalena, too, who simultaneously loves and hates Helchor. The two emotional forces play a tug-of-war game at which neither can win - to the pain and frustration of both lovers.

When Helchor arrives to take leave of Don Alonso, he finds that his sacrifice of Magdalena is to no purpose, for he is to lose both the Countess and Magdalena (II.xii). In III.ii, however, Santillana’s arrival lifts him from the bottom of despair, into which he again falls in III.xii. The same curve is traced once more in III.xviii. It is
clear that Magdalena has miscalculated. She has completely lost control of the situation. Driven on by her curiosity to see if Melchor can at all be trapped into revealing signs of "infidelity" (a morbid preoccupation, which is virtually the manifestation of the "death-wish" of love), she devises a game which becomes an emotional trap for herself. Her own strength is inadequate to secure her release. In a psychological and human sense, this is, in a way, tragic: it is surely Magdalena's feelings of guilt which make her desire to establish Melchor's guilt, i.e., his infidelity. His constancy to the tapada makes it impossible for Magdalena to abandon her disguise. But Melchor cannot marry the tapada, for not only is the Condesa de Chirinola non-existent, but even when Melchor agrees to marry Magdalena in order to please his Condesa, the latter, curiously enough, will not have it. As we shall see, Magdalena's problem will not be resolved until the tapada is proved to be another person, i.e., until her feelings of "guilt" which divide her against herself are swamped by an outside threat to her love. But the situation is, at the same time, ridiculous. Not only is it absurd (for how can any normal woman be "celosa de sí misma"?), but it also has been created by Magdalena's own folly. It is the ridiculous aspect of this situation which Tirso is going to develop in order to bring about a dénouement.

Thus it would be wrong to see Magdalena as another "typical" Tirsoian heroine who manages to trap a husband. Just as Tirso inverts the normal society-individual clash in the case of the arranged marriage which turns out to be suitable (though a number of the characters on stage do not realise it), he likewise inverts the normal mate-hunt situation in this play. There is no need for Magdalena to resort (as she does) to any stratagems in order to win a husband. There is no husband to be trapped: he has already been caught. The
only difficulty is that he does not know that the woman by whom he has been trapped is the one he is meant to marry. This is partly his own fault, but largely Magdalena's doing. The manto is at the source of the whole problem.

In addition, the Tirsian heroine is generally mistress of the situation she creates, as we saw in Don Gil. Jerónica, too, in El amor médico, controls the whole game and every move of hers is merely another step towards the final checkmate. The heroines in those plays are typical comic wits. Magdalena, however, soon loses control of the game she starts. She thinks she is a wit, but only proves that she is her own gull. She is virtually a parody of the "typical" Tirsian heroine.

The secondary action, which, as I have stated, is essential to a resolution of the problem, is built around the intrigues of Sebastián and Angela. These, as a convention of the comedia seems to demand, are rivals of Melchor and Magdalena. As a result, their machinations, which are the means they employ to fulfil their ambitions, are conditioned to a certain extent by the situations developed in the main action. Conventional rivals though they be, they are made to serve a vital purpose in the structure of the play.

The genesis of the secondary action (which introduces the corruption motif into the play) is to be found in 1.ii, where Sebastián cleverly manages to extract from the relatively inexperienced Jerónimo the fact that he is rich and has a rich sister:

[Jerónimo:] Tengo un padre perulero, que, de gobiernos cansado, tregues ofrece al cuidado, y englesos a su dinero. Ciento y cincuenta mil pesos trae aquí con que casar una hija, en quien lograr intereses y sucesos que en Indias le hicieron rico. La mitad me cabe dellas.

1.ii. pp. 1443b-1444a.
Sebastian's greed is immediately aroused and he at once seeks to establish a friendly relationship between the two families. He tells Jerónimo of his melindrosa sister, beatiful but immensely proud, at whose extremos he invites Jerónimo to laugh:

**SEBASTIÁN:** Sí, pero es nunca acabar
ci os cuentos en lo que se estima.
De todos hace desprecio;
el más Salomón es necio,
si a pretendérla se anima;
Tersites el más galán,
Lázaro pobre el más Creso,
y el más noble, hombre sin seso.
No quiere venir de Adán,
porque dice que no pudo
progenitor suyo ser
quien delante su mujer
se atrevía a andar desnudo.

I.i.ii. p.7444b.

In I.ix, we realise that his desire to cement the friendship between his house and Jerónimo's has not grown cold. He is obviously eager that Magdalena should see him before she sees Melchor. Thus both the principal and the secondary actions have a common source in the existence of the rich nubile Magdalena.

In II.vi, Sebastián's plans take shape. He is interested in marrying Doña Magdalena, and thinks of ways of preventing her marriage to Melchor. His first thought is to kill Melchor, but he renounces this in favour of an easier (and cheaper) ruse. In the following scene, however, Angela discovers that Melchor loves the Condesa: this puts a valuable weapon into her hands, and at the end of the act she has the satisfaction of seeing the engagement between Melchor and Magdalena broken off. This situation is, for a start, equally satisfactory to Sebastián as to Angela, while Sebastián loses no time in suggesting himself and his sister to Don Alonso as a suitable son and daughter-in-law:

**[ALONSO:]** Yo te buscaré consorte
caudaloso y bien nacido.
SEBASTIÁN: Si yo ese nombre merezco,
y con mi hermana os obligo
a que por hijos troquemos
el título de vecinos,
doce mil ducados tiene
de dote, y siendo los míos
seis mil, que de renta gozo,
daréis a mi amor alivio.

II.x. p.1472b.

At this point, control of the action passes into Angela’s hands,
with the unhappy result that Sebastián’s plan to marry Magdalena is
thwarted, and his attempt to marry his sister to Jerónimo very nearly
fails. Sebastián’s failure is morally justified. His desire to marry
Magdalena and his attempt to foil the plans for her marriage to
Melchior were motivated by greed, by interés. Marriage is more than
a profitable merger of partners, and Sebastián’s failure has the weight
of the traditional comedia attitude (which favours love) behind it.

The case of Doña Angela, however, is more complex. She is by
far the more important of the two rivals. Sebastián in his initial
remarks to Jerónimo painted her as a melindrosa creature. Her first
appearance on stage gives further proof of the nicety of her scruples:

ANGELA: ¡Jesús! Delante de un cura
(por más que el Cielo dispuso
que se desposen así),
y tanta gente, ¿de haber
que lo diga a un hombre “sí”?

SEBASTIÁN: Pues ¿qué escrupulo hay en eso?
ANGELA: ¡Jesús! Quien hace tal cosa,
o es muy libre y animosa
o no tiene mucho seno.

I.ix. p.1456a-b.

But we soon see that even the staid, sensible Angela is completely
transformed by love.

When Angela first sees Melchior her remarks give an ambiguous
twist to her character:

El leones es por extremo
como no oliera a marido.
I.x. p.1458a.

We are puzzled, until, in the next act, we realise that we had been
witnessing the beginning of a change in Angela's character. In II.vi, she frankly confesses her love for Melchor to Sebastián, whose phlegmatic, matter-of-fact acceptance of the news is, to say the least, surprising. However, love and initiative appear simultaneously in Angela, and by the end of the act, she and Sebastián have denounced Melchor to Don Alonzo and Don Jerónimo.

In Act III, Doña Angela comes to the fore. A rift now begins to appear between herself and her brother. The latter's plan includes the marriage of his sister to Jerónimo; but Angela herself is in love with Melchor and she plans her strategy with marriage to Melchor as her aim. Love, in fact, has effected a complete change in Angela's character. All her former scruples are thrown overboard and she launches out upon a daring plan which consists in no less than usurping the personality of her real rival (as she has discovered), the Condesa tapada, in order to trick Melchor into marrying her. This act of Angela's links the two actions of the plot.

So far, the presentation of Angela has been fairly conventional. We have, first, the traditional ridicule of the beautiful but cruel woman who is "punished" for rebelling against nature by being made to fall hopelessly in love. Secondly, the device Angela resorts to is also a conventional one - though at the same time it emphasises the extremes to which the once haughty and very proper Angela has been forced.

What is novel, however, is the way this situation is developed in the context of the play. Our analysis of the main action revealed that an impasse had been reached owing to Magdalena's psychological problem. There is thus a psychological as well as a dramatic need for a solution. Now, dramatically, the complication produced in a plot by the use of disguise is normally resolved by the revelation of the identity of the disguised person. It is clear that the situation created in La celosa
de si misma can only be resolved by the discovery of the Condesa's identity. Self-revelation is the obvious way out, but we have seen that Magdalena is unable to renounce her shadow self. Therefore the revelation of identity must be forced by external factors. One way of forcing this revelation is to confront the genuine shadow figure with a false one. Basically, this is the device Tirso employs, but his use of it is remarkably subtle.

Angela's resorting to disguise is precisely the catalyst that produces the final dénouement, and is a further variation on the troquelía theme. Her disguise leads to the clash of the two actions, and it is this impinging of the secondary action on the principal which forces Magdalena to reveal her identity. III.ix, then, is the crucial point of the play, for it is here that the trajectories of the two actions clash, with a consequent shattering of the false personality around which the action of the play has been constructed. It deserves a closer examination.

In III.viii, we see that the Condesa has materialised, and confronts Magdalena in the following scene. The appearance of a flesh-and-blood Condesa saves Magdalena from the sterile, self-destructive conflict with herself by giving her a real rival. However, a showdown is prevented by the appearance of Jerónimo and Sebastián (producing, one is tempted to say, an interrupted cadence), and the revelation of identity is postponed. The evidence, though abundant, is inconclusive. The two veiled women are virtually carbon copies of the Condesa, whose right to identity is being challenged. The confrontation ends with an apparent discomfiture of Magdalena. Angela, however, is too timid to follow up the advantages of her victory, and the outcome of the battle is to be decided later than night.
The "interrupted cadence" (if we may call it thus) is puzzling. There is no dramatic reason why the dénouement should not have been effected in this scene. True, the postponement of the discovery scene prolongs Melchor's mental torture. But this in itself, though comic, does not seem to be the reason for Tirso's unusual procedure. An explanation is to be sought, first, in Magdalena's subsequent behaviour, now that she is confronted with a concrete tapada who is not herself, and then, in its implications.

The fact is that while the tapadas retain their incognito, for Magdalena, Angela is still the Countess and, therefore, her second self (albeit a second second-self):

QUINCÉS:    Ya de otra dama ofendida, no tendrás de ti recelo.
MAGDALENA: Con ese mismo desvelo quejas de mí misma doy; pues si la Condesa soy que él ama, y si opositora finge ser la misma agora, mal consigo misma estoy. Como a Condesa, ¿no me ama don Melchor?
QUINCÉS:    Por ti se enciende.
MAGDALENA: ¿Ser condesa no pretende mi enemiga?
QUINCÉS:    Así se llama.
MAGDALENA: Luego si una misma llama causa aqueste frenesi y yo quien le abrasó fui, aunque esta tro lo enamore; mientras en ella me adore, celosa estaré de mí. Dame tú que ella dijera ser Magdalena fingida, y vieres que aborrecida della como de mí huyera. Mira qué extraña quimera causa este ciego interés, que en tres dividirme ves, y aunque una sola en tres soy, amada en cuanto una, estoy celosa de todas tres.

III. xvi. p. 1486a.

Magdalena obviously prefers the identity of the Condesa to her own, since it is the Condesa whom Melchor loves. But these two figures
must somehow be reconciled. In the final interview with Melchor in III.xviii, Magdalena makes a last attempt to fuse the identities of the Countess and herself. However, although she gets Melchor to promise, albeit unwillingly, to marry Magdalena, we see that she has not been entirely cured; for in a fit of jealousy and anger, she slams the window in Melchor's face. It is now Magdalena's preference of the false Countess to her own self which is the obstacle to her marriage with Melchor. To solve this problem, her second self has to be shown to be someone else, a person who threatens the happiness of both Magdalena-Condesa and Magdalena-Magdalena. Angela's claim to be the Countess provides precisely such a threat when she declares that she, Angela, is the Countess. Magdalena, no longer eager for Melchor to remain faithful to his Countess, refutes this claim with her hand as conclusive proof, and all ends happily.

Or perhaps not as happily as may appear at first sight. There is no doubt that Angela's plans have failed. First, her attempt to thwart Sebastián's plan to marry her to Jerónimo fails. She also fails in her attempt to help Sebastián to marry Magdalena, for the very steps she takes to prevent Magdalena's marriage to Melchor actually precipitate it. Her own attempt to marry Melchor is also frustrated, for the trick she resorts to, i.e., impersonating the Condesa, actually provides a way out of the impasse created in the main plot. In other words, the device of the mujer tapada, resorted to by Angela as a conventional way of capturing a husband is a failure. It has been utterly useless, for it defeats its own purpose.

Nor are we to think that Magdalena's employment of the device has been any more successful. The fact that any such device was unnecessary from the start has been pointed out already. It has only
succeeded in creating unnecessary confusion. The game which
Magdalena initiates out of sheer thoughtlessness eventually gets
out of hand, and, in fact, it is only Angela's intervention in III.
xx which prevents Melchor from coming to grief. Magdalena discovers
that the more she clings to her assumed personality (which in a con-
ventional situation would get her her man), the less chance she has
of winning Melchor. So she is at the end forced to reveal her true
identity in order to avoid losing Melchor. We must conclude that the
use of the device of the mujer tapada in this play ends in complete
failure.

How is this to be explained? In the first place, we note that the
plans of the main characters deserve to fail. Sebastián has been
motivated by greed. Angela is punished for her earlier haughtiness.
Melchor is ridiculed for his folly, which consists in being constant
"a lo ridículo", and Magdalena for hers. On the psychoanalytic plane,
too, Magdalena's "cure" depends upon the failure of the device which
has divided her against herself. All these characters betray a
frivolous attitude to life. Important human emotions, actions and
relations have been reduced, in the confused Madridian setting, to
the level of a frivolous game. Thus the interior moral logic of the
play demands that the use of the device in question (the concrete
illustration of such frivolity) should fail.14

But the condemnation of this frivolity is also turned into a
comment on existing dramatic conventions, which are, by implication,
no less frivolous. The structure of the play, we recall, consists,
in skeleton form, of two converging actions, the clash of which produces
a disintegration of the tapadas. Magdalena's dramatically unconventional
(because gratuitous) use of the manto produces the complication of the
plot, but cannot bring about its unravelling. The dénouement is
achieved by Angela's conventional use of the manto, which fails to achieve its purpose, but, because of its failure, solves Magdalena's problem, the two failures, so to speak, cancelling each other out. Two would-be wits turn out to be unwitting gulls of their own tangled games. But the irony of comedy converts their failures into success of sorts. The structure of the play is thus itself satirical of dramatic conventions. The comedy is a perfect example of Tirso's "anti-drama".

There is a further explanation for the ridicule of the device if we consider the social context in which the play first appeared. The manto was widely used in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain, but it clearly was no longer a sign of feminine modesty by the seventeenth century. It lent itself to abuses not only on the part of men, but also on the part of men, as the following extract from the Cartas de jesuitas illustrates with a real-life version of tropelía:

No sé sobre qué andaba la justicia estos días buscando a un religioso de grave religión; supo que estaba en una casa, buscóla, y al fin visió en el estrado con la señora a una tapada; alzaron el manto y hallaron al santo religioso con su cercillo y en hábito de mujer." (15)

The manto, by preserving the anonymity of the wearer, provided women with considerable moral freedom (which finds a reflection in Tirso's amor médico). Premáticas in the years 1586, 1594, 1610 and 1639 prohibited the use of the manto as a result. 16 And Quevedo himself wrote a poem on the occasion of one of these premáticas. 17 Of course, the fact that the premáticas had to be repeated suggests that women paid little heed to them. But that the mantos were regarded as morally dangerous is obvious, and this is a further explanation for Tirso's ridicule of the custom in this play.
The final dimension to our exploration of the play’s meaning emerges from an examination of its style. Here, too, the *tropelía* theme dominates. There is little doubt that Tirso was deliberately satirising Gongorism. And Gongorism, of course, is a form of *tropelía*. There is an overt reference to the *Soledades* at the beginning of the play:

**VENTURA:**

A la puerta
desta devota capilla
de la Soledad, y en ella
a un fraile, que, esgrimidor,
juntó el pomo a la cortera.

I.iii. p.1445a.

As if to ensure that the point was grasped, the allusion returns a few lines later:

**MELCHOR:**

¡Ay si de la Soledad
esta hermosa imagen fuera,
y no de la compañía,
porque ninguna tuviera!

I.iii. p.1445b.

The implications of the religious terminology will be discussed later, but Tirso manages another reference to Góngora later on in the same scene:

**VENTURA:**

Mas ven acá; si esta mano
viene a ser, cuando la veas,
de algún rostro polifemo,
o alguna cara juaneta,
¿qué has de hacer?

I.iii. p.1447a.

Melchor persists throughout the play in interposing a Gongoristic style between reality and his perception of it, and this is mercilessly satirised by Ventura from the start:

**MELCHOR:**

¿De qué suerte pude verla,
si me embarazó los ojos
aquella blancura tierna,
aquel cristal animado
aquel ...

**VENTURA:**

Di candor, si intentas
jerigonzar critiquicios;
di que brillaba en estrellas,
que emulaba resplandores,
que circulaba en esferas,
que atesoraba diamantes,
Tirso manages to include most of the obvious features of Gongorism in the course of the play. Melchor refers to the whiteness of the hand he adores thus:

Cápmelo, al oír la misa
su lado; y cuando la empecen,
quité la funda al cristal,
y en la distancia pequeña
que hay desde el guante a la frente,
vi jazmines, vi mosquetas,
vi alabastros, vi diamantes,
vi, al fin, nieve en fuego envuelta.

Some of Gongora's favourite images appear in the following passages:

[MELCHOR:] y salgo a aguardarla aquí,
desandando que amanezca
el alba de aquella mano,
cuando, cisne puro, vuelva
a bañarse en la agua canta
que en esta pila desean
mis esperanzas gozar,
después que no la ven, secas.

[NAGDALENA:] Pidiése que de su parte
me despídiese a lo fino,
y enjugo a los soles perlas
con aquel marfil bruñido,
en cuya comparación
es yeso, es carbón el mío,
y es, en fin, una Etiopía.

Syntactical tricks are not omitted:

MELCHOR: Ya sale; apártate, y mira
la hermosa mano que llega
a transformar gotas de agua
si no en diamantes, en perlas.

and the light-darkness opposition is developed at length in the following speech:

MELCHOR: Deslutralde al sol la noche,
dejad su luz descubierta,
pues no es bien cuando despierta
deseos en que me abrase,
señora, que al mismo paso
que la adoro, me atormenta,
y apenas goce su oriente,
cuando me aflija su ocaso.
Crepúsculos tiene el día,
como al nacer, al ponerse
que ven antes de esconderrse,
los que adoran su alegria.
Sol hermoso, mano mía,
si al nacer me os habéis puesto
en el ocaso molesto
que mis esperanzas ciega,
sol parecéis de Noruega,
pues os escondéis tan presto[;]
agua traéis; no me espanto,
si amor llamas multiplica,
porque llover pronostica
el sol, cuando abrasa tanto.
Basta que el avaro manto
sirva de nube sagrada
a esa gloria idolatrada;
descubríos, blanca aurora,
que dirán que sois traionera,
pues daís muerte, disfrazada.

Examples could be quoted at length, but there is no need to stress
the point further: reality is made to appear other than it really is.
Ventura sums up the confusion in which the process ends:

VENTURA: quitad la encella a esa nata
si es que hay natas con encellas;
quien dije a decir "cuajada",
andán, desde que hablan cultos,
las metáforas bastardas.

III.viii. p.1461a.

The connexion with the chaotic Madrid is evident, for, as Valbuena
rat puts it:

El culturanismo se convirtió en una moda de Corte.
El lenguaje culto se hizo típico de los galanes y lindón
del Madrid de los últimos Filipes. (19)

However, this is not all. The love-affair between Melchor and
the tapada begins in Church. This play, as Valbuena states on p.238
of the same work, suggests that the Victoria was one of the focal
points of Madrid:

La Iglesia de la Victoria, que se hallaba en la
Puerta del Sol, era el templo cortesano por
The suggestion, as we shall see, is repeated in Por el sótano y el torno. Thus it is only natural that religious terminology should mingle with the words of love. Much of the comic effect of the language springs from this subtle allusion to Biblical or religious contexts. A number of the characters' names have religious associations: Magdalena, Angela, Jerónimo, Sebastián. The following two quotations have obvious Biblical overtones:

**MELCHOR:** ¿Soy yo, señora, el llamado?
**VENTURA:** ¿Sóis vos, decid, la escogida?

[QUINONES:] A alargar la dilación de mi ama voy agora, porque su competidora le gane la bendición.

---

References to the Inquisition are not missing:

[QUINONES:] Nuestra doña Magdalena (que para decir verdad tiene extraña voluntad a don Melchor), con la pena y celos de quien adora, en fe que por él se abrasa, para saber lo que pasa me ha hecho su inquisidora.

**VENTURA:** No hará a lo menos la calle: información de limpieza.

And there is a humorous comment on Magdalena's display of her eyes:

**VENTURA:** ¿Son reliquias de una en una?

Ventura realises that his jokes are a bit outrageous:

1Oh mano, más celebrada ...!

Iba a decir que una misa nueva y de aldea; mas no que es descompuesta osadía.

---
Cleverly, Gongorism and the amorous-religious terminology are fused:

[MECHOR:] Volvió en ocasos de amar segunda vez a esconderla, hasta que en pie al Evangelio, amaneció aurora fresca. Sintiguése al comenzarle, y al darle fin la encarcela hasta el Sanctu, que desmuda da alabeledas a la puerta del pecho, llamado al alma, que desnuda de vella, debía penetrar cartones, pues corazones penetra. Duró esta vez el gozaria sin la prisión avarienta, hasta consumir el cadiz. ¡Ay Dios, si mil siglos fueran! Volvió a ponérseme el sol, hasta que, acabando, empieza el Evangelio posfero, siendo también la postrera liberalidad feliz que hizo a mi vista, ciega con la oscura privación de su cóndida pureza.

I.iii. p.1446a-b.

But Melchor's words make it clear that we have to do with the
religion of love:

¡Ojalá fuera
divina mi devoción,
y la imagen causa della.
Devoto salgo, Ventura;
pero a lo humano. ¡Ay, qué bella
imagen vía! Si es imagen
quien a sí se representa.
I.iii. p.1445a-b.

Selchor, as he has declared, is a "devoto ... a lo humano", and his
language faithfully reflects this:

Verdadera información
habéis hecho, y tan cumplida
como la fe con que os amo;
mas creed, tapada mía,
que obligado a diligencias
tan amorosas y dignas
de la eterna estimación;
si como el día imagina,
sois hermosa (que si sois,
pues por más que el manto impida
milagros que reverencio,
es mi amor lince en la vista);
This has been led up to by the earlier insertion of religious terms into an as yet ordinary, secular love:

[MELOCHOR] Cese el no oído oficio, que me holgara yo que fuera de Pasion.

And there is an implicit condemnation of the blasphemous overtones by Ventura:

MELOCHOR: Si vieras tú aquella mano y aquel talle, no dijeras blasfemias a su hermosura.

VENTURA: A tu amor digo blasfemias.

Valbuena has rightly drawn attention to the frivolous nature of this situation:

Al ir describiendo la dama que le enamoró, y sus actitudes durante la misa, hay un juego encantador entre lo devoto del tema y la frivolidad amorosa en torno a él. Todas las observaciones de la blanca mano de la dama al santigarse, al darse golpes de pecho, están expresadas con toques culteranos de refinada poesía y delicada malicia típica del ingenio de Tirso.

(p.239)

We may add that the ambivalence inherent in the language of the religion of love is a stylistic version of the tropelia motif. The religion of love is and is not a religion. In the literal sense, it is, of course, not a religion at all. But human love, by being clothed in the garb of religious terminology, is made to appear to be what it is not. That is why the goddess Melchor worships, i.e., the Condesa de Chirinola, is proved to be a non-existent, false deity.

The Condesa is a product of tropelia. Magdalena's use of the mento as a disguise, a mask behind which she can carry on a frivolous and pointless flirtation, sets up an opposition between what she posse
as and what she is. But the distinction is not as clear-cut as we might at first think. The Condesa is and at the same time is not Magdalena. The hand is and simultaneously is not Magdalena's. The Condesa and her hand are illusions created by the manto and the red. And not merely is it that Melchor, ignorant of this tropelía, refuses to accept that Magdalena is the Condesa, but Magdalena herself thinks she can change while yet remaining the same (the sexual overtones implying that the Condesa-Melchor relationship is at bottom human):

MAGDALENA: Igualame ese vestido,
que con el otro que dejo,
los pensamientos desnudo
que aquel extranjero pudo
engendrar.

I.viii. p.1454b.

There would seem to be a contradiction or confusion here. A thing clearly cannot be both itself and simultaneously something else. And yet the tapada is simultaneously Magdalena and the Condesa, who, even to Magdalena herself, are almost distinct persons. The situation is absurd, like the complex relationships in the plot. But this absurdity has a respectable justification - Neo-Platonic philosophy.

Neo-Platonism is a complex phenomenon and has a considerable influence on various aspects of life, religion, philosophy and culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Not surprisingly, its influence on literature is marked. It is the literary conventions which derive from Neo-Platonic premises and which serve as the bases for so many works of literature that Tirso sets out to satirise in this play. The ensuing remarks, then, refer essentially to these literary conventions and not to the philosophy itself as a whole.

The principal conventions for the purpose of this analysis are as follows. Human love is idealised and regarded as something spiritual, and, consequently, non-sexual. It is born out of a spiritual affinity
which spring from a recognition of spiritual and moral beauty. Such beauty, however, in a world of shadows and imperfection is indicated by and reflected in physical beauty (hence the assumption of the period that physical imperfections reflect inherent moral ones). This physical beauty is loved not for its own sake but because it is a symbolical representation or indication of spiritual beauty. The whole process is one of abstraction from reality, the ultimate stress being on the abstract ideal of feminine beauty which is the object of a non-physical love.

These literary conventions are for Tirso, in home of his satirical comedies, absurd affectations, not based on a sound, realistic appraisal of human love. Thus we can appreciate the full force of Ventura’s humorous remark, quoted earlier:

La primera vez es esta
que entró el amor por grosura.
I.iii. p.1447a.

This is not to imply that Tirso denies the spiritual aspect of love. He is merely asserting that love between man and woman is not and cannot be purely spiritual, and that spiritual love by itself cannot be the basis for a satisfactory marriage. I shall try to show how these ideas are worked out in the play.

Melchor’s language makes it plain that he is a Neo-Platonist and the tapada, his Platonic ideal of beauty. This is why the Condesa de Chirinola is hidden from human eyes by a veil, for the Idea is perceived, not by gross human eyes, but by the intellect. The beauty of the tapada has to be imagined. But from glimpses of her hand and eyes, Melchor deduces that her beauty must exceed that of any other woman. If Neo-Platonic philosophy is true, the beauty of the net-covered hand promises a countenance which it is implied must be much more beauteous than Magdalena’s:
Melchor has insisted from the beginning that the hand must indicate the face's beauty:

and I, of the same destiny, conjecture by the hand what will be the beauty of the owner of that Ministro.

But if we are to be consistent as Neo-Platonists, the beauty of the face must be Absolute Beauty, the perfect Form which exists only in the Platonic heaven - and Melchor's imagination. Magdalena is fully aware of this inherent danger in the Neo-Platonic outlook:

What is more, since we know the Platonic reality only by re-creating it in our minds from the evidence of its reflection on earth, how are we to know this real reality when and if we see it? Melchor, on seeing Angela's eye, is sure, notwithstanding Ventura's protests, that Angela is his love:

But when another tapada enters, Melchor is faced with a philosophical dilemma, and, for its solution, would revert to the prime, material cause of his love:
He is still not enlightened when, towards the end of the play, he is prepared to accept Angela, now unveiled, as his wife:

¡Ay señora de mis ojos!
No en balde el alma discreta,
sin veros, hizo elección
de tan celestial presencia.
Vos sois mi querida esposa.

Suddenly we realise what Tirso has done. The distinction between Magdalena and the Condesa, while only an apparent one to us (being the product of tropelía), is half-real to Magdalena herself and fully valid for Helchór, to whom his beloved tapada is the Neo-Platonic ideal of beauty. But human love desires the unveiling of this ideal beauty. This, as any Neo-Platonist knows, is rash: human eyes cannot look upon the sun - and here, certainly, is where Neo-Platonism and Gongorism join hands!23 Yet the sun is unveiled, and Helchór can look it straight in the eye - and see a woman's face.
The Neo-Platonic reality behind the veil seems to be, after all, only another Platonic "shadow". The explanation for this lies in the fact that this so-called "reality" takes the earthly "shadow" as its starting point and model, and, in fact, is a "shadow" which is transformed into a "reality" by the imagination and reason. Neo-Platonism is here presented as merely another form of tropelía! The Platonic "reality" is the Platonic "shadow" which, of course, is the reality we all know.
But there is a further complication. The Platonic "reality", being an abstraction, a concept, has no such thing as identity.

Therefore, when it is unveiled - and here the wit of the situation emerges - we can get only the equivalent of the Platonic "shadow", i.e., any beautiful woman - Angela, Magdalena (or any other). The true Condesa has no identity on this earth: she is non-existent, a mere figment of the imagination. Tirso has wittily equated the Neo-Platonic reality with an unsubstantial shadow, a mere abstraction from the Platonic "shadow", which is the real reality.

The structure of the play exposes the limitations and ultimate absurdity of the literary Neo-Platonic view. It is because the Condesa is the ideal woman that Melchor loves her, and this, in turn, is why Magdalena wants to be the Condesa and is angry in III.xviii when Melchor agrees to marry Magdalena. But Magdalena's identification with the Condesa is only possible for so long as the latter remains the abstract Platonic ideal, without an identity. A man cannot marry an abstract concept of beauty, however, and that is why Melchor's marriage to the Condesa is an impossibility.

For similar reasons Angela also seeks to identify herself with the Condesa. The situation is virtually the same as in Magdalena's case, but, as we have seen, the effect on the plot is crucial. Magdalena is perversely content to pretend to be the Condesa, hoping to fuse their identities somehow, and encouraging Melchor to marry the Condesa. But once the Condesa materialises and presents a threat to Magdalena's happiness by declaring she is Angela, Magdalena is glad to put an end to her game. For Angela's claims are as valid as Magdalena's. It is only on the coarse, earthly level that such trivial distinctions as the colour of the eyes have any importance or validity. But, also, it is only on the same coarse, earthly level that
human love and marriage are possible. To the Neo-Platonic Melchor, one woman would make just as good a wife as another. This is a view no sane and moral woman — and Magdalena is a woman — would share.

The manto, the red, Gongorism, the religion of love and Neo-Platonism are thus all shown as variations of tropelía. Neo-Platonism converts objects, the reality we know, into shadows, the "unreal" reflections of ideal forms. Similarly, the religion of love converts love into an apparent religion and woman into an apparent goddess. Gongorism, too, converts a hand into cristal, a veil into a cloud, a face into the sun. But these are all apparent changes, for we know that a face remains a face, a woman, a woman, and love, love. Magdalena must remain Magdalena, and Angela, Angela. This is something the main characters discover. Melchor cannot marry the Condesa, who is a non-existent abstraction. Therefore she must be destroyed so that human beings can carry on with the business of living. La celosa de sí misma is a systematic and witty satire of all forms of tropelía: Gongorism, the religion of love, dramatic devices, morally perverse customs, and, the most absurd of them all, the literary derivations of Neo-Platonism.
CHAPTER THREE

EL AMOR MÉDICO. FEMINISM VERSUS FEMININITY
Two almost contradictory features make *El amor médico* a curiously intriguing play. The comedy is characterised by a brilliant play of wit which effects a reconciliation of apparent opposites by showing them to be, at bottom, one and the same thing. On the other hand, the play seems to be marred by a certain lack of structural coherence and dramatic economy, faults which are all the more surprising in view of the brilliance of its wit, the technical excellence of some aspects of its construction, and its probable chronological position in Tirso’s dramatic production.

First, it may be helpful to try and place this comedy – if only very roughly – in its chronological context. Internal evidence indicates that the play was written after the highly complex *Don Gil de las calzas verdes* (1615). This is based not on the fact that the *desfrazada de hombre* is common to both plays (a factor which proves nothing, inasmuch as the figure constantly recurs in Tirso’s production), but on the clear evidence that the play was written after Tirso’s return from the Indies (1618). Reflections on the experience which is born of travel and reminiscences of Tirso’s sojourn overseas provide concrete proof of this, as Da. Blanca de los Ríos has pointed out.¹ Da. Blanca herself suggests 1619-1621 as the period during which it was written, especially as the play would seem to allude to the outbreak of the plague in Lisbon in 1619. This suggestion seems reasonable. The most obvious link between the play and historical fact is the 1617 *promitica* concerning doctors, to which Prof. Wade has drawn attention.² Medical satire is, of course, a commonplace of comedy of the period, but, while Tirso satirises the medical profession as early as 1615 (the date of *Don Gil*), the virulence of his attacks increases after 1618 (when he returns to Spain). The question of appointing doctors to the royal household
lo? maine burning one and finds echoes in La prudencia en la mujer (1622).

Medical satire is also present in La fingida Arcadia (1622-3). But it is in El amor médico that this satire is seen at its most sustained. In fact, a modern doctor wonders whether Tirso was not being grossly unfair to members of the medical profession of his time, since he attacks them,

insistiendo machacadamente en la ineptitud de nuestros colegas, la ineficacia de la medicina de la época, y lo que es peor, en la calidad moral de los galenos contemporáneos; no es posible recoger en la obra del mercedario una crítica más apasionada y corrosiva, si exceptuamos las privanzas cortesanas.

It is true that as it may (and Tirso's intimate knowledge of medical jargon would make us hesitate before we accuse him of injustice born of ignorance), the satire of doctors is an integral part of the play's theme.

Some other features also help us to establish El amor médico as a sort of mid-way house between Don Gil and La celosa de sí misma. As will become evident in the course of this thesis, some of Tirso's earlier plays appear to contain the germs of future developments in his dramatic technique. El amor médico illustrates this developing technique in a number of ways. First, disguise: this takes two forms in this play: the well-known female-page which, as has been stated, is a common factor in Don Gil and El amor médico, and the mujer tapada, which serves as a link between this play and La celosa de sí misma, which was probably written in 1621-22. Whereas Tirso's treatment of the tapada is satiric in the much better constructed La celosa, his use of the figure conforms to a fairly conventional pattern in El amor médico. His more subtle handling of the tapada in La celosa would
seem to indicate that *El amor médico* was a preliminary exercise in the use of this figure.

Furthermore, certain stylistic features in *El amor médico* (which I shall discuss later in greater detail) seem to point towards *La celosa*, where they are developed more extensively: these are, in particular, the use of Gongoristic devices and the humorous use of religious imagery. The latter feature, it may also be noted, finds an important structural function in *Por el sotano y el torno* (1622), as will be seen in the subsequent analysis of this play, and, if the developing technique is accepted as valid, this argues for the prior composition of *El amor médico*. No less important is the fact that the use of Portuguese as an element of disguise is a common factor in *El amor médico* and *Por el sotano*, which seems to reinforce both their technical and chronological proximity, without, however, establishing the chronological priority of either.

Finally, the episode in II.xiii, where Gaspar's passion is aroused when Jerónima, tapada, reveals her uncovered hand to him would seem to confirm the relationship suggested between *El amor médico* and *La celosa*. The motif recurs in the penultimate scene of *El amor médico*, where Gaspar's scepticism as to the real identity of Barbosa-Marta is overcome in part by his recognition of Marta's hand as the one which fired his love. In this play, the motif, appearing only at two almost isolated moments, lacks any systematic development within the play. But the motif of the hand (if we may call it thus) is extensively exploited in *La celosa*, where it is intimately connected with the dominant motifs and thus the structure of the play. Here again, it seems licit to argue that Tirso saw the potentialities of the "hand-motif" as he wrote *El amor médico* and developed them in the later play.
El amor médico may thus reasonably be placed approximately midway between two high points of Tirso's dramatic art: Don Gil on the one hand, and La celosa on the other. In view of this, its apparently clumsy technique comes as a surprise, for it would suggest that Tirso's experience in the composition of Don Gil was of little use to him in the writing of El amor médico. An analysis of the latter can thus cast some light on certain aspects of Tirso's dramatic art. We may be led to conclude, among other things, either that the play is more subtly constructed than it would seem at first sight, or that Tirso's dramatic production is of a consistently uneven standard.

The initial impression produced by the play is certainly not a satisfactory one. Prof. Bruerton has stated unequivocally that the play is not one of Tirso's best.¹⁰ Hartzenbusch, whose comments on Tirso's plays are normally lucid, seems to respond in a rather uncertain way to the play, giving it enthusiastic but at the same time qualified approval.¹¹ As we shall see, some of his comments on the heroine are rather ambiguous, reflecting an uncertain frame of mind, which is not surprising when we consider that the presentation of Jerónima is itself ambiguous. This seems to have been an effect deliberately aimed at by Tirso. But there is no denying the existence of flaws in the play. Some of them are real enough; others, as will become clear, are, to some extent, only apparent flaws which must cease to be regarded as such if the play's structure is examined more closely.

First, the play suffers from a repetitiousness (which one is tempted to equate with long-windedness) into which Tirso seems rather prone to fall: his plays, it may be remembered, are considerably longer than the average comedia. This repetitiousness seems to mar the dramatic economy of the comedy. The superb exposition of the opening scene, for example, is to a great extent repeated in I.vii.
The only new detail is the knowledge that Jerónima has carried out her plan to rifle Caspar's papers. What she has found out we know already from Caspar himself in scene ii. Jerónima's long speech in scene vii, then, from the technical point of view, unnecessarily slows down the action, nor is there any justification for this delay on the grounds of pure stage business. This is a curious fact, and its significance will emerge later on.

This double exposition is not the only violation of dramatic economy. There are frequent reviews of the situation: an example is Jerónima's opening speech in II.xii: this tells us little that is new - the action has been clear enough -, and the review seems even more tautological after Caspar's jealous speech in the immediately preceding scene. These repetitions, admittedly, are more obvious to a reader than they would be to an audience, but, as I shall suggest, Tirso probably intended that his audience should be aware of them.

The violation of economy is not confined to the verbal level. The unity of place is not observed. This is understandable enough within the context of the conventions of the comedia, but the case seems to be more complex than usual in this play. The violation seems to have been quite deliberate, especially as the Castilian-Portuguese opposition is stressed throughout. Worse, the shift in setting from Seville to Coimbra occurs between Acts I and II. As the last two acts take place in Coimbra, they constitute, in one sense at least, a self-contained unity.

More striking is the fact that Acts II and III, taken together, can also be seen as a self-contained action. In other words, Act I, from the point of view of the action, appears to be almost a superfluity. What happens in the first act could have been narrated with
only a minimum of additions in Act II. The latter can almost be
caid to start a new action in a new setting. The introduction of
Rodrigo and Estefanía (with her family) to form the other two angles
in a new triangular love-affair involving Gaspar, around which the
main part of the rest of the plot turns, strengthens our impression
that Act II virtually begins the play afresh and that Act I is little
more than introductory background material to the play proper. 12

Tirso's management of his characters seems to be no less con-
tributory to the prevailing impression of a self-indulgent indifference
to technique. Gonzalo is introduced at the beginning of the play,
indirectly in the opening scene and then directly in the following one.
He promises to play an important part in the plot - he is, after all,
the main obstacle between Jerónima and her Gaspar -, but he disappears
permanently from the stage at the end of Act I, and his death is
reported at the end of the play. His function is thus to serve as
confidant to Gaspar in the second scene and to interrupt Jerónima's
tête-à-tête with Gaspar in the last scene of Act I. Hartzenbusch would
have eliminated Gonzalo (along with Act I) altogether.

Gonzalo and Machado, his servant, (who speaks but one line in
the entire play - a feeble joke in I.ii) are replaced in Act II by
much more important characters, Rodrigo and Estefanía, along with
Magio and Martín. Of these, Martín is a pretty useless figure and
does little more than occasionally mumble the correct words at the
appropriate moment. Even the appearance of the King himself seems
almost a burlesque of the dramatic convention whereby the monarch
intervenes at the end of a play (not, as here, at the opening of Act
III) to bring justice to the wronged and restore order to a chaotic
situation, for the vindication of the persecuted Barbésia is turned
into an occasion for satirical innuendo about the position and privileges
of palace doctors. The scene with the King marks the summit of Jerónima's feminist achievements and undoubtedly adds a dash of colour and excitement to the opening of the last act, but its main functional purpose is to be seen in the context of the medical satire in the play.

There are also some curious features concerning the characterization. From about the end of the second act, a partial dissolution of Jerónima's personality into a stock farcical figure becomes evident. While this transformation is not absolute, in the third act especially, that seems to have begun as a comedy of character turns into a comedy of situation and wit. There are ambiguities in Gaspar's character, too, as we shall see, and we may infer that they stem, in part at least, from the demands of the action: if Gaspar is seen largely in a functional rôle, these ambiguities can be considered as responses, controlled by the author, to the momentary demands of external plot situations and not emerging from inner motivations of a coherent personality integrated into the plot. Such an explanation would fit in with the fact that the other secondary characters are also conceived as largely functional.

It is possible, of course, that the play may have been hastily written as a pièce d'occasion. Da. Blanca suggests that it may have risen out of one of Tirso's visits to Portugal. If so, that would explain the use of Portuguese, which would be a natural way of acknowledging the presence of a largely Portuguese-speaking audience. Apart from this, however, the profusion of small, seemingly unimportant rôles should be seen in the context of the theatrical conventions of the time. The play was probably written for a specific author, and parts therefore had to be provided for all the actors in his company. Later in the century, companies would no longer be able to dictate dramatic requirements in such a way. But the con-
ventions of the period in which Tirso wrote most of his plays were not the same as those under which Calderón was to work. Yet, it does not seem that external factors can account for all the apparent weaknesses in the play, and perhaps not at all for what appear to be its major flaws.

I suggest that the structure may be more subtle than it appears to be at first sight. Out of its apparent incongruities (which make _El amor médico_ seem to be two plays arbitrarily combined to form one), there seems to emerge a binary pattern, based on the theme of the comedy, which makes for a brilliant play of wit in and through the action and characters. The play, in fact, may almost be seen as an enormous dialectic on stage, which would help to explain some of its unusual features. Tirso, in other words, seems to be experimenting here with a novel dramatic structure. In view of this, an attempt will be made to examine the witty thematic development in the play in the hope that this will lead us to a fuller understanding of its structure.

The view of comedy put forward by W. Kerr in his book, _Tragedy and Comedy_, seems to be fully supported by Tirso's _El amor médico_. Here we see the so-called "parasitic" aspect of comedy: the humorous treatment of potentially noble aspirations in man— and woman. Here, too, the incongruity between these aspirations and human limitations, between an intellectual and an emotive approach to life. This basic incongruity has other ramifications in the comedy which I shall presently explore.

What feminism is and whether it can be reconciled with femininity are the intriguing questions Tirso asks in this delightful play. Feminism is generally thought of as an attempt to secure the rapprochement of the sexes: women want to have the same rights as men;
they want to practice the same professions as men; they almost seem to want to be men. This, on the surface, may appear a ludicrous impossibility (although Tirso shows how it may be possible in one sense), but the problem is perhaps a more serious one. Feminism may be regarded as a manifestation of woman's self-assertion as a free being. Such an assertion of freedom, if carried far enough, i.e., to the point where her nature was in danger of being altered, could bring her into conflict with social and natural laws - and the stage would be set for tragedy.

A woman can refuse to love, or, at least, reject marriage as a humiliating form of servitude. In so doing, she denies herself a deep emotional and physiological fulfilment which is a fundamental need of her femininity. But not only does she thus reject nature: her stance is anti-social and anti-vital, inasmuch as it tends to undermine the existence of the basic social unit, the family, the existence of which is essential for the continuation of the human race.

A further justification for this anti-vital and anti-social attitude is often sought in an alleged incompatibility between love and intellectual pursuits. This view is a recurrent one in literature. The pursuit of learning is a basic intellectual freedom: studies in themselves constitute an attempt on man's part to extend the frontiers of human knowledge. The extension of these frontiers widens the individual's sphere of action by increasing his ability to act and multiplying the opportunities for him to intervene in increasingly numerous events.

The consequences of education in a woman are easy to envisage. The range of her possible careers being widened, her function in society changes, and so does her hierarchical position in any social structure. Thus education allows her to extend her sphere of action;
but, in a social set-up in which a woman's sphere of action is rigorously defined, any such extension of her capacity to act leads her to encroach upon territory regarded as the preserve of the male. If we accept that a thing is defined not merely by virtue of what it is, but also by virtue of what it is not, we can understand more readily the view of so many persons who regard a breakdown of the male-female polarity as something verging on the absurd, if not on the horrific. Such a reaction would be much stronger in the seventeenth century, when the roles of men and women were more clearly defined and the spheres of their activities more rigidly limited. For a woman to want to usurp the functions of a man would be un-feminine, anti-social, and immoral, because unnatural. By it, the male's function in society is threatened - and perhaps his very existence. In fact, the corollary of female emancipation would seem to be an almost Shavian reduction of man's rôle to a secondary sexual one. And if the feminist aversion to love and marriage were erected into a norm, man would become a superfluous appendage in a feminine world.

The absurdity inherent in such a world, however, becomes immediately apparent. An exclusively feminine (like an exclusively masculine) world could exist for no longer than a single generation. The view that intellectual activity tends to be anti-vital and sterile, an assertion made through the ages and repeated by modern writers such as Ionesco and Unamuno, is not an entirely pointless one. There is thus a profound irony, which comedy exploits to the full, in the theme of the woman, the giver and propagator of life par excellence, who rejects her femininity in order to embrace sterile learning. This is done in the name of the pursuit of freedom, and here the irony runs even deeper. For we are faced with the paradox that the pursuit of
freedom to extremes is self-defeating, since it leads to a situation where the possible field for its exercise, i.e., human existence, is destroyed, and, along with it, freedom itself.

There is another consideration to be borne in mind, however. This is the question of whether a woman is in fact capable of rejecting her femininity. A woman's femininity is a fact of life rooted in nature, and nature is a force which few can resist and even fewer deny without peril to themselves. A woman's femininity is an essential part of her make-up, and she is thus to a certain extent controlled by it. In other words, on the emotional level, woman is susceptible to love. Its fulfilment brings into play her biological rôle as mother, and this is exercised in the social context of the marriage relationship. Femininity, by being an integral and, therefore, inescapable part of woman's make-up, tends when it comes to the fore, to restrict her sphere of action. There is thus an inherent limitation in woman's very being which is at odds with the feminist desire for intellectual and social freedom. The feminist seeks to overcome this limitation by suppressing any dangerous manifestations of her femininity and by giving full rein to the instinct of curiosity which characterises the pure pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

The feminism-femininity opposition is the basic motif in the comedy under examination. This opposition can be seen in terms of an opposition between freedom - man's desire to enlarge his sphere of action, whether it be physical or intellectual - and the limitations which militate against the exercise of such potential freedom. The clash is a potentially serious one. But in this light-hearted play, there are only echoes of seriousness here and there, and these lie deep below the surface. In any case, Tirso eschews any metaphysical seriousness in El amor médico, and, by a brilliant tour de force of
wit, suggests that feminism and femininity are, at bottom, one and the same thing. A potentially serious conflict is dissolved by wit.

Such a startling reconciliation of the feminism-femininity opposition is already foreshadowed in the play's title: El amor mético. The basic meaning is clear enough: love, to find fulfilment, becomes a doctor. This on the level of the fable. But the symbolic level is more complex. Love symbolises all that is alive and self-renewing. It is associated with the motif of femininity. The doctor, on the other hand, symbolises learning. Traditionally in comedy, he stands for all that learning ought not to be - pedantry, pompous and dressed-up ignorance, a mechanical (as Bergson would say) attitude towards life, etc. - and is therefore a satiric figure. In comedy, he starts off as a university professor, but then turns into a physician. This adds a grotesque element to the implications of the comic figure, for to the seventeenth century especially, the doctor was virtually the emissary of death, and the implied equation médico = muerte must account for a lot of the black humour implicit in such a play as Calderón's El médico de su honra. Tires, in this comedy, gives us a heroine who is both physician and university professor, thus combining the original with the later version of the comic figure. Furthermore, the portrayal of the doctor is ambiguous: Jerónima is both a satirical and a satiric figure, by being both a model doctor and a parody of a quack one. The implications of this will be discussed later.

We are presented, therefore, with a title which in itself contains a violent paradox: in it, life and death, love and learning are innocently combined, even though such a combination is, at first
ight, an impossibility, and even an absurdity. The reconciliation of these virtual opposites is achieved through their reconciliation in the heroine. It is interesting to try and discover the key which could reveal to us the means by which the paradox in the theme can be made intelligible. We shall see, for example, that love is, contrary to expectation, presented as a form of illness, instead of a state of health. Medicine, therefore, is the means by which this illness can be cured. But, as the play goes on, it becomes clear that the cure for this particular illness is really tantamount to spreading the contagion, not eliminating it. The doctor's skill, therefore, lies in his incompetence. This, of course, is one reason for the emergence of the "quack" element in Jerónima's portrayal: her competence in the treatment of ordinary illnesses is of no use in the case of the illness of love. But, in the end, it is only sterile learning which is killed. The illness of love is necessary for the existence of the human race. By a process of comic inversion, an illness is shown to be health, and medicine, incredibly, effects a cure.

The basic thematic opposition between feminism and femininity is manifested psychologically in the inner conflict in Jerónima between learning and love. This carries on the binary pattern referred to, and the way in which the structure of the opening scene presents this conflict will be analysed later on. Before I examine Jerónima's character in greater detail, however, it would be convenient initially to trace the main stages in the development of the thematic conflict.

The learning motif can be broken down into the following elements, which are presented at first with Jerónima's obsessive passion for study, which has incurred her brother's displeasure. This passion is intimately linked with her feminist aspirations to freedom, liberty, and the assertion of her individuality. But her aspirations are not ill selfish: she is not only striking a blow on behalf of herself and
of womankind, but also dedicating her life to study for the benefit of human beings at large. That is why her particular field of study is medicine. But the practice of medicine is in the seventeenth century virtually an exclusively masculine sphere of activity. Jerónima's own competence in this skill is thus a direct challenge to existing masculine incompetence and, consequently, a challenge to men themselves. (This is an extension of the feminist element in her character.) Jerónima, furthermore, is not content only to invade a masculine sphere of activity, but, with the help of disguise, "becomes" a man. Meeting men fully on their own ground, she can give rein, directly and indirectly, to the criticism of doctors and existing medical practices. While the medical satire in the play will be discussed more fully later on, it is convenient to note its two basic aspects at this point. There is, first, the social element in this satire: not only is it highly topical, as has been stated, but the play offers serious, constructive criticism concerning the medical profession. Secondly, there is the traditional comic aspect associated with the quack doctor (already mentioned) which comes to the fore in the later stages of the play. A fuller possible explanation for this shift from the serious to the farcical will be offered later on.

The love motif has a simpler but equally logical development. Jerónima's intellectual curiosity (allied to a more normal curiosity) starts the process:

\[\text{[JERONIMA:]}\]
Causó en mí este sentimiento
una curiosa impaciencia
y deseo de inquirir
si vivén hombres de piedra;

The last line, of course, reveals that the curiosity is not wholly intellectual: Gaspar's attitude has wounded Jerónima's female vanity.
and aroused her anger - and jealousy. His continued apparent indifference turns her indignation and jealousy into love, which, as we discover at the end, is the prime motivating element in the plot. At first, however, love stands in frank opposition to Jerónima's intellectual aspirations - a physical limitation in the way of her desire for freedom. A resolution to this conflict is found when we discover how love turns Jerónima's pursuit of knowledge into a weapon in her hunt for a mate; her intellectual activity is made subservient to love, and used as an instrument for the furtherance of love's designs.

The development of these two motifs finds a common link in disguise: it is not only Jerónima's feminist aspirations which lead her to disguise herself as a man, but also her love for an indifferent Caspar which turns her into a "female-page" figure. Thus, in this play also, the two basic comic situations appear linked together. There is the hunt for a mate - Jerónima's pursuit of Gaspar -, and there is the satire of doctors, which is intimately bound up with the question of feminism. The incompatibility between these two activities creates a tension which moves along the plot until a reconciliation is effected between love and learning.

Since Jerónima is the central pivot of the plot, not only is the main thematic conflict embodied within her, but she virtually controls the whole action of the play. If the characters in comedy may be said grosso modo to fall into two categories, the butts and the wits, the separation is very clear in this play in one sense. On the level of the action, the wit is Jerónima, for she controls the action, using almost all the other characters as her puppets. But, as we shall see presently, the ironical development of the play on the level of wit exposes Jerónima as a puppet of her own nature by showing her to be a puppet of love. Thus two main antagonists can be identified in the
comedy: Gaspar, first of all, and, secondly, Jerónima herself. This latter factor introduces into the comedy a structural complexity which is lacking in the earlier Marta la piadosa, where we have a clear separation of the characters into wits (Marta and her accomplices) and butts. In El amor médico, then, Jerónima is both wit and butt. What is more, being very self-conscious, she is aware of the grotesque, paradoxical inconsistency in her character. Paul Goodman has stressed the dual aspect of many characters in comedy: a character, on the one hand, may possess certain traits which we consider "normal"; on the other hand, the character also possesses a certain specifically comic trait which the overall action of the comedy aims at deflating. The comic trait classes the character as one of the "humours". Now, Jerónima, as a machinating woman in love, is a wit and a normal character. Her femininity is not a deflatable trait (or, at least, not regarded as such in the social and literary context of the seventeenth century). As a feminist, however, Jerónima is a humour and a butt. She must be purged of her feminism, which, presumably, is "unnatural". The play is thus both a comedy of intrigue in which Jerónima is wit and a comedy of character in which Jerónima is butt.

For analytical purposes, certain clear advantages are gained from looking at the play in the light of that statement. The plot of the comedy is seen to possess two strands of action, one of which is overt, while the other is more or less latent. The former is motivated by Jerónima, the feminist, the latter by Jerónima as the wit. Unity is achieved in the overall structure of the plot when we are made to realise that Jerónima's erstwhile fault is cleverly transformed into a positive virtue, thus converting Jerónima the butt into Jerónima the wit. With this, the two strands converge to a single
Let us proceed to examine the feminist aspect of Jerónima's character first.

As has been said, Jerónima's feminism is an "unnatural" and deflatable trait of which she must be purged. Yet the particular form which her obsession takes is not an ignoble or inherently ridiculous one. From the beginning we learn of Jerónima's dedication to study. Although this found favour in her father's eyes, it has led to an estrangement between herself and her brother who is now head of the household as their father is dead:

[Jerónima:] que como muestra disgusto
porque no me determine
en admitir persuasiones
casamenteras, pasiones
de hermano, a que no me inclino,
le ocasionan a no hablarme
dos meses ha.

[Quiñéria:] — No me espanto:
haste embebedo tanto
en latines, que a cansarme
llego yo, sin que me importe,
cuanto y más quien se encargó
de ti desde que murió
tu padre.

[I.i. p. 971a-b.

This bothers Jerónima not a wit, as she is determined to have her own way. Her assertion of independence is reinforced by her feminist desire to widen the sphere of female activity. Her resolve is at one with the actions of Isabel la Católica:

[Jerónima:] Yo sigo el norte
de mi inclinación; ¿qué quieres?
Mi señor se recreaba
de cifra, cuando estudiaba.
¿Siempre han de estar las mujeres
sin pasar la rey estrecha
de la aguja y la almohadilla?
Celebre alguna Sevilla
que en las ciencias aprovecha.
De ordinario los vasallos
suelen imitar su rey
en las costumbres y ley:
si da en armas y en caballos,
soldados y caballeros
son el sabio y ignorante;
There is a fine irony in this speech which should not go unremarked. It begins with a bold assertion of individual freedom:

"Yo sigo el norte / de mi inclinación". But this is obviously a freedom which is not absolutely free. Her dedication to study is clearly motivated in part by a desire to please her father: "Mi señor se recreaba / de oírme, cuando estudiaba". Then she tries to justify her attitude by an appeal to authority: the Queen "empieza a estudiar latín", and is taught by "La Latina". (We may note, en passant, the political overtones of this section of the speech). Whereas, judging from the bold initial assertion, we should have expected Jerónima to be anything but a conformist tribal Indian, that is what she ironically declares herself to be: "Por esto quiero imitalla". Although the queen and her tutor may be regarded as exceptional rather than run-of-the-mill individuals, Jerónima's desire to imitate them is only the first stage in a long process which culminates in the undermining of her desire for autonomy.

At the same time, Jerónima is not yet a complete conformist. Unlike Isabel, she will not marry, since marriage, she argues, is incompatible with the freedom which the pursuit of learning demands:
The opposition between freedom and captivity takes up the basic theme of the play, and is a traditional assertion. But Tirso's sharp irony is transparent here also: "las artes son liberales / porque hacen que libre viva / a quien en ellas se emplea". Jerónima's decision to opt for the freedom of the liberal arts has obvious moral implications, as is indicated by the phrase, "libre viva". The education of women leads to a slackening of moral rules. This is as yet only a vague innuendo, but, as the play progresses, the implication grows stronger.

All the same, Jerónima's refusal to marry has a wholesome side to it: the independence of mind it reveals finds a reflection in her unorthodox choice of subject:

[QUIZERIA:] pero ¿por qué ha de estudiar medicina una mujer?

JERÓNIMA: Porque estimo la salud, que anda en poder de ignorantes. Ciencias tú que seda y guantes de curar tienen virtud? Engañaste si lo piensas; desvelas y naturales son las partes principales que con vigilias inmensas hacen al médico sabio. Por ver si a mi patria puedo aprovechar, contra el miedo que a la salud hace agravio. I.I. p.972a.

A strong idealistic trait can be discerned in Jerónima. There is her concern for health - a concern not devoid of some altruism. More, there is her concern for the dignity of learning: it is something to be taken seriously. There is, enveloping both of these, her more
idealistic patriotism, which, as the continuation of the speech indicates, would find some satisfaction in the reform of medical teaching and practice in the country. Her disinterested study of medicine is re-affirmed later on in the play. (Although the latent irony in her words is very strong here, we may grant that her initial interest was largely disinterested.) The study and practice of medicine have been prostituted for base, selfish ends, asserts Jerónima, but:

[JERÓNIMA:] Yo estudió la Medicina por inclinación no más, sin que intentase jamás que facultad tan divina fuese de << pane luciendo >>.

III.viii. p.1008b.

Jerónima herself is a more than competent physician: though largely self-educated (there is no evidence of her having received any formal education in medicine), she becomes professor of medicine at Coimbra, physician to the King and Queen, and earns the envious hatred of her less successful colleagues:

[QUITERIA:] Das en querer catedrar de vísperas o maítines, con que médicos rúfines no te acaban de envidiar, sin que haya en ellos quien hable en favor de tus recetas; que en médicos y en poetas, la envidia es sarna incurable.

II.xii. p.997a.

(One wonders if there is a veiled reference to Lope in the last two lines, incidentally.)

There are two sides to this achievement. The first is the fact that it constitutes a devastating victory in the feminist war against men. Dr. Barbosa is not only more competent than "his" colleagues, but is also very young, and, what is more, really a woman, as the audience knows.

The second side to Jerónima's achievement consists in the reflection it casts on the medical profession of the time. Impelled, as we have seen, by a combination of feminist, altruistic, and idealistic motivations, Jerónima devotes herself to the study and then practice

of medicine. This was, in the seventeenth century, traditionally a masculine occupation, but one in which masculine incompetence was notorious. Jerónima is a woman, virtually self-educated, and young enough to arouse the hatred of her fellow-doctors, the misgivings of Gaspar, and the admiration of the King. The stage is thus set for the satire of the medical profession.

Hartzenbusch does not admit that the play satirises the medical profession. Arguing against an earlier view that Lope's El acero de Madrid and Tirso's El amor médico are satirical in intent, he is at pains to point out that our reaction is a purely comic or hilarious one to what is basically an unusual situation:

... lo cómico del personage de doña Gerónima no nace de que haga el papel de médico por su gusto, ni de que emplee la fraseología técnica, sino de la novedad que causa una muger tomando pulsos y ordenando recetas, de la estreñez del disfraz á que ha recurrido para colocarse entre don Gaspar y doña Estefanía. No creemos nosotros que Tellez al idear su doctor con faldas quiso ridiculizar á los médicos de su tiempo con la intención profunda que Molíre en varias de sus comedias: doña Gerónima, aunque dirije algunas pullas á los médicos, no nos parece la sátira personificada de la medicina: doña Gerónima estudia el arte de curar para aventajarse en ella, para saber más que sabían los doctores de su época, y porque estudia y sabe, le dan el grado. Si sus argumentos y citas nos hacen reír, es porque en una obra dramática mueve a risa todo lenguaje afectado o simplemente facultativo; y es muy de creer que si Tellez hubiera introducido en alguna comedia la persona del mismo Hipócrates con ánimo de ensalzar su ciencia, le hubiera hecho hablar casi lo mismo que la Marisabidilla sevillana. (23)

The play is, of course, not primarily a sustained invective against
doctors. As we have seen, its scope is much broader; but the medical satire in it consists of considerably more than "algunas pullas".

Hartzenbusch, apparently expecting to find a traditional burlesque figure, seems to have missed the ambiguity in Jerónima's portrayal.

For it is important to remember that Jerónima is not primarily or always a satiric figure within the play. Tirso is at pains to modify the conventional approach, principally because of the varied implications of the theme. The satire in the play is both positive, i.e., constructive, and negative.

Constructive criticism of the medical profession occurs principally in the first section of the play, and, more specifically, in the first act. This straightforward approach is consistent with Jerónima's high and passionate seriousness. She is indignant that human lives should be placed in the hands of ignorant, unskilled tyros, and decides to become a model doctor herself and remedy current abuses.

But it is not enough to expect doctors to be as honest and as diligent in their studies and dedication to their profession as they ought to be. The vital rôle played by doctors calls for something more. Jerónima laments the fact that the practice of medicine is not subject to supervision and control:

**JERÓNIMA:** ¡Cosa extraña, que en cualquiera arte, por poco que valga, hay aprendiz que no salga con ella, echándole fuera, y que en esta no ha de haber médico que desechar, Quiteria! I.i. p. 972b.

Strict and proper training of doctors is necessary:

**[JERÓNIMA:]** ¡No es lástima que examinen a un albéitar herrador, a un perale, a un tundidor, y que antes que determinen que practique su ejercicio, aprueben su suficiencia; y la medicina, ciencia
que no tiene por oficio
menos que el dar o quitar
la vida, que tanto importa,
con una asistencia corta
de escuelas, un platicar
don año, a la guardapra
de un doctor en ella experto
porque más hombres ha muerto,
polijo de barba y capa,
en habiendo para mula,
llueng queda graduado,
antes de ser licenciado,
de doctor? Quien no regula
estos peligros, ¿no es necio?
I.i. p.972a.

The last two lines are a clear enough call for legislation. The matter is urgent, for, as Quiéria humorously points out, the reputation of doctors is at an absolute low:

**QUIÉRIA**

Diz que en Madrid enseñaba
cierto verdugo su oficio
no sé a qué aprendiz novicio,
y viendo que no acertaba,
puesto sobre un aspantajo
de paja, aquellas acciones
infames de sus liciones,
le echó la escalera abajo,
diciéndole: "Andad, señor,
y pues estáis descalviado
para oficio de hombre honrado,
estudiad para doctor."

I.i. 972b.

In II.viii, we see that Jerónima has taken a further step along the feminist and medical road. She physically invades the medical profession, disguising herself as a (male) doctor. She can now put into practice her ideas about medicine. Her opening speech, well-ordered and rigorously logical in its argument (which is virtually irrefutable if we accept the medical premises underlying it), confirms that her intellectual training leaves little to be desired. Nor is she lacking in learning, as we are forced to admit on hearing her long speech towards the end of this important scene, when she defends her youth against Caspar's accusations of ignorance. The sheer weight of authorities she summons to back up her arguments is overwhelming.
She finds similar support for her constructive advice on dress and appearance, while the psychological value of her argument (which has its source in Hippocrates, as Zamora-Vicente points out in a note on pp. 76-77 of his edition) is supported by San Román in his booklet already referred to. In the following scene, Inigo's favourable report on the doctor confirms that the latter is both skilful and respected in Coimbra: the city owes its health to Dr. Barbosa.

At the same time, if we return to scene viii, which is one of the central scenes in the play and a pièce de résistance, so to speak, we must acknowledge that Tirso's treatment of the doctor is not wholly serious. The Latin quotations are an inevitable adjunct of the traditional comic doctor and Estefanía says as much:

ESTEFANÍA: No gustéis, señor dotor,
de aforismos tanta copia;
que es almacén ordinario
de todo médico broma.
Ved si tengo calentura.

II.viii. p.99Ob.

The examination of the patient, Estefanía, is also not without its burlesque aspects. The clearest example is perhaps to be found in the patent absurdities of the diet which is prescribed for Estefanía, and the effect of which is to be enhanced by "unos jarabes" and "cinco pilí Doras solas". Similarly, the medico-philosophical explanation to Rodrigo of love at first sight is an amusing piece of sophistry.

Halstead has noted its debt to a philosophical theory and also questioned the soundness of the argument in the speech. But the excessive length of the speech, together with the implication at the end, makes it obvious that Tirso does not intend to be serious here. He is aiming rather at producing a comic effect with a display of spurious logic and apparent learning. It is clear that an element of ambivalence has been deliberately introduced into the portrayal of
Jerónima. She is no longer to be seen solely as the serious feminist-doctor, but also as a comic figure, and this is confirmed by her farcical encounters with Tello in II.xv and III.iv. Part of the explanation, of course, lies in the fact that the satire is now also being effected by means of parody and burlesque.

The introduction of a tone of greater levity provides ample opportunity for the introduction of innuendo and indirect attacks on doctors and their moral standards. When Jerónima first appears on stage as a doctor (II.viii), her opening words are "Dios sea en esta casa". On one level, it is grotesque that a doctor should utter such a salutation on visiting a patient—much as if he were a priest. The invocation is, to say the least, hardly a heartening one, especially since we read in *Por el sótano y el torno* that a certain doctor's nickname is "Extreme Unction".²⁵ On a more subtle level, however, one can see a further implication. The doctor's pious words seem to be an echo of Fabia's in Lope's *Al caballero de Olmedo*: "Paz sea en esta casa!" (Act II, line 1407), which, of course, hark back directly to Celestina's "Paz sea en esta casa!" (*La Celestina*, Act IV).

The insinuation from the very start seems to be that the doctor is an alcahuete. This, in fact, finds confirmation in the subsequent development of the intrigue. We are told that the doctor has free entry into his patients' houses:

\[
\text{ESTEFANÍA:} \quad \text{Entre, y advierta que el docto nunca la puerta se le cierra.} \\
\text{II.vii. p.989b.}
\]

This presupposes a necessary confidence in his professional and moral integrity. But it is hinted that the latter are qualities not always possessed by doctors. Rodrigo, conveniently for Jerónima, is smitten with love for Estefanía. Jerónima, as Dr. Barbosa, has forbidden
Caspar to talk to Estefanía. This move is aimed at isolating Caspar and preventing a marriage between him and Estefanía, while preserving him as a future husband for Jerónima herself. But as the other characters are ignorant of Jerónima’s true intentions, her action is interpreted in various ways. To Rodrigo, the doctor presents himself as a sympathetic third party, explaining why he has forbidden Caspar to speak to Estefanía: he will intercede on Rodrigo’s behalf and is sure of success:

[JERÓNIMA:]  Dejadme a mí el cargo de esto:
que aunque yo no vaticine,
no en balde impédí el hablarla
con Gaspar. Apercibidme
para guantes cuando estéis
en altura tan sublime,
que con título de esposo
mis curas os maravillen.
III.v. p.1006a.

Immediately afterwards, Rodrigo unequivocally states that some doctors are intermediaries, the implication being that Dr. Barbosa is such a person:

[RODRIGO:]  ¿No es mujer? No me apercibe
a amarla un doctor tercero?
Pues él vencerá imposibles;
que hay médicos << in utroque >>,
criminales y civiles,
con billetes por recetas,
que a amor y a Galeno sirven.
III.vi. p.1006a.

Furthermore, the doctor also emerges as a tercero de sí mismo. In III.xiii, Doña Marta reveals to Estefanía that her brother is carrying on an intrigue with Leonor, Estefanía’s cousin. But just before Marta leaves in the following scene, she hints that the doctor is not uninterested in Estefanía either "... porque o doutor / ou ten ser de
Leonor, / ou de vossa senhoria." (III.xiv. p.1013b). Estefanía is very naturally angry, and refuses to let the doctor feel her pulse when he next visits her:
Not a minor part of the comic effect of this scene resides in Estefanía's hysterical accusations of the doctor. Her charges are partly pure comic (insofar as they spring from her passionate jealousy), but also partly serious, as they seem to have some validity outside the immediate context of the play. She attacks the unscrupulous behaviour of some doctors:

More seriously, there is also a reference to the choice of a palace physician:

This latter reference seems to be related to the contemporary concern over the appointment of palace doctors, a concern, which, as has been stated, produces echoes in other plays of Tirso's. Estefanía's anger,
ironically, is appeased when, after a series of sex metamorphoses in which the doctor moves from the male Barbosa to the female Marta disguised as her brother and finally back to Barbosa, he confesses that he really loves Estefanía and his disguise as a woman was motivated by love and jealousy, i.e., that he is guilty of precisely the charges which Estefanía had only a moment before levelled against him:

**ESTEFANÍA:** ¿Quién eres?

**JERÓNIMA:** Vuestro doctor,
que dos veces os visito,
una en nombre de mi hermana,
y ahora en nombre mío:
como mujer la primera,
y esta en traje masculino.

**ESTEFANÍA:** Luego no fue doña Marta
la que estuvo antes conmigo?

**JERÓNIMA:** No, mi señora, su traje
solo en mí sustituido,
mi poca barba y edad,
el fuego en que me derrito,
la dispensación severa,
los celos siempre atrevidos,
en mujer me transformaron.

---

The scene ends with Estefanía accepting as her esposo the unscrupulous doctor of uncertain sex, a factor which she, in her blind passion, curiously seems to have overlooked completely.

Such unethical conduct on the part of the doctor finds not a little encouragement in the fact that Estefanía virtually throws herself at Dr. Barbosa. This is especially evident in the medical examination scene (II.viii), which is rich in comic meanings. The examination of the patient is itself a caricature of a medical examination; but this is on the level of farce. On a much more subtle level is the delicate *quid pro quo* in the conversation between doctor and patient. Estefanía is irritated by the doctor's long medical lesson and invites him to get down to brass tacks:
On the verbal level, Barbosa's comments and questions, if isolated from their context, seem (if we make due allowance for the exaggeration of caricature) normal and harmless enough. But Estefanía's interleaved asides leave us in no doubt that the examination is for her an occasion for amorous communication:

**ESTEFANÍA:** (Aparte): 
Amorosa sangre, decide mi mal: 
sirva la arteria de boca, 
pues viene del corazón. 

II.viii. p.990b.

She invites the doctor to examine her:

**ESTEFANÍA:** Abrásanseme las palmas 
de las manos: cuanto tocan 
encienden; tentad, tentad. 

**JERÓNIMA:** ¡Brava intemperies!

**ESTEFANÍA:** Soy Troya. 

II.viii. p.991a.

There is, on the stylistic level, the ambivalent *double entendre*: the fire is, in one sense, a fever; in another, it is her passion. On the level of the medical satire, there is the obvious invitation to the doctor to hold her hands and be inflamed: "cuanto tocan / encienden; tentad, tentad". Barbosa's tacit connivance is loaded: his medical examination is, on the moral level, unethical. But professionally he cannot but be unethical if he would avoid the charge of being indifferent to the patient's welfare!

The situation is therefore a complex one (and would demand considerable skill and delicacy when acted on the stage). First, Jerónima's remarks must be neutral and professional enough to withstand the scrutiny of the bystanders (including the jealous, suspicious,
hawk-eyed Gaspar). At the same time, it is clear that the remarks, by virtue of their professional neutrality, must have the effect of varying Estefanía's frantic advances. In other words, Dr. Barbosa knows that Estefanía loves 'him', and sees the need for restraining her (for 'he' is, after all, really a woman - a fact which, because of its undertones of sexual perversion, contributes not a little to the risqué comic suggestiveness of the scene). Thus Estefanía's inflamed declaration of her love is, in part, neutralised as the doctor takes up the image of burning but puts it into a medical context:

**JERÓNIMA:** Tenéis toda la región del hígado por la cólera lesa, que con la pituita quemándola se incorpora. Ahora bien, señora mía, Vuestra se da onga a preservar accidentes que la experiencia diagnóstica nos indica: lo primero, con dieta flemagoga y algo colagoga, enfrène cualidades licenciosas.

II.viii. p.991a.

The last line, of course, is a discreet hint to Estefanía that she should control herself. Again, when Estefanía aggressively and almost shamelessly offers herself to the doctor, the latter's professional solicitude helps to defuse the situation:

**[JERÓNIMA]:** espero en Dios de dejarla sana en distancia tan corta, que restituya alegries y a sus mejillas sus rosas.

**ESTEFANÍA:** Haced vos eso, docto, si mi salud os importa (que si gustáis, bien podéis), y de cuanto soy señora disponréis a vuestro arbitrio.

(Aparte)

**[JERÓNIMA]:** ¡Ay! ¡Si me entendiese! Sobran voluntad y medicinas; pero falta que se pongan en ejercicio.
Secondly, Jerónima realises that Estefanía's ambiguous speech cannot merely be countered on one of its levels of meaning, i.e., the doctor-patient one, which, in the context of the intrigue, is the less important. Thus the doctor's response, too, must be ambiguous. There is limited scope for further manoeuvre on the level of speech (which is rendered complex enough by Estefanía's ambiguities and the quid pro quo resulting from Barbosa's deliberate response on a professional level), but the doctor's total response can contain a reciprocal ambiguity, precisely because of the fact that 'he' is a doctor. The second level of response is, of course, that of physical action: the examination of a patient can be less than an innocent process; and it is in the physical examination that the doctor responds to Estefanía's advances. He takes one pulse, then the other, and this does not pass unremarked by Gaspar:

Gaspar: (Aparte)
¿Que tenga una doctora licencia
tan amplia, que lo que goza
el tacto a mí se me niegue?
¡Oh facultad venturosa!

II.viii. p.990b.

Nor does the doctor hesitate to take the palms of the patient when the latter thrusts them forth, hot with love, for him to touch. This move is repeated a little later in the scene (after the passionate defence of youth and of personal cleanliness in doctors) when the doctor confirms Estefanía's almost miraculous improvement. But here, Barbosa's replies to Estefanía's questions themselves contain an element of ambiguity, for they can be interpreted as the flattery of a man addressed to a woman, and they are surely taken as such by Estefanía, since she rewards
the doctor with two diamonds! Gaspar, of course, finds in this medical examination a confirmation of his worst fears:

**GASPAR:**

(Aparte):

Por Dios, que soy si se nombra medicina, y no amor, esto, en uno y en otro idiota.

II.viii. p.993b.

The comedy of the scene is thus obvious, but its implications extend beyond the narrow boundaries of the plot itself. The insinuation here is that doctors are not all moral creatures, and will not hesitate to exploit any opportunity which presents itself. Gaspar has realised the truth of the situation, and in the ensuing scene (II.ix), his jealousy and anger are betrayed by his extreme irritability and his irrational calling into question of the doctor’s competence. In a soliloquy in II.xi, his jealousy leads him into a wider criticism of doctors: first, he sees the dangers inherent in the doctor-patient relationship:

**GASPAR:**

Celos, ya empieza a temer
mi amor al doctor Barbosa.
Cuando no le ve, está triste;
y en viéndole toda es gozo;
él es despéjado mozo;
cúrala, a su pulso asiste:
poco la sangre resiste,
si la ocasión la provoca:
si llega y arterias toca,
comunicarás penas:
¿quién vio que amor por las venas hablase, y no por la boca?

II.xi. p.996a.

But almost immediately, the criticism is raised to the absolute level and virtually becomes a general charge directed at the medical profession at large:

**GASPAR:**

Médica jurisdicción,
malicioso estoy: ¿qué quieres
de ocasiones y mujeres,
ella mujer, tú ocasión?
¿Oh médicos, que inhumanos
con los cuerpos sois, dejad
las almas con libertad,
que ya perseguís tiranos!

II.xi. p. 996b.

This line of thought is continued into Act III, when Gaspar directly accuses Barbosa of unethical conduct:

[GASPAR:] que como consiste en tactos
vuestra facultad, dotor,
el médico y el amor
todo es físicos contactos.

III.viii. p. 1007b.

His charge stings the doctor into a passionate defence of the profession, a defence which, because of its heavy irony, can only succeed in eliciting a cynical guffaw from the audience:

JERÓNIMA: Baste, señor don Gaspar,
que no es noble el malbar
sino villano en su aldea.
Yo soy hombre de opinión,
y hasta agora nadie ha habido
que haya, cual vos, deslucido
la médica profesión,
ni la justa confianza
que todo el mundo hace della.

III.viii. p. 1008a.

But Tirso is not done with the profession yet. A further point taken up in the play is the social position of doctors. As has been pointed out already, Quiteria, in the opening scene of the play, remarks that in comparison with a doctor's profession, an executioner's is an "oficio de hombre honrado" (I.i. p. 972b). Doctors, in fact, are regarded as social outcasts, and Estefanía meditates on the ignominy of someone of her class loving a doctor: her haughtiness has made her fall into the depths of degradation:

[ESTEFANÍA:] ¿Por qué amás desigualdades,
ni posibles ni seguras?
Lo que fin será razón
que tengan mis alévores?
Libertad, que tantas veces
triunfó vuestra presumición,
yo que imitáis a Faetón
cayendo, no os despeñéis
sin que en todo le imitáis;
pues aunque de seso falto,
The conflict between the desires of love and the demands of social conventions is also potentially present in Gaspar's love for Doña Marta. He, in the blindness of his passion, is quite prepared to ignore her social status; but the gracioso is by no means blind:

[TELLO:] y advierta tu ciego amor
que es hermana de un doctor.

GASPAR: Mejor dirás ángel, Tello.

His warning does not fall on deaf ears, for in III.viii, we see that Gaspar is prepared to marry Doña Marta if he can find someone in the city "quien vuestra limpieza apruebe" (III.viii. p.1008b). The reference to limpieza de sangre is significant, for doctors of Jewish origin were regarded with suspicion at the time (as is made plain in La prudencia en la mujer). What is more, all doctors were suspected of having Jewish blood in their veins, and were thus socially undesirable characters. Similar doubts persist in Estefania's mind, and, as late as III.xviii, she wants to be re-assured about the doctor's suitability as a husband for her.

Now we can see why Jerónima, a member of the upper classes, acts scandalously by becoming a doctor. She is not only undermining the natural order, but also introducing chaos into the social. Such are the extremes of moral and social degradation to which the education of women and feminist tendencies lead! This, of course, is only the negative and comic side of the problem. But the play also contains a positive side. Jerónima, by giving rein to her feminism, makes a plea, ipso facto, for improving the status of doctors. It is implied that
the medical profession is used by some as a social ladder. Again, doctors not only rise in social esteem in certain circumstances but also find medicine a lucrative profession. Dr. Barbosa, too, becomes royal physician (and implicitly gains some political power) and university professor, thus obtaining both status and wealth. But he often affirms that his sense of vocation is genuine (as it originally was, we know): he is neither a social climber nor a fortune-hunter:

Don Gaspar, yo os doy mi fe que si en la sangre estribará lo: que vuestra amor repara, aunque médico, no sé quién a quién hace ventaja; que en la hacienda cierto estoy que si tan rico no soy, no es mi fortuna tan baja, que a faltar (mil años viva) un mi hermano, no adquiriera mayorazgo que os pudiera admirar; pero no estribá aquí la dificultad; que siendo médico yo de Cámara, ya adquirió principios mi calidad con que atesore intereses; que aunque entran necesitados, siempre mueren hacendados médicos y ginoveses. Yo estudié la Medicina por inclinación no más, sin que intentase jamás que facultad tan divina fuese de «pane lucrando».

III.viii. p.1608b.

It is his aim to invest the medical profession with a new dignity and importance. To achieve this, doctors must be well trained and of unquestionable intellectual and moral calibre. Their new position in society must be a reward for their merits, and that is why Dr. Barbosa will not support his claim to a university chair with bribes (as is the usual practice):

IMIGO: Iré yo, mi casa toda y cuantos títulos tiene
esta corte; y si os importa hablar votos ...

JERÓNIMA:

eso no;

mi justicia, señor, sola

es de quien he de valerme;

que los sabios no sobornan.

II.viii. p.994b. (28)

Thus the play contains a constructive criticism of the medical profession in addition to being an overt condemnation of abuses and an exposure of ineptitude and ignorance by burlesque.

The satire of the medical profession is clearly not something extraneous. It contributes to the comic effect of the play through burlesque and the creation of ambiguous situations. More organically, Jerónima finds that being a doctor satisfies her feminist instinct, inasmuch as it constitutes an assault upon a traditionally masculine stronghold. Her success in storming it is of the highest importance in the fulfilment of her feminist aspirations. But, in addition to this, being a doctor (and therefore a man) is a perfect disguise for the love-stricken woman. Dr. Barbosa is none other than a new version of the old figure of the female page.

It is time to consider the feminine aspect of Jerónima's character, which is revealed in her relentless pursuit of the man she loves. Comic irony will have it that it is precisely her intellectual curiosity which leads to the emergence of her femininity: this is reflected, e.g., in the diction of the following extract:

[JERÓNIMA:] Causó en mí este sentimiento

una curiosa impaciencia

y deseo de inquirir

si viven hombres de piedra?


But it is more than a mere intellectual curiosity. Gaspar's indifference towards her has offended her female vanity:

JERÓNIMA: La privación

es causa del apetito;

no haberme visto, es delito

que ofende mi presunción.

I.i. p.973b.

Her reaction is in accordance with normal feminine psychology, as she
herself points out:

[JEKCNIMA:]  En nosotras, ya tú sabes
que imperando la soberbia,
se rinde por sus contrarios;
hombre que nos menosprecia,
téngase por bien querido.

Jerónima's pride has been reduced, and her surrender to love puts her on a level with all other "normal" women and in the same class as humbled man-haters:

J ERÓNIMA:  Este hombre se me ha entrado
en el alma por las puertas
más nuevas y peregrinas
que ha visto el amor, Quiteria.
Comenzó por menosprecios
el mío: ¡ay Dios! ¿Quién creyera
que hicieran descortezías
en mí lo que no finezas?

It is to be noted, however, that Jerónima's surrender is a fait accompli from the very beginning of the play. Tirso thus departs from the conventional treatment of a stock situation in comedy. We are not presented with a man-hater whose antipathy is gradually but inevitably overcome in the course of the play. Rather, from the outset, love and learning, nature and the intellect are housed in the same soul and, after an initial conflict, seem, surprisingly, to co-exist happily. This, of course, is in conformity with the binary pattern on which the play is built.

Jerónima, as we have seen from our examination of her feminist aspect, is strong-willed: "Yo sigo el norte / de mi inclinación" (I.i. p.971b). And her inclinación is also towards the intriguing Caspar:

J ERÓNIMA:  Si fuera al paso discreto
que galán, yo te prometo
que llevara que soñar
porque es su disposición,
por gallarda, peregrina.
QUITERIA: Y eso está en la medicina?
JERÓNIMA: No, pero en mi inclinación.
I.i. p.973b.

Just as her obsession with learning makes us consider her on one
level as a humour, her new obsession with Gaspar threatens to make
her a flat character, i.e., one given to violent obsessions. But her
love, though violent, is always under control — if only just. She
can devise a means of knowing whether Gaspar is ignorant of her
presence in the house or not:

JERÓNIMA: Porque veas que te engañas,
anoché a la celosía
del patio le vi bajar;
y para que no tuvieses'
disculpas, porque me cyese,
dije en voz alta: "Aguilar,
¿dónde dejáis a mi hermano?"
Y respondíome: "Señora,
iba a la Alameda agora."
Entonces él, cortesano,
quitó a la reja el sombrero,
sin extrañar el oírme.
¿Ozarás ahora decirme
que no peca de grosero
quien, sin hacer novedad
de escuchar que en casa había
hermana, la suponía?
I.i. p.971a.

She concludes from this that Gaspar must have another woman on his
mind and spies on him:

JERÓNIMA: Vile anoche revolver
papeles, sin advertencia
de que acecharle podían.
QUITERIA: ¿Por dónde?
JERÓNIMA: Por el espacio
de la llave.
QUITERIA: ¿Qué despacio
tus desvelos te tenían?
I.i. p.973a.

She is sure that his papers hold the clue to his distraction, and
must see them: she is jealous.

[BERÓNIMA:] Yo tengo celos, Quiteria,
y he de ver, pues me maltratan,
de qué estos papeles tratan.
I.i. p.974a.
She decides to rifle his papers, and, significantly, Quiteria puts her two passions for love and letters on the same level:

**JERÓNIMA:** Las navetas los tendrán de aquel contador, que están sin llaves para guardarnos. Salgamos de ese cuidado.

**QUITERIA:** Vamon, porque le asegures, y enferma para que cures, la ciencia que has estudiado, que uno y otro es frenesá.

**JERÓNIMA:** En accidentes de amor, no cura bien el dotor que no cura para sí.

I.i. p.974a.

This active scheming and planning on Jerónima's part make her not a humour but a wit. At times her passions threaten to overwhelm her:

**[JERÓNIMA:]** En efecto, mis pasiones, sin saber dónde me llevan, me traen aquí, a ¿qué sé yo? ni ¿qué espero, aunque lo sepa?


But her intellect succeeds in containing and channelling them in a constructive and purposeful way.

This is possible because Jerónima is a very self-conscious character, aware of her own nature and her own inconsistencies. This aspect is perhaps most effectively illustrated by the way in which she humorously accepts Quiteria's ironical remarks about her:

**QUITERIA:** ¡En verdad que en el estudio de la medicina medras lucidamente! Dotor, que en vez de curar enferma, el diablo que lo dé el pulso.

**JERÓNIMA:** Decirme podrá el problema: "Dotor, cúrate a ti mismo".


She is not unaware that her books, which she originally thought of as her means of salvation may be the cause of her perdition:

**QUITERIA:** De los libros te aprovecha en que estudias.

**JERÓNIMA:** ¡Pague a Dios que por ellos no me pierda!

I.ix. p.984b.
This remark coincides perfectly with the more pessimistic, comically sour attitude of Quiteria:

QUITERIA: Yo no sé de qué blasona
la ciencia en que te señales,
si a tal locura te obliga;
pero diré que a la hormiga
por su mal le nacen alas.
Il.xii. p.997a.

On the metaphysical level, Quiteria has a point, of course.

Jeronima spreads her wings, but only to pursue Gaspar. It gradually becomes evident that all her energies are directed towards trapping the elusive male, and in this hunt, everything takes second place to the claims of love. Jerónima's machinations are evidence of her amazing ability to cope with almost any situation or development, expected or unexpected. The most obvious example of this trait is to be found in the scene in which she cleverly handles Estefanía, avoiding, by effecting a series of metamorphoses of sex, the scene which the latter threatens to create(III.xviii). These sex-changes are all part of the overall use of disguise by Jerónima throughout the play, and illustrate in the most extreme manner her chameleon-like ability to adapt herself to the situation with which she is confronted.

The conventional use of the device of the mujer tapada is one of the main features of La amor médico. Finding herself unexpectedly in love with an indifferent Gaspar, and piqued by his incivility, Jerónima finds the manto an effective weapon of offence as well as of defence.

In the first act, her skilful manipulation of it allows her to conceal her own identity and at the same time to rouse Gaspar's curiosity so as to lure him into her net. His interest is initially awakened by a tapada who gives him news of Doa. Micaela. Gaspar's enforced flight to Portugal, which threatens to frustrate this move of Jerónima's, does not, however, daunt our heroine, who follows him there. In Coimbra, Gaspar
is the object of a three-pronged attack. He is shadowed by the Castilian tapada whom he had promised, as she claims to his mystification, to marry, while, at the same time, he is held prisoner by the beauty and promises of Da. Marta, who, by tantalisingly revealing to him a hand, an eye, and, finally, her entire face, makes him almost completely forget Da. Estefania. In addition, the presence of Dr. Barbosa (the female-page version of Jerónima's disguise) also helps to keep Gaspar and Estefania apart.

Jerónima's use of the manto also enables her to juggle with identities in such a way as to puzzle Gaspar. In fact, she has discovered a perfect way to keep Gaspar guessing. Tirso does not fail to exploit the comic potentialities of this. By being now Da. Marta and now, disconcertingly, the Sevillian tapada, Jerónima is able to "punish" Gaspar for his earlier indifference towards her (for the tapada, who now compels his attention, alternately fulfils and frustrates his expectations), while his slight, but obvious, basic emotional instability is exposed. Thus a large part of the comic effect of this play depends on the situations produced by the clash of the male and female temperaments, the process by which Gaspar is emotionally isolated, then confused, and finally captured. Jerónima has wholeheartedly devoted her talents and energies to capturing the man she loves. This signifies the triumph of her femininity.

But how can this femininity be reconciled with Jerónima's feminism? She herself had stated at the outset that the two things were incompatible. For Jerónima has not renounced her feminist aspirations. It is precisely in Act III that she appears to have won her greatest feminist triumphs. This development seems incongruous at this stage, when Jerónima's femininity seems to have gained the upper hand as
her love has met more and more obstacles. However, a closer examination of the stages through which Jerónima's feminism passes reveals a curious situation.

Jerónima's feminism in its initial stages is at its most passionate: her opening speech reveals the warmth of her passion. Nevertheless, we note that, in the gardens of the alcázar in Seville, she uses the feminine manto as a means of disguise, i.e., she is a mujer tapada. When we meet her next, it is in Coimbra, where she seems to be pursuing her feminist aims with considerable success. Here, she is disguised as a man, and is practising her profession. The cures she effects earn her a considerable reputation which allows her to gain entry into Íñigo's house as physician to the Spanish ambassador. She immediately follows this up by becoming professor of medicine at the university of Coimbra and physician to the King, thus obtaining authority, social status, and the royal favour. But at this point, as we have seen, a tendency to caricature begins to creep into Tirso's portrayal of her: this is most marked in the farcical scenes with Tello. This is significant, although, at first glance, puzzling, as it signals the emergence of the latent plot.

For, of course, Jerónima has gone to Coimbra, not principally to practise medicine, but to pursue Gaspar: she enters Íñigo's house because Gaspar lives there and is courting Cstefania, and Jerónima must prevent their marriage; she wins authority and status so that Gaspar can have no hesitation in marrying Da. Marta. In reality, therefore, she is pursuing aims intended to give satisfaction, not to her feminist, but to her feminine instincts. Her remarks at the end of the play make this quite plain. It was her love for Gaspar which turned her into a doctor:
a don Gaspar he querido
desde que fue huésped nuestro;
él solo médico me hizo,
y él, en fin, es hoy mi esposo.

III.xx. p. 1020b.

And the aim of her studies was to win him as her husband:

JERÓNIMA: Don Gaspar
es mi esposo, merecido
a precio de estudios tantos,
tanto disfraz y suspiro.

III.xx. p. 1020b.

But, paradoxically, she achieves all this while dressed as a man!

It is now clear that the various disguises are important in the revelation of the heroine's character. One might almost say that with the assumption of each new disguise a further layer of her soul is uncovered. The initial disguise is that of the mujer tapada, and this corresponds to Jerónima's most feminist stage. Male disguise is a part of Jerónima's scheme (here the conventions of comedy are obviously at work, since Dr. Barbosa is a "female page" figure), and it is cleverly incorporated into the plot through the theme of feminism. Male disguise is the ultimate and logical stage of Jerónima's feminism.

The assertion of equality between the sexes leads to Jerónima's invasion of a masculine sphere of activity, which in turn leads to a usurpation of the masculine personality. But by the time Jerónima adopts male disguise, we realise that she is more intent upon trapping the man she loves than upon asserting feminine equality, which she succeeds in achieving in almost an incidental manner. Indeed, from the way Gaspar is outwitted at every turn, one might be tempted to ask which of the sexes is the unequal one! Thus, paradoxically, it is precisely when she is a man that Jerónima is most a woman. Clearly, then, disguise has an inversely symbolic rôle in this play. (The same is largely true of Rosalind's disguise in As You Like It.) Now we can
better understand why Jerónima's initial disguise is the *manto* of the *tapada*, while, as her femininity gains the upper hand, she switches to male disguise. Significantly, when the *tapada* re-appears in Colibrí, she reveals herself in an oblique fashion as Dr. Marta, Dr. Barbosa's sister. But she is also accompanied by the more mysterious Castilian *tapada*, whose identity is unknown, and whose intervention threatens to frustrate any hope of marriage between Gaspar and Marta. The re-appearance of the *tapada* marks the beginning of the recapitulation; we have now come full circle.

But the inverse symbolism of dress, which has so far dominated the play, must somehow be re-inverted. This is achieved in III.xviii, whose organic function now becomes evident. Dr. Marta has been introduced to Estefanía in scene xiii. In scene xviii, the doctor appears, claims to be Marta to pacify Estefanía, and then, to pacify her again, declares he is the doctor, who has visited her earlier (in scene xiii) disguised as his sister. It is as a man, therefore, that the doctor is accepted by Estefanía as her *esposo*. A woman's agreeing to marry another woman in male disguise is a stock comic situation of the time. But the real purpose of this apparently farcical mystification is to emphasise the fact that the doctor is "his" sister, i.e., that the man on stage is a woman:

**Estefanía:** ¿Cuando no tenías hermano?

**Jerónima:** El amor la ha convertido a ella y el doctor Barbosa en un cuerpo.

III.xx. p. 1020b.

and the comic irony persisting to the last, it is in male dress (i.e., wholly a woman) that Jerónima is accepted by Gaspar as his wife:

**Jerónima:** Escuchad aparte. *(Apartale)*

**Gaspar:** ¿Quieres casaros contigo? *¡Jesús, doctor! ¿Estás loco?*
It is in male dress, too, that Jerónima admits that she is a woman:

**INIGO:** ¿Luego sois mujer?

**JERÓNIMA:** He sido quien a la Naturaleza con mi industria he contradicho.

It is clear, then, that the use of disguise in this play allows a progressive revelation of the female mind, an exposure of Jerónima's character. By showing her to be really a woman underneath the surface trappings of a man, the play wittily equates feminism with femininity. The initial incongruity between the two has been overcome.

We can proceed to consider some of the consequences of this.

**Tirso is not an anti-feminist.** He does not take the view that women are stupid creatures or that intelligent women are unattractive. Jerónima herself is an attractive woman, very clever, and, moreover, exceedingly intelligent. Nor, as is evident from this play, does Tirso believe that intelligence is incompatible with love.

**B. Katulka,** although (surprisingly) not referring to this play in her article on feminism in Golden Age drama, asserts that Tirso was a misogynist who, sceptical of the virtue of women, mocked them in his plays. This play, however, can hardly be said to mock the amorousness of women. It is precisely Jerónima's love and her efforts to achieve its fulfilment which, as has been pointed out, save her from the deflation a humour must meet and convert her into a wit who controls the action of the play. **El amor médico,** like a number of other plays of Tirso's, celebrates the triumph of love and commonsense: it is, love and life win the day over medical learning and death.

This triumph, far from being a mockery of women, is an exaltation of Jerónima, of woman, and of femininity. If we laugh at Jerónima, it
is not because we find her love ridiculous, but because she is made to realise that she cannot choose but love. She seems to have achieved a miraculous, harmonious reconciliation between learning and love - until we are made to realise that in reality the struggle between love and learning has ended in the triumph of the former, which cleverly converts the practice of medicine into yet another man-trap. Love threatens to destroy Jerónima's feminist aspirations, but, being the wit she is, she can quickly adjust to the changing situation. The intellect is used to achieve a natural end, while the professional garb and status are handy weapons in this battle of the sexes. Thus Jerónima, the wit, comes to the rescue of Jerónima, the humour, and saves her from absolute deflation. We have here a sly, gentle thrust at feminists, who are controlled willy-nilly by their own natures which they cannot deny. Their intellectual aspirations and desire for equality are but new manifestations of their age-old war against man: it is perhaps not so much a case of fatalism as of female wiles.

Kartzenbusch saw the essential irony of Tirso's treatment of the theme, even though one would see less of philosophy and more of comic wit in it: "... es harto filosófico el pensamiento de pintar a una mujer que pugna por salir de su esfera, que quiere competir con los hombres en sabiduría, y que sin embargo cede, como la menos avisada, a la propension natural de su sexo, no sirviéndole su ciencia sino para lo que le bastaba con su hermosura y despejo....". Thus it is that Tirso, with a light, gay touch, reveals to us the workings of the feminine soul. We are meant to rejoice at the triumph of love and life over death-dealing knowledge. The feminist theme is almost wholly divested of all seriousness in order to afford a witty play on the concepts of feminism and femininity. Out of a serious question Tirso has built a comedy of wit.
So far, consideration has been given almost exclusively to the character of Jerónima. This can be seen to have been justified, inasmuch as she is the most important figure in the play; she controls the action (since she controls the other characters); her portrayal is the one Tirso gives most attention to, which is only natural, since the basic conflict of concepts which constitutes the theme of the play is embodied in Jerónima herself, and its resolution achieved in that of her psychological conflict. This makes the study of this character crucial in any formal analysis of the comedy. However, before we pass on to the consideration of other aspects of the play's overall structure, it would be helpful to review rapidly the more important secondary figures. These, as has been already stated, can be regarded in large part as Jerónima's gulls. As such, they perform an ancillary function, being auxiliaries in the dialectic of the play. They are not drawn as fully as Jerónima. Yet this does not prevent them from being reasonably interesting, while the continuance of the binary pattern in their characterisations makes for certain ambiguities which help to create an illusion (at least) of roundness.

Gaspar is Jerónima's antagonist. As such, he is a convenient mouthpiece, as we have seen, for Tirso's criticism of the medical profession. The jealousy he experiences as the result of Barbosa's interference in his courtship of Estefanía makes the moral condemnation of the apparently unscrupulous doctor natural and apposite on his lips. His indignation and open attacks on the doctor are consonant with one aspect of his character, which is a curiously ambiguous one.

As befits his secondary rôle in the play, he is introduced indirectly, in the opening conversation between Jerónima and Quiteria. The two give us conflicting opinions on him. Jerónima, as we know, considers him uncivil and ungentlemanly because of his indifference
towards her. She has established that Gaspar is aware of her presence in the house; therefore his failure to pay his respects to her must be set down to a lack of breeding. On the other hand, Quiteria, who is not as emotionally involved, can find nothing but praise for him, even considering him perfect:

**QUITERIA:** Yo en lo que he notado dél, perfeto le considero; la persona un pino de oro; un alma en cualquiera acción; de alegre conversación, guardando en ella el decoro que debe a su calidad; en lo curioso, un armiño; mas no afectando el aliento que afemina nuestra edad; mozo, lo que es suficiente para prendar hermosuras; mas no para travesuras de edad, por poca, imprudente. Júzgole yo de treinta años. 

I.i. p.970a-b.

She can explain away all apparent lapses into incivility. But not to Jerónima.

Gaspar's first appearance on stage follows in the next scene. Like Jerónima, he is provided with a confidant, Gonzalo, and his long speech provides factual background information about himself which supplements what we have learnt about him from Jerónima. The speech also tells us something about his character. He seems to be a man of principle - at least where his own honour is concerned. He does not hesitate to speak out and wound and even slay his slanderers. His attack on this breed of men is remarkable and betrays a considerable warmth of passion. However, it is clear that Gaspar's passionate impetuosity is as strong as his sense of honour.

Certain aspects of his behaviour during his courtship also help to confirm the view that he tends to be led by his emotions. His rash attack on the slanderers leads logically to consequences which
Caspar could not seriously have pondered: he has to flee from Lédo and then from Seville. Furthermore, it was his own indiscreet conduct of his courtship which gave the slanderers the opportunity to libel both Doña Micaela and himself. The former, too, must have had some knowledge of her fiancé's impetuosity to believe that it was Caspar himself who penned the anonymous letter to Doña Jaime. His clumsiness is a trait which persists through the play: we see it in a (almost slanderous!) attack on the doctor, his precipitate desire to marry Marta without properly knowing who she is, or, rather, in spite of his knowing that she is the sister of a doctor, and his hasty, almost unreflecting acceptance of Barbosa-Marta as his wife at the end.

His attitude towards love is curious. His indiscreet parading his affection for Micaela and of hers for him is only one aspect of this, and, as Jerónima informs us, Micaela has had to instruct him how a discreet lover should behave:

[Jerónima:] "No habla el cuerdó amor, ni escribe; que no hijo er cuanto la lengua, y no las plumas de sus alas volverán mal si escribieran."


Much of the play, however, Caspar is anything but discreet. tiresomely parades his love for Estefanía in Act II and in II.ii. only praises her to Rodrigo, which naturally arouses the latter's interest in her. It is not until he falls madly in love with Marta that Caspar shows some discretion in his love-affair. In III.iii., for example, he is, for the first time, albeit perforce, secretive and indirect about his love.

Caspar's boasting about his love-affairs may hint at some security in his relations with women. But more significantly, it reveals the superficial, conventional nature of the attachments prior
His real passion for Jerónima. These superficial attachments can be attributed to two factors. The first is that, through a series of accidents, Gospar is forced to lead a peripatetic existence. The second, and perhaps more important, is that social honour demands that a man should court a woman unless (and sometimes even if) he is married. This social convention encourages the so-called "double standard". That Gospar should transfer his (admittedly conventional) affections from one woman to another is something he regards as quite natural. But he does not recognise a woman's freedom to do the same.

Find the same attitude in Don Lope de Riquer Por arte mayor and Alvaro de la Rubia, and there are interesting variations on the situations in El Mendo and Eno si que es cierto. Thus, for much of the play, Gospar is unable to maintain a valid and significant relationship with a woman. His affair with Eufemia is a dismal failure, and all he gets out of it is a long opportunity for wallowing in self-indulgent pity and romantic fancies; Jerónima's spying reveals to us. But this, too, is a conventional action, and Gospar probably enjoys it. Then there is his curious attitude towards Gonzalo's sister, Jerónima. His courtship of Eufemia may have been motivated by either love of socio-economic considerations, or he may simply have been courting her on the good. Certainly his attitude in II.iv, as in I.viii, is too mounded, too polite, too correct, in short, too passive. This is an ardent love. Even his jealousy appears too superficial: he does not challenge the doctor, but merely abuses him or, instead of trying to outwit the latter, complains about his fate in mannered, poetic language:

**Gospar:** (Aparte):
*Qué pronto, recelo mío,
os muestra mi sol en noche!*
Apenas salió el aurora
del favor, cuando ya veo
nublados en mi desecl
II.iv. p.988a.

The use of stylistic clichés would seem to indicate a personality
and reactions are likewise clichés: his concern for Òstefanía's

**GASPAR:** ¿A quién no dará cuidado
el ver el sol eclipsado,
señor, que entre nieve abrasa?
II.vi. p.988b.

His love for Òstefanía was at best a mere superficial
action is proved by his sudden and overwhelming passion for
which makes him forget every other woman to whom he had been
acted: his initial flirtation with the *tanada* in II.xiii is
acted in his mannered style; but once he has seen Marta's hand,

and face, he loves her with all the impetuosity of which he is
able, and, in the following scene (II.xiv), his language is
markably free of studied conceits: his emotions are too powerful.

Moreover, in III.viii, Gaspar has so far forgotten his love for
Óstefanía that he can offer the doctor a deal: he will surrender his
its over Òstefanía in return for Marta's hand. This bartering of
kind strikes us as grotesque. But what is worse is the "dis-
ity" this implies towards his previous attachments. Therefore, the
or chides him for his "immoral" behaviour. In fact, the circum-
tial evidence against Gaspar, as arranged and presented by the
or, is damning indeed:

**[JERONIMA:]**
Muerto por vos en Toledo
un hombre, sin opinión
por vos doña Micaela,
con cartas que sin firmar
la intencaron desodorar!
¡Civil y baja cautela!
¡Una dama sevillana
que vuestros engaños llora!
The doctor's warning underlines one of the most obvious weaknesses in Gaspar's character: his apparent emotional instability. As been stated, he seems unable to establish a sound relationship a woman. But can this be an indication of a superficial attitude love, a confusion of love with idle flirtation? Several remarks in play seem to confirm this. There is Tello's unvarnished aside Gaspar's behaviour:

T.LLO: (Aparte):
Mires allí qué meollo!
Tantas quiere cuantas ve.

III.viii. p.1009a-b.

s alleged, in the comic context of the intrigue, that Gaspar has ady fallen for four different women, and Tello quite expects a her change in his affections at any moment:

T.LLO: Por mí, vaya, mientras pasa otra, que en todo distinta,
de pique por despicarte
de estotra, y vos desenmascar;
vendrá a ser la dama quinta.


o's readiness to give credence to Barbosa's charge against Gaspar not only comic, but helps to blacken the latter's character:

T.LLO: Gallo en damas, y después
No es mucho lo que te importa.
Sin mí, y en tal ocasión!
Cinco ya las damas son;
o darás cinco de corto.

III.ix. p.1009b. (33)

This systematic attack on Gaspar's morals is in part curious.

Blanca seeks to link it to circumstances outside the play, i.e., 's amourous exploits. There is even another passage which she might cited in support of her hypothesis, viz:

T.LLO: Doctor para con chapines,
que con amarilla borla
The idea is an intriguing one, and would bear further investigation.

The veiled hostility to Lope thus revealed would fit in well with Prof. Kennedy's account of the relations between Lope and Tirso at this period, and also, perhaps, help to bring forward, if only by a year or so, the probable date of composition of the play.

Be that as it may, such a presentation of Caspar is primarily comic. We know that Caspar has in fact courted only three women - Micaela, Estefanía, and Marta -, but even these are too many for Tello, as we learn when he rebukes Caspar for falling for Marta:

**TELLO:** Del [aire] de tus cascos me avisas, según a todas acudes. ¡Bueno es que en un año nudes tres mujeres? ¿Son camisas?

**CASPAR:** Ellas ocasión me han dado.

Gaspar's defence is to some extent valid, but we can hardly help thinking that he is in part to blame for the failure of his affairs. But the other two women whom Caspar allegedly promised to marry are largely ghost figures - the anonymous Toledan woman and his Sevillian hostess. Both of these, we know, are in fact Jerónima, and are thus identical with Marta. But their constant haunting of Caspar produces a comic effect (just as the green Don Gil haunts Martín), and also constitutes part of Jerónima's scheme to trap Gaspar into marriage.

In the whole, however, this aspect of Caspar's character marks him as a man basically hesitant in his relations with women, perhaps an elegant flirt, who only learns what love is when he meets Marta.

Gaspar, however, is not a simpleton, lacking in moral qualities. There is a touch of nobility in his frank apology to Barbosa in III.iii, although even here his apology is based on self-interest.
scene, he is discreet about his love for Marta, but again his discretion is forced on him and again motivated by self-interest. His preoccupation with Marta's `limpiza in III.viii, confirms that he can be concerned with the niceties of social honour even where an overwhelming passion is concerned. In III.xix, Gaspar is "hooked" in an almost casual manner: he enters and agrees to marry Marta-Barbosa without much ado. To the last, he fulfils his function as a foil - almost an instrumental foil - to Jerónima, who throughout occupies the centre of the picture.

The minor characters, Estefanía, Rodrigo, Quiteria, are largely functional, but nonetheless interesting. I cannot consider them in detail here. It will be obvious that they are used as vehicles for the satire in the play. The way in which this satire is expressed through the clash between the rivals, Jerónima and Estefanía, especially, is worthy of closer attention than I can give to it here.

So far I have examined the witty implications of the theme and their effect on the structure of concepts in the play as well as their embodiment in the characters. It is necessary now to determine to what extent the play possesses that overall structural unity which is indispensable in all good works of art.

Notwithstanding the criticisms brought against the play and the faults it undoubtedly contains, I have attempted to show that the real faults are minor ones, whereas the apparently major ones can be regarded in a different light. The binary pattern noted in the thematic structure and the characters is also to be seen influencing the plot structure as well as the smaller sub-structures, thus ensuring a coherent unity within the comedy. In fact, a considerable amount of thought and care seems to have been devoted to the construction of the play.
The opening scene, for example, beautifully reflects Jerónima's inner conflict. It is a skilfully constructed scene which is ternary in structure and which grows out of the two thematic motifs of love and learning. We are presented, first, with Jerónima's exasperation at what she considers Gaspar's ill-breeding; her curiosity is aroused and her vanity offended. This is the love motif. The opening merges almost imperceptibly into the middle section, which introduces the learning motif. The final section constitutes a return to the love motif. From the outset, then, a basic pattern is established which both reveals the main theme and also, by its configuration - love-learning-love -, foreshadows the future thematic development.

The structure also reflects the emotional and psychological state in which Jerónima finds herself. While learning and feminism seem to be at the core of her character, her present obsession is with love and jealousy. Furthermore, the learning motif, set as it is between the two appearances of the love motif and presented in the form of a flashback providing background information, is already relegated to a secondary position and to the past. This is a good example of the skilful way in which structural configuration and the variation of tenses supplement and reinforce the sense of the actual words. It is interesting to note, too, that Jerónima's admission of jealousy comes after the motif of learning is introduced (with some warmth of feeling): this stresses the incongruity of her situation, and sounds a note of irony which is taken up in Quiteria's remarks. The transitions from motif to motif are effected smoothly and naturally enough, although this does not lessen the brusque effect deliberately created by the juxtaposition of opposing themes.

A similar ternary structure is also evident in the next scene.
where Gaspar's account of his tragic love-affair is enclosed between references to Castile and Portugal and their possessions in the East and West Indies. Again, there are two motifs, unrequited or frustrated love (and violent emotions) and travel, which are to be developed in the course of the play. Again, the transitions between them are smoothly effected.

The underlying binary pattern persists in the internal structure of a large number of scenes. A quick glance confirms that very many of them consist of a dialogue between two characters (often using the confidant technique - as for example, in I.i.ii) or a soliloquy in which an interior conflict is laid bare. The frequent use of such discussions and soliloquies harmonises with the basic dialectic which goes on in the play. This pattern also tells us something about the rhythmic structure of the comedy, which I shall consider later.

Nor is this careful patterning and symmetry restricted to individual scenes. The movement of the whole of Act I, for example, conforms to a beautifully symmetrical pattern. The act falls into two parts. The first opens with the conversation between Jerónima and Quiteria which introduces the basic motifs. The next scene brings in Gaspar with Gonzalo after the women have left the stage. There is a build-up of characters in this second cuadro to scene iv, and then a gradual reduction (in twos) in the number of characters - much like the reduction of stops on an organ - to the end of the cuadro (scene vi). The second half of the act follows a similar pattern: a gradual build-up of characters, again in twos, introducing first Jerónima with Quiteria (scene vii) and then Gaspar with Tello (scene viii), comes to a climax in scene ix with the entry of Gonzalo who interrupts the tête-a-tête between Jerónima and Gaspar (just as in the first half Jerónima had interrupted the conversation between Gaspar and Gonzalo).
This is followed by a withdrawal of characters: Gonzalo's exit is followed by that of Gaspar and Tello, which leaves the stage to Quieta and Jerónima, who sees the plan she sketched out in the first scene apparently in ruins. The love-learning motifs, again in juxtaposed opposition, bring the act to a close. We have come full circle.

The inner conflicts in the main characters and their ambiguities can be seen as a continuation of the binary pattern. An instance of this ambiguity can be seen in the portrayal of Estefanía. Tello informs us that she loves to speak in Portuguese:

**TELLO:**

> La embajatriz mi señora, 
> que es digna de todo amor, 
> y me hace mucho favor, 
> por no decir me enamora, 
> da en hablar a lo seboso; 
> porque en nuestra tierra es fama 
> que en esta lengua una dama 
> tiene aire garabatoso; 

*Il.iii. p.986a.*

Furthermore, Estefanía is overcome by an inexplicable melancholy. This in characteristically Portuguese, but the real cause of her melancholy, which she admits only to herself, is her burning passion for her physician. This violent love, like the violent jealousy she experiences later, is also a Portuguese characteristic. Portugal is traditionally, and always in Tirso, the home of love: Rodrigo as well as Gaspar find love there, a love which, in both cases, is sudden and violent, and, in the case of Gaspar, quite unlike his earlier tepid affairs.

At the same time, ambiguous emotions, like Estefanía's, and obvious internal conflicts, like Jerónima's, are salient features in the characterisation of the play, and are determined by the fact that the characters are, to a large extent, to be seen as live dialectical elements engaged in an intellectual play of wit rather than solely as living persons.
Since wit is a vital element in the dramatic structure, the play of ideas naturally occupies a prominent position. This explains why, in spite of a seemingly considerable amount of physical movement, there is in reality comparatively little action in the play. The changes of scene and setting, the quick changes in disguise, etc., are necessary to produce an illusion or, at least, an impression of action. The dialectic in the play is indubitably its most important feature, and the play of ideas can be illustrated in action only to a limited extent. But more of this later. What we must note at this point is the curious rhythm of the play: short bursts of physical action alternate with relatively long periods of stagnation, during which the dialectic is pursued. I.i,ii, for example, are, apart from the entrances and exits, long narrations built on a number of motifs standing in mutual opposition one to another. Scenes iii to vi bring a perceptibly quicker pace on the surface of the action. They also increase the psychological tension by creating suspense in Caspar's mind. The pace begins to slow down in scene v, and there follows in scene vi a period of reflection, broken only by the counterpoint of Hollo's brilliant linguistic virtuosity. The next scene (the "second exposition") continues this reflective mood. Though tautological on the level of the action, it casts light on Jerónima's character, stressing her obsession with her new experience of love to which Caspar's indifference and her own jealousy have given birth. This stagnation in the action allows Jerónima to meditate on the nature of female psychology. It is Quitería here who ironically reminds her of her love of learning, a trait which, as will be demonstrated later, finds only indirect reflection in Jerónima's style. Jerónima's humorous reaction to Quitería's irony reveals an irony
directed against herself. Scene viii brings no quickening of the physical action apart from the entrance of Gaspar and Tello. But on the stylistic level, the emotional tension increases as Jerónima's aggressive and sarcastic remarks take a bewildered Gaspar quite by surprise. The tension is maintained in the final scene with Gonzalo's sudden interruption and the progressive dissolution of the cluster of figures on stage, leaving Jerónima in despair and bewildered by the unexpected turn of events. This rhythmic pattern of a constant alternation between periods of surface action and episodes of stagnation with movement on the emotional and conceptual levels is maintained throughout the play, and is a direct consequence of the structure of wit employed by Tirso.

Wit also constitutes the unifying thread which draws together scenes and episodes which at first sight might appear unconnected. Three scenes in Act II provide us with as good an example as any: these are scenes iii, viii, and xiii. Scene iii is a humorous conversation between Tello and Delgado, the latter being essentially Tello's confidant. The shift of scene from Castile to Portugal has introduced complications, misunderstandings and ambiguities into the life of Tello, who explains to his friend the comic confusions which his partly deliberate misunderstanding of Portuguese produces. These confusions find a reflection in the quid pro quo's of linguistic confusion. The comedy arises, of course, out of Tello's witty exploitations of homonyms: the same word (more or less) seems to mean one thing in Castillian, another in Portuguese. On the surface, this scene seems to have been inserted into the play for its comic effect. But the particular nature of the comedy, i.e., the confusions arising out of an ambiguous language, makes this scene a brilliant introduction to the ambivalent "medical examination scene" which follows in scene viii.
This scene is doubly ambiguous. It is both a love-scene and a medical examination on the one hand, and, on the other, a courtship between a woman and a "man" who is in reality a woman: that is to say, the relationship itself is ambiguous on the sexual level. Scene viii presents to Caspar only one meaning, however, for to him, as to Estefanía, Harbosa is a man. The other meaning emerges in scene xiii, which is complementary to scene viii. Here, Jerónima, as a woman, ensnares Caspar by attracting him, just as in the earlier scene she had isolated him from Estefanía both by leading on the latter and also forbidding Caspar to see her.

The use of wit to link scene to scene and to provide the conceptual opposition in the play with an ultimate synthesis does not, however, mean that the principle of causality is ignored. This principle operates to a surprising extent in the play: even the shift of scene from Seville to Coimbra is foreshadowed as early as I.ii, where Caspar tells us of his intention to go to Portugal in order to embark for the East. Gonzalo's alternative suggestion is not allowed to materialise, and Caspar is forced to flee to the Portuguese court in order to escape from the clutches of the Castilian law-officers. Thus the violation of the unity of place maintains the validity of the causal principle. The one real violation of causality is at the beginning of Act II, where there occurs the unexpected and unmotivated introduction of Estefanía and Rodrigo, who give rise to a new intrigue. At the same time, a change in scene would normally entail a change in circumstances; to maintain the old ones rigidly would constitute a flagrant violation of the probable. Also, as the main conflict is between Jerónima and Caspar, Estefanía and Rodrigo (like Micaela) exist on the circumference of the main plot, and Estefanía can be seen
another obstacle in Jerónima's way, thus underlining Gaspar's emotional instability. But, as we have seen, Estefanía and Rodrigo are integrated into the plot in another way via the medical satire.

The binary pattern is manifested in other ways in the comedy, but I cannot go into that here. I should like only to note, briefly, the aspects of the Castile-Portugal opposition. On one level, the shifting of the setting after the first act to Portugal can be seen as a gratuitous violation of the unity of place. But this shift, if seen in symbolic terms, turns out to be intimately linked to the dramatic development. Portugal and Coimbra especially, symbolise a purer, more innocent, less corrupt way of life than does Seville (Gonzalo's speech in I.v. p.979a). Thus it is in Coimbra that Gaspar finds true love.

So far, I have been dealing largely with the wit of situations and concepts in the play. Wit, of course, is a basic element in Tirso's style, and I shall now consider briefly some of the pertinent aspects of the play's style.

An obvious example of the persistence of the binary pattern at the stylistic level is the opposition of Spanish, the language used for most of the time in the play, to Portuguese, which is employed mainly by Marta/Barbosa as an element of disguise, and, for comic purposes, by Tello in a scene which has already been analysed. The use of the two languages reinforces and enlarges upon the bivalence which is at the root of the dialectic in the play.

But to pass on to wider considerations, we note that, as always with Tirso, the style employed in the play is brilliant. In the opening scene of the play, it is fluid and conversational. Jerónima's speeches betray the warmth of her passion for study as well as for Gaspar:
they are long, well-argued and impassioned, indicating that she is carried away by the earnestness of her feelings, her exasperation at the incompetence of doctors, and Gaspar's indifference. The entire conversation in this scene is shot through with a liberal use of irony, initially unconscious on Jerónima's part and highly conscious on Quiteria's. The scenes in which Jerónima confronts Gaspar are particularly fine for their verbal fencing. In I.viii, Gaspar is no match for Jerónima. Every remark he utters leaves his guard down, making him vulnerable to Jerónima's penetrating thrusts. On the other hand, in II.xiii, when Gaspar falls madly in love with Jerónima's hand, he finds no difficulty in rising to Jerónima's level and maintaining a discreet and witty dialogue in the flirtation.

One feature of Gaspar's speech is worth noting. This is his use of Gongoristic language. As this Gongoristic style is employed almost exclusively by Gaspar, it is an aspect of his character and does not have a structural function in this play. Gaspar tends to use this style in scenes of heightened emotion. He expresses his gratitude to the mysterious tapada in Seville thus:

GASPAR: ¡Oh iris de mi ventura, que disfrazada en tinieblas, reflejos del sol retocan colores con que me alegras! Dame a besar esas manos.

I.viii. p.988a.

He expresses his solicitude over Estefania's poor state of health in the following way:

GASPAR: ¿A quién no dará cuidado el ver el sol eclipsado, señor, que entre nieve abrasa?

II.vi. p.988b.

As has been suggested earlier, this use of a stylised language in moments of presumed emotional tension indicates the conventional nature of Gaspar's love. Also, one may go further and see in the limited use
of this style a foreshadowing of the elaborate and symbolic part it plays in the structure of La celosa de sí misma. This is one point which would suggest that el amor médico is earlier than La celosa.

Further support for this view would seem to be found in the limited use of the religious word-play for comic effect in el amor médico. Again, this stylistic aspect is associated with one person in the main, viz., Tello, and is thus an aspect of his character.

There are simple, obvious jokes such as:

[TELLO:] Y adiós, hasta la otra vida.
L.ix. p.983b.

Rather more elaborate is the following:

TELLO(A QUITERIA):

Fue da
alcanzar yo algún favor
dese retablo en cuaresma,
ya que no corren cortinas
aquí por pascua, ni fiestas,
¿cómo dama noticia
de la hermana compañera?
¿regatriz o de labor?
No quiero decir doncella;
que esa es moneda de plata,
y como el vellón la prema,
apenas sale del cuño,
cuando afirman que se trueca,
Dame un adarme no más
de carantoña,
(Re el dentanaria, y pégale ella)

QUITERIA: Jo, bestia.

TELLO: Bestia soy, pues que te sufre,
y Jo soy en la paciencia.
L.viii. p.982b.

Perhaps the most developed example occurs when Tello condemns Gaspar for his fickleness:

TELLO: que con esta ya es la cuarte
que hemos nadado,

GASPAR: ¿Qué quieres?
Entre todas las mujeres ...

TELLO: ¿Nezas?

GASPAR: Sola es doña Marta
digna de ser adorada.

TELLO: Yo que rezaba creía
por ella el Ave-María.
these examples, too, are isolated, and do not form a consistent pattern in the structure of this play.

However, there is, in \textit{El amor médico}, a structure of images which is derived from the basic theme itself. Love is equated in play with illness. This equation, as we have already seen, gives rise to a delicious double-entendre in some of the key scenes, based on the ambiguities of meaning which the equation allows. On the one hand, any illness calls for the services of a doctor, and the efficacy of his cure depends on his learning. Thus, the love-sickness, the play implies, calls for the services of an alcahuete who is also a learned doctor. The ambivalent character of Dr. Barbosa is the core of much of the comedy in the play. His words and his actions are frequently double-edged. The ultimate irony in this play of wit centred on the protagonist herself. Not only is she doctor and between: she is also a victim of the love-sickness. Thus she must become her own doctor and, therefore, 

\textit{tercera de sí misma}. To this end she exploits her hard-earned knowledge and learning. In this way, the eventual reconciliation of feminism and femininity is mirrored on the level of the action.

Seen in the light of these comments, the second exposition in \textit{i} takes on a new appearance. While, on the level of the action, it is tautological, on the level of character, and, more significantly, on the stylistic level, it makes an initial step towards the
reconciliation of the two opposing concepts first introduced in the opening scene. At first glance, Jerónima's speech is monothematic, in that it seems to repeat what we know about the birth and development of her love. This is an indication of the extent to which she has been carried away by her passion. But, significantly, her speech is shot through with terms and phrases drawn from educational jargon. Intellectual curiosity leads her to investigate Gaspar's character, as has been pointed out already. Her recognition of awakening jealousy is recalled thus:

[Jerónima:] Esto ya yo imaginaba
que A, B, C, de celos era,
que si a la postre presumen,
al principio deletran.
I.vii. p.980b.

She reads and studies the accounts of Gaspar's love-affair:

[Jerónima:] Esto, Quiteria leí,
sospecho que en la postrera [carta]
de todas, con que animé
esperanzas y quimeras.
Estudié por las demás
todo el suceso y materia
destos trágicos amores:
fin más dichoso en mí tengo!

The study motif has been assimilated into the love-motif on the stylistic level, which indicates that Jerónima's learning is being turned towards un-academic, if not unscholarly, ends. Thus, beneath its apparent repetitiousness, the scene indicates a modification in Jerónima's attitude as well as a development in the dialectical process.

It is now quite clear that the comedy in this play exists both on the stylistic level and also on the level of the stage action. Thus the implications of witty ideas which exist only in a germinal state on the stylistic level - e.g., the love-illness equation, the doctor-alcahuete equation - are fully developed only in the physical
action on the stage, as in the medical examination scene. Such a comic structure in which verbal wit is both developed and reinforced by physical situations makes for a comic language of extraordinary compression, capable of being "read" at different levels simultaneously. The resulting complex structure more than compensates for the looseness and repetitions noted elsewhere in the play.

The binary pattern which pervades the whole play springs from the basic thematic opposition between feminism and femininity, the reconciliation of which is the aim of the play. So, too, in the violent structural and conceptual juxtapositions and oppositions which reflect the basic opposition, there can be discerned a series of movements towards reconciliation. A reconciliation between Castile and Portugal is hinted. The Barbosa-Marta dualism finds a resolution in their being absorbed into Jerónima:

**ESTEFÁNIA:** ¿Luego no tenéis hermana?
**JERÓNIMA:** El amor la ha convertido a ella y el doctor Barbosa en un cuerpo.

**III.xx. p.1020b.**

Similarly, the male-female roles of Jerónima are resolved at the end by a shedding of disguise:

**INIGO:** ¿Luego sois mujer?
**JERÓNIMA:** He sido quien a la Naturaleza con mi industria he contradicho.

**III.xx. p.1020b.**

The feminist doctor emerges as a feminine woman when feminism is shown to be another manifestation of femininity (or female wiles). With this, death-dealing, sterile learning is converted into a weapon which brings about the triumph of love. This event is simultaneous with Gonzalo's death, which ends the brother-sister conflict within the play on the personal as well as on the social level.

But this very event draws our attention to a final factor,
While, in the majority of these cases, the oppositions established in the play dissolve with the final reconciliation of the main opposition, in a few significant cases, there is no real reconciliation, but rather a postponement of harmony which tempers the final gladness with a hint of an undecided struggle stretching into the future.

With Gonzalo's death, Jerónima, the second-born, inherits the mayordomio. She is now head of the family and is required to return to Castile. This may be seen as no more than reasonable, but the situation is a bit more complex. Coimbra and Portugal have done their bit in achieving a certain harmony among the lovers, but realities require the main characters to leave their idyllic retreat in order to return to the corrupt, harsher Castile. Here, there is no real resolution to the Castilian-Portuguese opposition. It is put into cold storage. Perhaps this is a comment on the political situation of the early seventeenth century. Perhaps it is Tirso's way of saying that reality, however unpleasant, has to be faced, just as Shakespeare makes his characters, with the exception of the affected melancholy Jacques, return to the court at the end of As You Like It. Coimbra, like the Forest of Arden, is no more than a temporary escape from reality.

Again, and here irony creeps in, Jerónima returns to Castile as the head of her family; but she returns as Gaspar's wife and is now subordinated to his authority. It is Gaspar, then, who in law takes over the mayordomio. Jerónima has surrendered her desire for freedom in exchange for love, subordination and captivity. We have a comic situation in which the protagonist is forced to recognise the superior power of natural inherent limitations and to accept them freely. Such a freedom is, of course, little more than an
illusion, although it may denote a certain wisdom. But the irony goes deeper. Our first movements of pity, or at least sympathy, for Jerónima are modified when we recall the sort of man Gaspar is and the ease with which Jerónima was able to outmanoeuvre him.

Gaspar has been no match for Jerónima in the play, and is unlikely to be one in the future. Jerónima, at the end, it seems, has salvaged some little measure of freedom— if only freedom from the possible tyranny of a husband. Her voluntary submission, like Kate's at the end of The Taming of the Shrew, is only apparent.

These ambiguities and ambivalences in the ending ensure that echoes of the fundamental binary pattern persist to the end. The consistency of this pattern provides the play with a unity which, at first sight, seems all too absent. The oppositions in the play spring from the basic thematic opposition. That this is reconciled with the help of wit means that such a resolution is not absolutely valid; it is valid within the context of this comedy where the deeper metaphysical implications of the theme are avoided or only lightly and indirectly touched upon. The problem of whether the emotions can be reconciled with the intellect is one that brooks no thoroughly satisfactory answer.

How, then, does this play appear in the light of Kerr's ideas on comedy? In the play, love is presented as an obstacle to the intellectual aspirations of the heroine: being an emotion to which every person is subject, it constitutes a built-in physical limitation to any aspiration towards absolute human freedom. Jerónima realises this and willingly accepts the consequences. Is this voluntary abandonment of a desire for liberty to be seen in near-tragic terms?

Tirso, as has been said, avoids a deliberate exploration of the metaphysical aspect; all the same, there are certain implications
in the ending. Freedom is willingly, and almost eagerly, surrendered for the captive state of marriage. This is reasonable within the play, for the pursuit of absolute freedom is absurd, inasmuch as it is a sterile, anti-vital, self-defeating activity. The linking of freedom through and in intellectual pursuits with the practice of medicine makes this point neatly in the context of seventeenth-century ideas and views. This voluntary choice of limitation in preference to freedom is an implicit attack on intellectual exclusiveness. Man is a limited being, and, by accepting the consequences of his limitations, may succeed in partly transcending them. In this, the conventional view of the comedia which sets love above rigorous, inflexible ideologies, thought out a priori, prevails in this play, but it is presented in a new and more subtle way.

At the same time, a certain pessimism is attached to this necessary, albeit voluntary, renunciation of freedom. It is increased when we consider the nature of the life to which man must reconcile himself. El amor médico is, on the surface, a gay comedy of brilliant wit with only echoes of seriousness. Nevertheless, in it human beings are presented as almost helpless puppets of forces more powerful than themselves. The characters fall into the wits and gulls. The latter comprise all those who are deceived by Jerónima and her confidante. To achieve her end, Jerónima systematically deceives and tricks almost everyone else in the play. In this intrigue, good faith counts for naught and is mercilessly exploited by those who see how they can turn the naive credulity and frankness of others to their own profit. Even Rodrigo double-crosses his friend, Gaspar. But ironically, Rodrigo himself is a puppet controlled in part by love, in part by Jerónima-Barbosa. Rodrigo is more clever than Gaspar and thus naturally seeks to ally himself with Barbosa; he is open with the
latter, but this frankness is not wholly reciprocated. Jerónima is the arch-deceiver who triumphs in the play: yet, powerful as she is, she, too, is helpless in the hands of nature: her only strength lies in her ability to recognise her situation and make the best of it.

The whole intrigue is an elaborate pattern of deceit, schemes and counter-schemes typifying a way of life in which honesty and frankness are fatal flaws of character. Deceit and dishonesty (the ambiguous nature of which is reflected in the play's structure) are on the side of natural forces: the triumph of the latter in the comedy nullifies the negative moral effects of the former in practical terms. But do the means justify the ends? The overall view is a pessimistic one — as Kerr asserts the comic view to be —, and the implications no less than disturbing. It is this residue which makes the final, ambiguous tone of this comedy so apt. The whole play can be seen as a vast symphonic structure whose argument consists in a struggle between conflicting motifs which inter-act on one another as they recur periodically. The working-out leads to an uneasy reconciliation in the recapitulation: but we are meant to feel that the coda is not as merry as it seems to be: it only underlines the absurdity of life.

From the preceding analyses, it is now possible, by way of summing up, to draw some initial conclusions, which will serve as a guide to an exploration of the remaining plays to be examined.

First of all, there is the question of structure. In the three plays examined, I have shown that Tirso has used three different structures. This points not only to variety, but, more significantly, to experiments with the problem of dramatic structure. That we must hesitate before we accuse Tirso of being indifferent to dramatic
technique, and, in particular, to structural soundness, is driven home by the perfect structure of La celosa: here not only is the notorious Tirsian deus ex machina missing—although the complication in the main action reaches an impasse—but the dénouement is effected organically through the intersection or clash of the main and secondary actions: the two actions are thus linked not only thematically, as is normally the case in the comedia, but structurally, the development and unravelling of both being mutually interdependent. Don Gil and El amor médico exemplify two different approaches to dramatic construction: in their respective ways, both structures are novel. The Chinese-boxes structure recurs in a later play, Amor por arte mayor, while the use of wit as the structural basis of a play finds striking employment in Por el sótano y el torno. These experiments in dramatic structure indicate that Tirso was working on the "frontiers of drama". The dramatic structure of wit is perhaps his most interesting contribution here.

The way in which Tirso uses disguise is also noteworthy. Costume, in early plays, is symbolic of a character's social status: it is a form of short-hand by which the author helps us to "place" the character. Thus it is constant and fixed. In Tirso, the relationship between costume or dress and identity is explored more deeply, and the basic distinction between costume and disguise becomes more tenuous. Disguise ceases to be a mere technical device to produce dramatic complication and acquires a more symbolic function, being more closely integrated into the theme and structure. This is clearly so in Don Gil and La celosa. The thematic importance is even more obvious in El amor médico, where the resolution of the thematic paradox is achieved symbolically by disguise.
That some of Tirso's best comedies are satirically conceived is made clear by the analyses of these three plays. In other words, certain social and literary conventions are satirised not merely in the words of these plays, but by the plays themselves, that is, by the way in which they are constructed. Satire, therefore, has an organic and not simply an incidental function in these comedies. Where Tirso goes beyond the conventional satire of social follies and moral failings found in so many other authors of the period is in his systematic exploitation of such satire for literary ends.

Closely associated with Tirso's satirical attitude is his love of absurd situations. This is exemplified in all three of the comedies examined. It is his fondness for the absurd which lends some weight to the view that Tirso may have had a hand in the planning and writing of La mujer por fuerza. While it must be recognised that the term "comedy of the absurd" has existentialist overtones to the contemporary reader, it is at the same time a description which, if we are willing to forgo the existentialist nuance, suits Tirso's plays perfectly.

The three plays also illustrate Tirso's development technique. Don Gil carries to its extreme limits the conventional dramatic figure of the female page. In El amor médico, the use of two forms of disguise increases the complication. Some of the motifs in this play are developed in La celosa. A similar process can be discerned on the stylistic level: the structural use of imagery, although not absent in Don Gil and El amor médico, is much more marked in La celosa.

Finally, these three plays throw some light on two of the theories of comedy examined in the introduction to the thesis. It is evident that the attempt to apply the cathartic theory of comedy
to Don Gil and El amor médico does not provide us with an entirely satisfactory explanation of these plays: woman emerges as a force for order, stability, sanity and morality in a world where male domination tends to produce selfish self-centredness, chaos, immorality and confusion of values. While La celosa would seem to provide us with an instance of a woman producing chaos, the situation is really absurd, and the frustration of Magdalena within the play obviates the need for the cathartic theory to make us see in the play a restoration of harmony in the world. The charge, too, that Tirso's comedies are immoral is seen to be without foundation and clearly based on a misinterpretation of his plays.

At the same time, El amor médico provides obvious support for Herr's view of comedy as the dramatic form which pessimistically draws attention to man's limitations. The freedom-limitation opposition is no less evident in the other two plays. In Don Gil, however, the freedom Martín seeks is escape from responsibility. This is denied him in the interests of moral (and, therefore, social) stability and order. Martín's individual identity is also one of his limitations - but fortunately so, we feel in this case. The escape from self is presented in its absurdity in La celosa. But the metaphysical implications are not overtly explored.

These three plays thus illustrate what can be termed the "ambiguous tonality" of the comedia. The most striking example is, perhaps, Don Gil, a sparkling comedy which sounds deep and serious issues, and in which, as I have pointed out, the "diffused responsibility" which Professor Parker has shown to be a central feature of Calderón's tragedy can also be discerned. It seems to have been one of the fundamental assumptions of the age that life is both comic and tragic. In the one is the other, necessarily and inevitably. That, at least, if the comedia is a faithful mirror of life.
SECTION TWO

THE ABUSE OF RELIGION.

GOOD AND BAD ENDS.
CHAPTER FOUR

MARTA LA PIADOSA.

THE "RELIGION OF LOVE".
Karta la piadosa, which was probably written in 1615, was first published in *quinta parte* of Tirso's plays. This collection bears an *probación* by Calderón, which contains the following words:

antes hay en ellas [i.e., las comedias] mucha erudición y exemplar doctrina por la moralidad que tienen encerrada en su honesto y agradable entretenimiento, efectos todos del ingenio de su autor ... (2)

Professor Wilson has pointed out, there is little doubt that Calderón's words are meant sincerely. I shall have occasion to discuss this *probación* again, but, for the moment, my main concern is with the fact that Calderón finds nothing morally objectionable in the plays in this *parte*, a judgment which, presumably, also applies to *Karta la piadosa*.

Later critics, however, seem to react rather differently to the play. Perhaps owing to a conscious or unconscious association with Molière's *Le Tartuffe*, many have considered *Karta la piadosa* a study in hypocrisy. As a result, there is a conflict of opinion over the precise meaning of the play.

A. Lista has come penetrating comments to make on the play. He stresses that Karta's hypocrisy is feigned and not real. It is an attempt to cope with a situation:

Así su gaseñería es producida por las circunstancias, pero no está en su corazon. Esta combinación produce un buen efecto dramático, y es el de ridiculizar la conducta y el lenguaje de los hipócritas, sin hacer odiosa á la que se valió de la gaseñería para librarse de una violencia injusta, porque de tiempo inmemorial están convenidos el auditorio y los actores, en que todos los ardides utiles al amor son disculpables. La ridiculez cae toda entera sobre un viejo tan crédulo como avariento ... (pp.449-50)

Lista is not quite happy with the play. Not only does he disapprove of the supposed "indecencies" in it, but he also finds the moral condemnation of hypocrisy not strong enough: "Para la hipocresia no basta el ridículo: es necesario la odiosidad" (p.453). Tirso's play is, for him, mere trifle. But we know that Tirso's criticism is never as crude and
as heavily moralising as Lista would have it be. Furthermore, Lista puts in the centre of the picture the ridicule of religious hypocrisy, which is really a secondary aspect.

Hartzenbusch sees a clear moral purpose in the play: "Tellez, que se propuso escarnecer la hipocresia en la persona de doña Marta, se adelantó a Molíre y a Moratin en este pensamiento moral." But he also realised that, even though Tirso's purpose may have been to ridicule hypocrisy, Marta was not condemned: "Supone después que ha hecho voto de castidad; pero es cuando se ve colocada entre un joven a quien ella quiere, y un viejo que la destinan para marido; de modo que su ficción es harto disculpable" (p.241).

All her naughty pranks are amusing, "porque se ve que nacen de la astucia del amor, y no del vicio" (p.241). What Hartzenbusch says is apt; but were again a slight shift in focus would enable us to see the play more clearly.

P. Chasles states what must be regarded as an extreme and untenable view: "Une fois seulement Tellez s'est avisé de médire des femmes, et c'est aux dévoutes, à ses propres ouailles, qu'il s'est attaqué. Marta la Plndoza est le portrait comique d'une Tartuffe femelle, peinte des couleurs les plus vives et les moins indulgentes." This judgment is clearly based on mis-reading of the play. Marta is by no means painted in an unfavourable light, nor is it accurate to say that she is criticised.

More modern critics have, like Lista, stressed the essential difference between Marta and Tartuffe. While Romera-Navarro's judgment is still quivocal, Bell rightly points out that Marta "... is not a hypocrite ... he simply adopts hypocrisy to attain her purpose." In this, he follows Hartzenbusch, but perhaps ignores some of the more serious implications of the play. These are not sidestepped by Valbuena Prat, for whom the play represents "el triunfo del amor sobre los convencionalismos sociales, la esencia de la vida."
Not all critics share Valbuena's point of view, however, and some of the most serious criticisms of the play have been made by M. Penna, whose views are almost diametrically opposed to Calderón's. He considers that Tirso's plays are hardly the sort of thing one would expect from a friar. As for Marta la piadosa, the subject itself is offensive and borders on the sacrilegious: "Tutto codesto - non dimentichiamo, nello sfondo, l'ombra del fratello ucciso - a noi oggi fa l'impressione di qualche cosa poco meno che sacrilego, e costa fatica pensare che sia stato scritto da un frate" (p. 131).

The outcome of the play is also morally objectionable in Penna's eyes. He is disturbed by the fact that Marta and her associates triumph in the end. Marta organises an outing at which she is surprised by her father. A complete change of feeling is undergone by many, which leaves all happy and satisfied: Lucía, for no good reason, renounces Felipe and marries the Alferez; Urbina gives up Marta; Gómez "dimentica francescamente il figlio ucciso per accettare in santa pace l'uccisore come genero" (p. 132). There remains, contends Penna, "... insoluto il problema della carenza morale che in taluni momenti sembra sfiorare la profanazione." What is worse, Marta escapes scotfree, having made fun of all, and, not only is she made the central figure of the play, but she is never condemned.

Penna also finds the ending unsatisfactory on the structural level: the desenlace is absurd. The solution is improbable; nothing leads up to it, and the attitudes of Lucía, Urbina, and Gómez in the final scene are inexplicable and inconsistent with their earlier behaviour. In other words, the construction of the play is weak, or, as Penna contends, Tirso's plays are not constructed: an improbable ending puts an end to a fantastic game. As will be evident, the structural problem (as Penna sees it) is directly connected with the moral problem posed by the play.
If, in fact, Marta has been merely playing a gratuitously heartless and immoral trick on others, one might agree with Penna's views. The latter's own explanation is that Tirso, probably a bastard son of Osuna, was really an unwilling friar, who had to make the best of his life in a monastery. Art provided an escape for the basically worldly-minded Tirso, who, by writing profane and risqué plays, managed to maintain his mental equilibrium. Tirso's was a case of "due vite parallele ma diverse riunite nella stessa persona", and the situations he created in his plays were essentially examples of wish-fulfilment.

This explanation is very ingenious, but is perhaps over-subtle, and is demanded by a rather naive view of the play. Moreover, to grant the validity of the argument is to say that Calderón was a hypocrite, a charge Penna is ready to make. Yet, there is a possibility that Calderón may have seen something in the play which Penna overlooked. In fact, there is no doubt that Tirso is on Marta's side (and so are most of us), but Marta la piadosa is no more sacrilegious than is Le Tartuffe, nor does the play shock our moral sensibilities if we take the trouble to examine it carefully.

E. Juliá Martínez, in the introduction to his edition of the play, approaches it from a slightly different angle, which complements Valbuena's view. Juliá states that "El problema que plantea Marta no es de hipocresía, sino de explotación de la falsa religiosidad de cuantos le rodean" (p.15). Social satire, which consists of the ridicule of the credulous, is, for Juliá, central to the play and its main distinctive feature: "la sátira social la eleva de categoría estética, singularizándola entre la copiosa y selecta producción del dramaturgo mercedario" (p.16). The centre of gravity in the play is
This seems to me to be an apt comment on the theme of the play. Our attention is to be focused not on the criticism or condonation of religious hypocrisy but on the satire of the over-credulous. At the same time, this view can be widened in scope to include not only those who are deceived by apparent religiosity, but also those who are too ready to conform to social conventions and be over-awed by the trappings of authority. In this analysis, therefore, I propose to develop further the statements of Juliá Martínez and Valbuena Prat.

One indication of the rather wider scope of the play's satire - and simultaneously a confirmation of the validity of Valbuena's and Juliá's views - is the function of Juan and Diego in this play. In an enigmatic a play as this (if the puzzled and conflicting opinions of the critics mentioned above are anything to go by), the rôles of these two characters appear even more enigmatic. Hartzenbusch's view is that the two characters are superfluous and constitute a minor blemish in one of Tirso's best plays: "Tampoco hacían falta los personajes de don Juan y don Diego, que casi siempre hablan al paño" (p.242). Doña Blanca de los Ríos, following Hartzenbusch, implies the same. 14

It is true that Juan and Diego are minor, secondary characters. We see so little of them that it is difficult not only to decide whether they undergo any development, but also to form a very clear picture of
them. They are tenuously connected to the story by being made suitors of Marta and Lucía, but it is clear from the beginning that they are doomed to failure. They play no part in the plot of the comedia, nor do they influence the action. They appear on stage only three times — once in each act. Quick reflection will show that they can easily be removed from the play, and that, had Tirso wished to do so, he would only have needed to suppress a few scenes and make minor alterations here and there to a few others. Nevertheless, it appears that Tirso insisted on dragging them into the play, and the fact that, for the most part, they appear in virtually self-contained scenes suggests that they might have been added as an afterthought. Their presence, therefore, becomes even more intriguing, and an examination of the scenes in which they appear may help us to find a justification for their inclusion in the play.

The first appearance on stage of Juan and Diego (they always appear together, and their observations are generally complementary) is at the end of the first act (I.xiv-xv). They have entered secretly to witness the betrothal of Marta to Urbina, but they do nothing, whereas Felipe, who, like them, has also secretly entered the house, contrives to draw Marta’s attention to himself, thus strengthening her in her resolve not to marry Urbina. The function of the two friends is therefore reduced to that of spectators and commentators, and what they have to say is obviously important. In I.xiv, they condemn the practice of forced marriages:

DIÉGO: Casallas quiere el padre con violencia.
JUAN: No es en eso prudente, aunque atrevido, que en este tiempo no parece justo casar las hijas contra el propio gusto.\footnote{I.xiv.p.368a.}

In the following scene, Diego further disapproves of Marta’s
Diego and Juan, then, seem to belong to what we may call the enlightened section of the public. They move with the times and do not seem to follow traditional ways blindly.

This impression we have of their good sense is confirmed in II.v, when they frankly ask Gomez for permission to marry his daughters. Their behaviour is commended by the father, who, however, is unable to grant their request. Neither action nor plot has been advanced by this scene, which is, consequently, useless from a technical point of view. But it has served to bring the two characters on stage, and their rôle as commentators continues in II.vi. We realise that, not only are they sensible and intelligent, but that Juan is not lacking in perspicacity when he recognises the falsity of Marta’s saintliness:

esa buena persona
es mona de hipocresías,
II.vi.p.380cb.

Her religiosity is only on the surface:

Es Marta disimulada
zorra, que no vale nada
la carne, sino el pellejo.
II.vi.p.380cb.

Diego, who loves Marta, is not wholly convinced, but we see that at least one section of the public is not deceived by Marta’s feigned religiosity.

The third and final appearance of the two friends towards the end of the play (III.xvii to end) comes almost as a surprise to us. We have almost forgotten them. What is even more surprising, however, is that Juan’s attitude is far from being sensible. His abortive attempt to kill the Alferez turns out to be an unnecessary piece of melodrama. This time it is Diego who leads the way with a display of good sense. He restrains the insanely jealous Juan, pointing out to him how irrationally absurd
and unfounded his hostility towards the Alférez is. The point is that an emotional reaction to a situation blunts the keen sense of perception of both Juan and Diego. Just as Diego is unwilling to believe that Marta's saintliness is assumed, Juan cannot understand that his hostility towards the Alférez is misdirected. However, it is not only love which is capable of preventing the two, on the whole, intelligent characters from making a just assessment of certain situations.

Scenes xix and xx are interesting: now that Tirso has put Juan and Diego on the stage, we should normally expect further comments on the situation from them. Instead, the two friends, for all their good sense and perspicacity, are made the victims of a burla. Both Juan and Diego are persuaded (the latter, it is true, only against his will) that Marta is a Portuguese Duchess, in spite of the fact that Juan recognises Lucia and speaks to her, and that Diego's heart and eyes tell him that the "Duchess" is Marta. The fact that Marta is disguised as a Duchess - "su traje la asegura", affirms Juan (III.xx.p.401b) -, that Pastrana speaks in Portuguese, and that the outward comportments of Felipe and Marta are consistent with that of high nobility all combine to deceive, surprisingly, even the shrewd Juan and Diego.

Juan and Diego are here deceived by appearances: dress and language combine to make them deny their own feelings. It has been pointed out that their critical apparatus tends to be blunted by emotion. It is because Diego loves Marta and Juan loves Lucia that their judgment vacillates. In the final scene, they are again blinded, but this time by the trappings of false nobility. It is significant that the false nobles have only lately been false saints who have contrived to deceive others.

To sum up, the analyses of the three appearances of Juan and Diego confirm that they play no indispensable part in plot or action. They are, however, important, as commentators, and even more important as the
representatives of an enlightened attitude towards life. But while, on the whole, they are not deceived by religious appearances and refuse to accept traditional attitudes blindly, the fact that they are taken in at the end of the play is significant, for they are thus assimilated into that body of characters who are deceived and ridiculed—Gómez, Urbina, ucía, and the public in general. The deception of Juan and Diego, then, is the culminating point of a series of deceptions. Thus these two characters are related thematically to the main plot.

The central problem in the play arises out of a stock situation in Golden Age literature. Gómez wishes to marry his daughter to an old man. Such a marriage, although unnatural, is not only attractive to the greedy Gómez, but is sanctioned by social custom. Social custom, too, endows Gómez with that paternal authority over the life and happiness of his daughter, which he would wield tyrannically. These conventions are criticised in the play. Juan, as we have seen, declares that forced marriages are unjust (I.xiv), while Pastrana and Marta, in I.xv, stress the incongruity of a marriage between an old man and a young girl:

**PASTRANA:** ¡Que a una muchacha casen con un viejo! Maldiga Dios vejez tan seca y verde
(I.xv.p.369a)

**MARTA:** Cuando a Felipe adoro, de mi amor vencedor como del toro, en vez mi padre de su Abril, me ofrece este caduco anero! ¡Buen empleo!
(I.xv.p.369a)

There are two other obstacles in the way of Marta's happiness. One is Lucía's rivalry. The way in which this obstacle is overcome has comic rather than social or moral implications. Lucía is outwitted in a game of love. The final obstacles are provided by social conventions. This has already been referred to above. Another is that Marta loves a man whom society expects her to hate—or, at least, persecute—for having killed her brother. But revenge is not man's highest moral duty, or is it reconcilable with love, Christian or otherwise.
At first sight, the cards are all stacked against Marta. In order to marry the man she loves, she has to defeat her father, her sister, and a powerful body of social conventions. There are two alternatives open to her. The first is rebellion in order to assert her freedom. But open rebellion against paternal and social authority, by convention, in the tragic mode. This is so in, for example, aldeón's La devoción de la cruz. The other alternative, which is adopted by Marta, is to resort to a trick by which the obstacles can be circumvented; the situation can then be treated as a battle of wits. This is, of course, in the tradition of comedy: emphasis is shifted from the tragic assertion of individual freedom to the comic exploitation of the limitations of others. The particular form which this trick takes is that of an appeal to authority - the highest authority, namely, religion.

The appeal to religion has the advantage of allowing Marta to cope with the demands of her father, the rivalry of her sister, and the pressure of social convention. The success of her trick depends upon the weight which authority in its diverse forms carries with the vast majority of people, who constitute the gulls of the play. They are the social conformists who follow convention blindly, who respect authority because that authority claims a respect which they are too ready to grant, and who, consequently, are dazzled by the trappings of authority - of nobility, of religion -, equating, to use Juan's words, he pellejo with the carne. It is the familiar mistaking of appearance or reality, a favourite theme in Golden Age literature.

The gulls in the play suffer from the defect of being deficient in intelligence to a greater or less degree. They are not wholly fools, however. But their rational faculties are blunted by their emotional,
nstinctive impulses, which are strengthened by social conventions. They then lapse into a sort of mental automatism. This is a clear instance of the automatism to which Bergson referred, and which is one of the human limitations which Kerr sees as the basis of comedy.

The wits in the play exploit this general human limitation in order to have their own way. The division in the comedy between the wits and the gulls is a clear-cut one: even Juan and Diego, who seem to be ambiguous characters, in the first two acts, are seen at the end to belong, for all their intelligence, to the gulls. In this relatively early play of Tirso’s, there is as yet no sign of that complex irony, discussed in the analysis of El amor médico, whereby the wit, Jerónima, is conscious of being the gull of her own nature. Tirso’s art is comparatively simple here. Marta is conscious of her superiority and of her more flexible approach to life, and delights in the ease with which she can manipulate the human robots who are her opponents. According to Romera-Navarro, “Uno de los principios de la fórmula romántica de Tirso es el contraste entre la iniquidad y la justicia, entre la agudeza y la necedad, entre la audacia y la timidez, etc., a cuyo contraste sacó gran partido sistemáticamente” (p.344) Marta a pladura is an excellent example of a play built upon this system of contrasts. Let us examine more closely the ways by which Marta’s opponents are defeated.

Lucía, Urbina, and Gómez are systematically deceived throughout the comedia. The opening scene gives a sample of what is to follow. Here, Marta traps Lucía, although the latter is on her guard, into dating her love for Felipe. The immense superiority of Marta over Lucía is made clear from the very start. The two opening sonnets illustrate superbly the difference in mentality between the two sisters. The theme of both sonnets is the same; but whereas we know
immediately the cause of Lucía's despair, Marta's sonnet gives nothing away. We know only that she despairs - "no puedo esperar ni aun esperanza". Marta's thought is expressed in poetic images; Lucía's words are more concrete. Marta is more circumspect, Lucía more simple. This contrast is emphasised throughout the scene, which ends with Marta's reflection:

*Qué fácil es de engañar cuando en boba una mujer!*

I.i.p.357b.

But not only is Lucía, as a person, less cunning than her sister, she is also slow-witted and naïve. In I.iii, she fails to realise that Gómez's perplexity at being told that Felipe has been arrested is proof that Marta had lied to her. Instead, she is puzzled, which allows Marta, with a show of infinite sisterly kindness, to calm her suspicions and lull her back into a sleep of complacency. Similarly, when Lucía's suspicions that Berrió is Felipe are confirmed, Marta finds it easy to persuade her sister that she plans to marry her to Felipe, while in fact manoeuvring her into marrying the Alférez. Lucía, then, is a gullible and relatively passive creature, easily convinced by protestations of kindness and friendship.

Her naïveté is again exploited in III.vi-vii, this time by Felipe, who finds it easy enough to appease her by promising to be her husband when she threatens to disclose his identity to her father. He bases his technique upon a dual appeal to her love for him and her jealousy of Marta. It is amusing to note, however, that his persuasion is so effective that he has some difficulty later in convincing Marta that it was all a pretence. Significantly, the arch-wit, Marta, is deceived, albeit momentarily, only by another wit, her accomplice in deception, Felipe. The momentary misunderstanding between these equals threatens to produce tragic results, but this threat dissolves into a delightfully comic scene (III.ix) in which the lovers' tiff and kiss of
reconciliation only serve to convince Gómez and Urbina of Marta's saintliness:

GÓMEZ: ¿Vióse perfección mayor?
III.ix. p.392a.

URBINA: ¡Qué nunca vista humildad!
III.ix. p.393a.

Where the intellectual discrepancy between protagonist and antagonist is so great, tragedy is impossible.

But to return to Lucía, it would be inaccurate to say that she is completely stupid. She is not a hopelessly unequal rival to Marta, and, in the opening scene of the play, holds her own until Marta informs her of the arrest of Felipe and his imminent execution. Until then, she is at least the equal of Marta in her use of biting irony and sarcasm.

Nor is Lucía taken in by Marta's show of saintliness:

LUCÍA: Es muy grande socarrona
mi hermana, o muy recogida.
No me pago de su vida,
por más virtud que pregoná;
que aunque no tan adornada
como yo, en fin se deleita,
y algunas veces se afeita,
y así es virtud afeitada.
II.viii. p.381b.

In fact, Marta does not depend on it in order to deceive her sister. Her deception of Lucía starts before her own "conversion": Lucía can be handled in a different way.

There is the occasional flash of fire and show of initiative to be seen in Lucía. She instantly recognises Berrio as Felipe, and decides to help Marta in persuading their father to allow Berrio to remain in their house. But she then loses the initiative to Marta when she allows him to lead her away (II.ix). In III.vi, she gives vent to jealous rage and threatens to reveal Berrio's real identity to her father, but is easily deceived by Felipe. In III.xii, she ventures to use ambivalent
language, pretending to address words of love to the Alférez, when they are, in fact, meant for Felipe. The fact that she is unaware of being deceived by Felipe makes her even a slightly pathetic figure here.

However, despite her intelligence, Lucía is too naïve, too credulous, too passive, and too timid. He who hesitates in love, as in other things, is lost, and Lucía has to be content with the Alférez. But more important is the fact that it is her emotions which blind her to the reality of things. Her love for Felipe is something which both Felipe and Marta can exploit: the promise of marriage to Felipe is the illusory carrot held out to her. Also, she too easily believes that Marta's attitude towards her is sincere and free from duplicity, for her knowledge that Marta was deceiving others, including their father, should have been a warning to her. But by then, perhaps, Lucía is already convinced of her sister's sincerity, as we see in I.iv:

**LUCÍA:** Callar quiero, que ya adviertes mi sospecha, hermana mía, que los celos que tenía de ti eran sin razón, pues que con tanta afición me favoreces.

**MARTA:** Lucía, los celos son el tributo que dan intenciones malas, ruin el árbol como el fruto.

I.iv.p.359b.

The readiness to believe that a sister is unlikely to deceive one, i.e., trust in the solidarity of the family, is another of Lucía's weaknesses. She is thus "punished" by being made to marry the Alférez, but not too severely, for the latter's love for her is genuine.

The indiano, Urbina, is a variation on a familiar type in Golden Age drama. His life has been dedicated to making money, which he confidently expects will compensate for other failings he may have. In this, he reflects the values of the society in which he lives. With his
money he hopes to buy a wife; like the present-day successful businessman, he expects money to be an adequate substitute for the love and affection he cannot offer. His attitude is unnatural and anti-vital and that is why his ambitions are frustrated.

As A. Urtiaga has pointed out, Urbina is not an unpleasant person. He seems to take the shock of discovering that Marta is vowed to chastity quite well, and is ultimately philosophical about it— as well as about the final discovery that he had been deceived all along. In III.i, he promises his nephew eight thousand ducats as a wedding present. And, to show his love for Marta, a love which is "ya no humano, as divino", he contributes an equal sum towards the asylum which she is establishing:

**URBINA:** El amor que os tengo es tal,
yo no humano, mas divino,
que por seros liberal,
daros luego determino,
para ayuda al hospital
que hazéis, ocho mil ducados,
que en vos son bien empleados.

III.i.p.385a

Later on, in III.xiv, he even remembers Marta's "hospital" (perhaps that is where his heart is):

**URBINA:** La obra que tenéis tan bien trazada
del hospital, señora, se comience,
porque cuando yo vuelva esta empezada.

III.xiv.p.397b

He is utterly convinced of Marta's saintliness: "Es una santa", he declares (III.iii.p.388a).

In all this, Urbina is not ridiculous. Where he is ridiculous is in wanting to marry a young girl who does not love him. That is why he is ridiculed. We may think at first that the loss of his money is a hit hard on him — that his "punishment" is excessive; but, on reflection, we can see that he is really learning to get his values straight — albeit the hard way. An old, rich man, Tirso seems to be saying, would use his
wealth more properly in works of charity and in helping his younger relatives than in grotesquely trying to secure personal, physical pleasure, which he cannot enjoy; he ought to be looking to his soul. Perhaps Urbina's declaration that his love is "divino" and his noble gesture at the end indicate that he has learnt his lesson. Marta's appeal to religion (her excuse of being bound to a vow of chastity has grotesquely comic undertones, since her marriage to Urbina would have been a "chaste" one in any case) seems to have been not only an effective check on Urbina's aspirations but also not without some positive influence on the old man's character.

Gómez is the most extreme example in the play of a person who completely and unquestioningly accepts the prevailing values of his society. This acceptance is perhaps not reluctantly given, for his innate greed for money, which is his most deplorable trait, is at once satisfied and aggravated by the social conventions to which he subscribes. Thus he seeks to marry his daughter to a man who is as old as himself. He is not unaware of the unsuitability of this marriage, but he rationalises the problem:

La misma edad que yo tiene
el capitán; mas pues viene
con más de cien mil ducados,
¿ánes que están tan dorados
reverenciales conviene.
Darúle Marta la mano,
que no es viejo el interés,
aunque el capitán es cano;
y menos enfermo es
el invierno que el verano.
Invierno viejo es mi yerno;
verano suele llamar
la juventud a amor tierno;
pero bien podrá pasar
con tanta ropa este invierno
mi hija; que della fío
que ha de hacer el gusto mío
y del que escribe esta carta;
que es viejo, y compra esta marta
para remediar su frío.

I.i1.pp.357b-358a
This speech would well repay a closer attention than can be given to it here. Not only does it anticipate the religious developments in the play ("reverenciarlos conviene"), but it also betrays a tension which springs from the incongruity between the apparently closely reasoned argument and the latter's failure to conform to fact. Gómez must admit that Urbina is old, although his money is not. But since the two are inseparable, Gómez must justify his choice of husband on the grounds that winter is more salubrious than summer: "y menos enfermo es / el invierno que el verano". That this is so in reality is by no means established. But there is even another objection: the analogy is clearly false in the light of human experience: if winter is a healthy season, old age is not characterised by good health. Gómez finally concedes that the marriage must be a loveless one, but there are, to his mind, adequate material compensations: "bien podrá pasar / con tanta ropa este invierno / mi hija". Here we see not a father's solicitude for his daughter's welfare, but a rationalisation of a sordid business transaction. His daughter is not a woman to be married, but a piece of cur to be bought by an old man "para remediar su frío". Marta's life and happiness are to be sacrificed on the altar of the selfishness of two old men. This instrumental relationship of father to daughter is extended to include lucía. Gómez takes both his daughters to Illescas and, with all the pride of a merchant displaying his wares, says to Urbina:

Celebraréis vuestras bodas
con la que más deseéis.
I.viii.p.362b

We must also conclude that Don Gómez feels - or felt - no great love for his dead son; we never see him grieving over his son's death, and, in fact, he never seems to think of it unless the subject is mentioned by others - his daughters or Pastrana. In spite of Marta's
protests in I.i, all respect for her brother's death goes overboard. Goméz's glee at the prospect of renewing his friendship with Urbina can hardly be concealed. Friendship (or should we say the possibility of selling a daughter?) excuses all:

y aunque impida
la muerte de don antonio
ver fiestas, en testimonio
de su amistad esta vez
dispensará mi vejez
y su rico patrimonio
con vuestra luto y mi pena.

When Gómez is told by Lucía (who has herself been deceived by Marta) that Felipe has been arrested, he does no more than pay lip service to a desire to see the offender punished. But even this is subordinated to his eagerness to visit Illescas: (note the significant use of enjambement in the last sentence, and the socially obligatory stress on "justa"):

dará el homicida
justa venganza a mi pecho.
De todo a informarme voy,
y porque partamos hoy
a Illescas, voy a aprestar
un coche en que caminar.

However, we notice that in I.viii, although Gómez has arrived in Illescas, no mention is made of his having found out whether Felipe has been arrested. This comparative indifference of Gómez's to whether his son's murder is avenged continues throughout the play, and is only once substituted by a real interest when Pastrana suggests in III.xiv that Gómez should go to Seville in order to witness Felipe's execution and claim his wealth. (Thus we see, incidentally, that there is no real contradiction in Gómez's character in the final scene when he accepts "in santa pace l'uccisore come genero" - to use Henna's words.)

As we see, then, that Gómez's lust for money, his greed, constitutes his driving force. To this all else is subordinated; his daughters are
articles he hopes to sell; his relationship towards them is instrumental, and he obviously treats his son's death as a little bit of spilt milk. He adopts a tyrannical attitude towards his children, seeks to violate their individual liberty (an action always fraught with dangerous consequences in Golden age drama) and is thus unjust towards them. He deliberately deceives Marta in I.ii ("Encubrille el casamiento quiero"), does not consult her wishes, and flies into a rage when she refuses to do his bidding:

GÓMEZ: ¿Quién te ha podido hacer tan atrevida?
Tu darás a mi cólera venganza,
o el "si" debido al Capitán, que es justo.

ALFÉREZ: Señor ...

GÓMEZ: O morirá o hará mi gusto.
I.xv.p.369b

Thus both in his arranging a "suitable" marriage for Marta and in his attempting to compel her to agree to it, Gómez is abusing social conventions for selfish, unnatural and immoral ends. He is morally culpable.

It is not surprising that Marta should rebel:

no me pida
mi padre y su interés hacer mudanza.
I.xv.p.369b

Her inspired plan, conceived on the spur of the moment (for the marriage proposal takes her by surprise), seems to owe not a little of its ingenuity to Pastrana's cynicism as expressed in I.ix: the fact that men are men, and, therefore, vain, gullible, and venal makes them more manageable than bulls. (The witty connexion between this speech and the theme of the play is obvious.)

While Marta's deception of Lucía starts from the very beginning of the play, she does not start to deceive her father until the end of Act I, when she is forced to invent a "lie" in order to avoid marrying Ubalda. From here onward, the deception of Gómez is systematic. He is
convinced that Marta has renounced the worldly life (although he hopes that it is but a passing phase); he is persuaded to give shelter to his son's killer. He helps to put Berrío to bed in II.xi, and, ironically, for once, feels an affection for Marta which he had never shown before: "¿Hay tal virtud! ¿Quién no ama / tal hija?" The superb Latin lesson scene (III.ii), which Valbuena has described as "un logro único del fraile malicioso", serves to underline Gómez's stupidity.

Gómez, however, is not only the dupe of Marta. He is also deceived by Felipe, who plays the part of a palsy-stricken theological student perfectly. Even more important is the fact that Gómez is taken in by Pastrana. By his diligent efforts, "Don Juan Martado con pestañas de Mendoza" effectively prevents Gómez from suspecting that Felipe is much nearer to Madrid than he thinks. Gómez is here dazzled by Don Juan's illustrious lineage - "Momrados títulos goza!", he exclaims in II.viii - without realising that Don Juan's surname would be more appropriately written with a small "h". Here Gómez is deceived by name and position.

It is Pastrana, too, who, by exploiting Gómez's lust for money, persuades him to leave for Seville:

Vuesa merced ordene hoy y concierte
la jornada a Sevilla, porque vea
con sus ojos su gusto y buena suerte,
para que luego que difunto sea
Don Felipe, su hacienda se le entregue,
que Doña MARTA con salud posea.
III.xiv.p.397a

Pastrana's advice is, predictably, seconded by Urbina:

Digo que os está bien, sin que os lo ruegue
este señor, y importa la jornada,
pues no hay inconveniente que la niegue;
que el ver una venganza tan honrada
es gran contento, y más juntar la hacienda,
que estará en otras manos mal lograda.

Gómez agrees: "Todos me aconsejáis; de todos sigo / el gusto y parecer".

This does not mean that Gómez is as weak-willed as his words seem to
imply, although they do indicate his readiness to be influenced by others. The prospect of getting his hands on Felipe's wealth is highly agreeable to him, and we must think that he undertakes his journey to Seville joyfully - especially as he has hopes of getting this extra wealth cheaply:

[PAJARANA:] porque en mi casa (puesto que es angosta para tan gran huésped) es forzoso que os haga el aposento, y aun la costa.

GÓMEZ: Estimo ese favor tan generoso, y le recibiré cuanto a la casa, por ser el hospedaje tan costoso,
III.xiv.p.397a

Let us now consider the question of revenge. As I have suggested, Gómez does not appear to be excessively concerned with his son's death or with a desire for revenge. At the very most, justice and vengeance interest him only in so far as they are financially profitable. And as far as Marta and Lucía are concerned, love rules out revenge. In Lucía's case, it is a simple matter of love being stronger than the social demands of vengeance or justice. This is also true in the case of Marta, but, in addition, the moral implications of such a choice, to which little or no consideration is given in Lucía's emotional attitude, are deliberately brought to the fore. There is a real problem here, but from the beginning, Marta leaves the matter in God's hands (thus anticipating, dramatically, her subsequent "conversion"):

Que perdone Dios los muertos
y dé salud a los vivos.
I.i.p.357a

Later on, of course, Marta is freer to preach that vengeance is incompatible with the Christian way of life:

[GÓMEZ:] Mi venganza cumpla Dios.
LUCÍA: Señor, sí, en Sevilla queda preso el que mató a mi hermano.
GÓMEZ: Castigue Dios al tirano.
MARTA: No le castigue aunque pueda.
In one level, this can be seen as a comic example of the Devil's citing of scripture; but on another, Marta's attitude is Christian, and it is the only attitude which can provide a suitable justification for her continuing to love Felipe - or, rather, she pardons him out of love for him. We may also remember that we are never told why Felipe was led to kill Antonio. Tirso himself leaves the matter vague, and this perhaps implies that the reasons are not important, the conventional implication (in comedy) being that the victor had acted in self-defence. The fact that Felipe is the man who killed Antonio is what is really pertinent in the play.

The ambivalence inherent in this attitude is characteristic of the handling of the religious question in the play as a whole. The overall comic effect derives mainly from two basic stylistic features. The first is Marta's use of religiosity as a cover for love, the second, Felipe's feigned "illness". The disguise of amorous meanings in medical and religious terms is a stylistic reflection of the situation in the play.

The fact that Felipe pretends to be a play-stricken student sets up the equation: love = illness. As we have already seen, this is an equation which is exploited to the full in the later play, *Amor médico*. Just as love is traditionally seen as an illness, the traditional cure for such an illness is, of course, love (although religion, too, will do). Whereas in the later play, a doctor is at hand to administer the cure, in *Marta la piadosa* we have the equivalent
of a religious nursing sister. Marta's sense of vocation is so strong that she intends to found a hospital:

**MARTA:**

> Con mi dote
> pienso hacer un hospital,
> y curar pobres en él.
> Si veras viva deseas,
> padre, déjame, y no seas
> en esto estorbo cruel.

II.iii.p.377a

We are told, in the same scene, that Marta has been visiting the sick, to which Gómez objects: she, however, insists on performing such works of charity:

**GÓMEZ:**

> aunque yo, Marta, os consienta
> que en eso os ejercitéis,
> ha de ser como no deis
> a vuestros deudos afrenta.
> Una mujer como vos
> no ha de andar por hospitales
> curando anquerrones males,
> y haciendo camas.

**MARTA:**

> ¡Ay Dios!
> Porque en esto me ejercito,
> ¿me ríñen? A ser liviana,
> y estar siempre en la ventana,
> ¿qué dijeras? ¿un delito.
> visitar el hospital,
> que le riñen como a vivo?
> ¿No se emplea en este oficio
> la gente más principal?

**GÓMEZ:**

> Hazte beata, y después
> haz, Marta, lo que gustares;
> pero así es bien que repares
> en lo que dirá después
> la gente.

**MARTA:**

> No determino
> aunque ese estado es tan santo,
> estrocharme, padre, tanto.
> Yo voy por este camino;
> déjame con mi opinión.

II.iii.p.376b

So worthy is she, in fact, that in II.ix the mountain comes, in the shape of the disguised Felipe, to Mohammed. We are to get an illustration on stage of Marta's charity. She sees this as an excellent opportunity to practise her skills:
FELIPE: ¡Ah de casa! ¿Hay quien se acuerde de remediar la pobreza de un estudiante que empieza cánones, y el tiempo pierde por la fierita enfermedad que mis cursos no consiente? Dad limosna, noble gente, si es caridad calidez.

MARTA: Padre y señor, ¿ve ese pobre? Pues no sé qué compassion las telas del corazón me mueve para que cobre remedio: si un hospital el cielo hacer me permite, déjeme que me ejerzite en este, y cure su mal.

GÓMEZ: Dale un cuarto, y vayase, que en la corte hay pobres hartos.

The cure starts immediately. In return, Felipe offers to teach Marta Latin, and the nature of the skills to be imparted is quite clear:

MARTA: Deseo yo leer latín. Decid: ¿no me enseñaréis?
FELIPE: Y aun gramática, hasta tanto que especéis a conjugar.

The second equation of basic importance to the play is love = religion. The fact that love ("charity") is a central feature of the Christian way of life introduces into the play an ambiguity whose potentialities are fully exploited. The implications of this equation are perhaps more complex than those of the first, i.e., the love = illness equation. For whereas, in the main, illness is merely a disguise for love, and we simply read "love" wherever "illness" occurs, the ambivalence in the love = religion equation is maintained intact; that is, love can mean both Christian charity and passion. Much of the comic effect arises out of the fact that Marta's religiosity is taken at face value by Gómez and Urbina, while Lucía sees it wholly as a pretence.

In reality, it is both. Thus Marta is not really lying about having made a vow of chastity, as the following lines show:
Similarly, Marta's appeal to religion in order to circumvent her father's plans and also to justify her forgiveness of Felipe is more than deception: it is a genuine and serious appeal to the highest authority. This is an important factor in the question of Marta's "hypocrisy".

But, as is to be expected, the comic effect is greatest, if not quite as subtle, where the element of deception is most apparent to the audience. II.ix is a superb instance of a practical demonstration of Christian love and charity: in the name of religion, Marta can admit her lover into her house and embrace him in front of her father. The comedy arises out of the audience's awareness of the discrepancy between appearance and reality. The fact that Gómez is taken in by appearances introduces the satirical note into the comedy.

This presentation of human love in religious terms derives obviously from the so-called "religion of love". But whereas in the latter phenomenon, religious terms are only a sort of disguise for amorous-sexual ones, with the religious terms virtually emptied of all really religious significance, in Tirso's play, the religious terms are not solely a disguise, but retain (or, rather, are re-invested with) their literal meanings. This allows for both the seriousness of Marta's religious utterances and also the ironical statements such as Lucia's:

LUCÍA (Aparte): ¡Ch qué devotos que están!
MARTA: ¡Bien rezan, por vida mía!
FELIPE: ¡Ay dulce domine mío!
LUCÍA (Aparte): ¡Ay mi hipócrita amorosa!
LUCÍA (Aparte): ¿Y este el domine Berrio?
Con tales dominaciones también me seré yo buena.

III.v. p.388b
In other words, the religion of love is to be taken in a much more literal sense than it generally is.

The fact that illness and religiosity are both used in the play as substitutes for love links the first two phenomena in passages such as this:

**MARTA:** ¡Mi infierno!

**FELIPE:** Vanos recelos

asaltan mi corazón,
y como en el alma sien
los celos pesados hielos,
siempre que el temor los cria,
sin poderme defender,
por tu ocasión vengo a ser enfermo de perlesía.

**MARTA:** Pues si le sana el calor,
y amor mis deseos abrasa,
perlático de mi casa,
llega al fuego de mi amor.

**II.x. p.384b**

Here love produces illness in Felipe: he is to be nursed back to health by Marta, which is made possible by love. This, in scene x, is, of course, passion. In scene xi, which takes up the motif introduced in scene ix, it shows itself as charity.

The link between illness and religiosity is fairly clear in terms of the ideology of love prevalent at the time, which springs from the ideas of courtly love. However, it is not clear why Tirso should have chosen precisely palsy, a sort of falling-sickness, as it turns out to be, with which to afflict the amorous Felipe. It is just possible that this falling-sickness is balanced by Pastrana's malicious reference to Marta's levitation in the third act:

**PASTRANA:** Chicoleas, eso sí.
Loco estoy de admiración
de ver el confuso abismo
de tu engaño y discreción;
porque me engaña a mí mismo
la fingida devoción.
De discreta el premio lleves;
hagas en el mundo raya,
pues tan de veras me mueves,
que he de asirte de la saya
para que no te me eleves.

**III.xiii. p.395a**
If we were to transfer the "palsy" to Marta and the "levitation" to Felipe, it will be seen that these manifestations of "illness" and "religion" are linked directly, and not only indirectly, through their metaphorical connexions with love. On the stylistic level, Tirso's ironical use in this play of literary and ideological conventions associated with love is evident. By explicitly maintaining the ambivalence of the language of the religion of love in our consciousness, he satirises the tradition.

The comedy, of course, is not mere farce. The comic scenes are part of the deception of Gómez and Urbina and thus an integral part of the social satire of the play. The basis of their deception is their inability to distinguish true religion from false religiosity, like the public at large:

GÓMEZ: Tu virtud es de manera que eres Marta la piadosa. Toda la corte te da este nombre que has ganado.

MARTA (aparte): ¡Ay Dios! ¡Qué engañada está!

III. i. p. 386a

It is this willingness to take appearance for reality which Marta exploits in order to attain her end. There are some who are not taken in by her saintliness, but she has other means of dealing with them: almost all persons are capable of being deceived by appearances.

The religious satire is effected in various ways. The most obvious is Marta's awareness of the effectiveness of her assumed religiosity in deceiving the public. But there are also direct comments on certain aspects of religious practices. A good example is Marta's expressed desire to learn Latin—so that she can understand her prayers:

MARTA: Siempre que llego a rezar en las horas a algún santo, me pesa de no entender lo que allí se significa.

II. ix. p. 384a
Even more explicit are her words in the preceding scene:

PASTRANA: Rosario de cocos!
MARTA: Pues.

Así se llaman. ¿Qué quieres, si hacen cocos las mujeres, porque anda el mundo al revés? A lo bueno en estos días la devoción va expirando, pues si rezan ya, es cocando hasta las avemarias.

PASTRANA: En algunas no son vanos los cocos, pues si reparas, muchas, cocos en las caras, llevan cocos en las manos.

MARTA: Profánanse ya las suertes: ya la devoción es gala. Traigan todas, normala, unos rosarios de muertes, que sirvan de sentinela; que yo desde hoy pienso hagármelo.

PASTRANA: ¿Muertes en rosario al cuello? Farcearán sacamuelas.

II.viii. p.382a-b

Then there is Marta's own comment on the freedom which the dress of a beata confers on one:

MARTA: Linda sangre y humor cría Pastrana, la hipocresía. Nunca tuve libertad, mientras que viví a lo damo, como ahora; si intentaba salir fuera, me costaba una riña: ya no llamo a la dueña, al escudero, ni agudo la silla y coche, ni me riñen si a la noche vuelvo: voy a donde quiero.

II.iv. p.378a

This is not merely a humorous comment on her own situation, but surely also a reference to real hypocrites in society.

It would be convenient to review here the moral values contained in the play as they have emerged from the preceding analysis. Our assessment of them must depend on our view of the deception practised by Marta and her accomplices.

On the plot level, the deception of Gómez, Urbina and Lucía brings about a successful end to the problem. This, we recall, was produced
by Gómez's cupidity and his slavish obedience to social conventions. By exploiting these factors, Marta can hold Gómez and Urbina at bay until she can present them with the fait accompli of her marriage to Felipe. Ironically, her opportunity for doing this is brought about by precisely those factors which initially produced the problem. Thus the ending of the play is not forced. Gómez, Urbina, and, to a lesser extent, Lucía, have been checkmated because they are victims of their own follies. At the end of the play, they can only passively accept the situation. The only alternative is, of course, a violent ending, which would solve nothing. (This is something to which comedy often points; a violent ending in tragedy generally does lead to a solution).

The gullibility and follies of these characters are ridiculed through their frustration. This is what gives the comedy its satirical tone. As I have tried to point out, the play satirises all those who are too easily taken in by the trappings of authority, by appearances, perhaps because they themselves obey the letter (often distorted) rather than the spirit of laws and conventions, since it suits them to do so for personal and selfish reasons. While the main weight of the satire falls on the gullible, there is also an ironical exposure of the ways of the religious hypocrite and a certain amount of religious satire in the comedy.

This brings us to the portrayal of Marta herself. While Tirso shows us the workings of the ways of the religious hypocrite, it is clear that he does not do so by presenting us with a hypocrite. In Marta's case we seem to be on equivocal terrain. In the play, those who are taken in by her consider her a saint; those who see through or pretend regard her as a hypocrite. Julia Martínez points out that she play does indeed contain a potential portrait of a real hypocrite,
drawing attention to Marta's words:

[MARTA:] Dirés, hermana Lucía
que no entendéis ni alcanzáis
qué es esto, y que hablar yo ansí
parece gran novedad:
pensaréis que fue fingida
mi mensura artificial,
y engañosa en la apariencia,
como en rosa el alacrán.
No, hermana; pero el que es bueno,
con su virtud natural
licencia tiene unos días
para poderse alegrar.

III.xv. p.398a

And Hartzenbusch is at pains to contrast this play with Moratin's
in order to stress that Marta is not a hypocrite. These critics are,
of course, right. The last four lines of the above passage stress
that virtue does not imply asceticism or puritanism. For Tirso, the
pursuit of cheerfulness does not mean the abandonment of virtue. Thus
one of the more interesting effects of the play is to lead the spectator
or reader into a consideration of the nature of hypocrisy. More than
ever are we aware of the change which intention or motive can produce
in an action. What is only a trick on Marta's part can, with a
different aim and a different intention, and in different circumstances,
unhesitatingly be recognised as hypocrisy. It is Penna's failure to see
the morally subtle ground on which the play moves which, quite under¬
standably, makes him uncomfortable about its implications. Few, indeed,
can read Tirso without experiencing unease.

Admittedly, it is difficult for us to reconcile ourselves to what
Tirso seems to be saying in this play, especially if we are accustomed
to think, in the abstract, of moral actions as absolute. I do not mean
that Tirso is proposing at a deep level the thesis of the relativity of
morality, although it may appear so on the surface. The question (only
one of the many raised in the play) is how are we to evaluate the
morality of our actions. It is a question of the relativity of judgment.
We may think that we know what hypocrisy is once we are alerted to it. But Tirso here presents an extreme case where few, if any, of our criteria of judgment are valid. The mere fact of deception is not sufficient, although deception is an integral part of hypocrisy. Religiosity is used as a mask, but this is not condemned. We must penetrate beyond actions, appearances and means in order to arrive at a ground firm enough for judgment. For, ironically, if it is the appearance of religiosity which enables us to define hypocrisy, Marta's hypocrisy is, in its turn, only mere appearance.

Marta's ultimate aim is a justifiable one: marriage to the man she loves is moral and natural. There is a possible conflict between this aim and her father's wishes, between love and duty, personal desire and obedience to authority. But Tirso is careful to point out that for Marta to place duty above love, that is, to do the apparently moral thing and obey Gómez, would be immoral. Thus we arrive at the paradox that, if morality is to prevail, there must be a violation of morality: Marta must break one of the Commandments. This can only be done, within the comic context of the play, by invoking a higher authority, religion, in which morality is vested. This appeal also allows her to overcome the obstacle of marrying the man who killed her brother. Not only are the circumstances attending the killing deliberately left vague, but, for Marta, as for Lucia, love forgives all. By refusing to apply the old law of an eye for an eye, she upholds the new law of love, leaving God to judge. Therefore she refuses to kill. And that, too, is Christian.

In other words, we see how Marta manages to do what is, at first sight, immoral and socially outrageous and yet escape condemnation; for what she does is, by absolute moral standards, perfectly moral. The demonstration of how what is immoral is really moral contributes not a little to the overall comic effect. Thus Tirso cleverly links
a conventional comic plot to a truly Christian attitude. The situation is an extreme one; but this is toned down both by the use of a conventional situation and also by the ambivalence of language and situation so frequent in comedy. The point is nonetheless serious enough.

*Marta la piedosa,* therefore, can hardly be regarded as an immoral or sacrilegious play. What Penna sees as a condonation of immorality is, in reality, its frustration. The means by which this frustration is achieved are indirect, roundabout ones because this is comedy. Rebellion would produce tragedy. Where suffering and death would serve no purpose and are avoidable, there is no need to insist on them. Suffering is necessary in tragedy to achieve some measure of freedom only when there are no other means of achieving it. But in this play, we do not have a contest between nearly equal forces. Freedom is achieved by the discomfiture of those who have deprived themselves of freedom by becoming the prisoners of their own passions and society's conventions.

Nor should we be scandalised by the discomfiture of elders and their ridicule. Nowhere in Tirso's plays is there any support to be found for a parent who abuses his authority or who attempts to compel his children to perform immoral or unnatural actions. This is not to say that Tirso is suggesting that one should not honour one's parents. He is merely stating that parents should not forfeit their right to honour, obedience and respect. In this, he is scrutinising social customs and conventions, the relationship between different members and classes of society, and, ultimately, the structure of that society itself and the moral values on which it is based. These problems, as we know, are to be explored, often in the tragic mode, by Calderón.
CHAPTER FIVE

EL SÓTANO Y EL TORNO. THE DRAMATIC STRUCTURE OF WIT.
For el sótano y el torno contains many of Tirso’s dramatic virtues: asterly use of language, convincing characterisation (especially of the rincipal female characters), realistic atmosphere, perfect symmetry of onstruction, and logical development of the plot up to and even beyond the lmax. Yet, faulty structure, often seen as a basic weakness in Tirso’s rt, seems to mar the essential economy of dramatic means and, more important, he self-contained unity of the action. In the first place, the economy is iodated by the insertion of Luis and Melchora into the action to enable rso to get over two awkward moments, a sign, all too common in Tirso, of carefree attitude to technique. In the second place, the solution to the nlict is brought about by what, on the level of the action, seems a rather rude deus ex machina – the discovery that the clash of wills and interests rich constitutes the conflict can, after all, easily be resolved by breaching al. The purpose of this analysis is to show that the play, notwithstanding his andetic structure, possesses a perfectly coherent unity if the torno and the sótano which motivate the action are seen as symbols.

The action of the play is directed towards satirising and partially ustrating cupidity. Bernarda’s love of money, by leading her into a umber of absurd situations, produces the complications of the plots. Verything turns on her plan to marry her younger sister to an old man; nce he is rich, her motive is cupidity:

[POLOCHIA:] Vala a casar a Madrid
con setenta años, dorados
de más de cien mil ducados,
de un viejo, hermano del Cid,
que en más de treinta la dota;
y a la viuda ha prometido,
porque la tercera ha sido,
para la primera flota
(que es el novio perulero)
diez mil pesos ensayados,
con que olvidando cuidados
del matrimonio primero,
busque nueva compañía. (1)
Polonia's long speech in this scene furnishes us with further details regarding Bernarda's character. The widow is searching not only for money but for love as well. However, she thinks she can only find love through money, since would-be husbands expect to be presented with dowries. The basic conflict in the play arises out of the fact that Bernarda's pursuit of money entails depriving her sister (who is also her ward) of her liberty. Naturally enough, Jusepa is far from keen to marry an old man, but is too young and immature, too well-trained by the conventions of her upbringing, to do anything but submit passively:

[Polonia:] En fe de la cual promesa, aunque a la niña le pesa, mezclár con su sangre fria la de edad tan floreciente, calla y sigue el parecer de su hermana, por no ser a su gusto inobediente.

I.ii. p.553a

As in so many other Spanish comedies, the authority-obedience structure of contemporary society leads not only to Bernarda's complacently violating her sister's liberty, but also to her taking it for granted that she is acting in her sister's interest; as a result, she pays no attention to Jusepa's protests. It does not occur to Bernarda that what she considers to be in her own interest may not be in her sister's. In fact, her cupidity is only one manifestation of her self-centred attitude towards life. Duarte refers to "competencias narcisicas" (I.xv. p.565b) as being the obstacles Bernarda places in the way of Fernando's love for her.

A second element contributes to the development of the plot: this is the binary symmetry of the play. The grouping of the characters is symmetrical: here are two pairs of lovers; the servants pair off to assist them; Antillana and Mari-Ramírez try to influence Bernarda, while Santarén and Polonia are on Jusepa's side. Looked at from another angle, the characters in be grouped in a different way: those inside the house, and those outside.
The action of the play aims at the assimilation of these groups into a larger unity, an assimilation which is completed with the marriage of Colonia to Santarén. This, however, is not all. More important, from the point of view of the development of the action, is the system of parallel, counter-balancing forces set up in the play: Bernarda and Jusepa are sisters, while Fernando and Duarte are bosom friends. The latter meet the former under similar circumstances, as Duarte points out in words which are a humorous comment on the contemporary dramatic conventions:

[DUARTE:]

Este, amigo, es mi suceso; de dos hermanas los dos a un tiempo somos amantes, uno de otro imitación. Una caída fue causa de vuestra enajenación; de la mía un estropiezo: ¿qué semejanza mayor?  
II.xiii. p.574b

erando agrees:

No fuéis vos mi amigo con tanto extremo, si el dios de amistades y de amores no enlazara así esta unión. 
II.xiii pp.574b-575a

In other words, there is a mutual correspondence between the actions of the two sisters and those of the two friends. Fernando's falling in love is followed by Duarte's; Bernarda's is followed by Jusepa's, while Jusepa imitates Bernarda's "fall" with the same result. A sort of moral causality, depending on the linking of incidents, is thus established in the play, linking Duarte and Jusepa imitate the actions of Fernando and Bernarda spectively. In this way, Tirso, as Calderón was to do later, turns an amatic convention into a dramatic necessity. The effect on the plot of two elements - Bernarda's character and the symmetrical demands of the ay's structure - can be traced in this way.

In pursuance of her plan, Bernarda brings Jusepa to Madrid where the eja has provided a house for them. This house, as the sisters discover
at once, is virtually a prison. It clearly symbolises Jusepa's loss of liberty — the result of her sister's tyranny as well as of the impotent viejo's use of force to retain a wife who will not be able to love him.

Jusepa goes to church and there sees Duarte with whom she falls in love. The house and her sister's authority are the obstacles to the fulfilment of their love. This constitutes the main strand in the action.

The second strand, though less important from the point of view of the mechanics of the plot, is nevertheless central from the psychological point of view, in that it involves Bernarda. The discovery that the house destined for them is virtually a prison comes as a surprise to both sisters. It is to be a prison for Bernarda no less than for Jusepa, since, in order to earn her "diez mil pesos", Bernarda must be not only Jusepa's guard, but in se fact o her co-prisoner. The absurdity of the situation is obvious: Bernarda, in her attempt to deprive her sister of her liberty, finds herself deprived of liberty as well. At first, Bernarda can accept the situation with a shrug of the shoulders, for there is money to be had:

No hay prebenda sin pensión.
I.vi. p.556b

But hardly has she settled in the house when she falls in love with the false barber and her situation becomes even more ridiculous. Bernarda is a self-constituted prisoner of her cupidithy, the satisfaction of which she hopes will bring her a husband. She now finds love wooing her but is unable to accept it because she is the prisoner of another passion: her love for the old man's "diez mil pesos". The house, therefore, represents Bernarda's self-frustration as well. The second strand in the action is concerned with the obstacle that Bernarda's cupidithy places in the way of her own marriage to Fernando.

The third, and final, strand in the action consists of the love-affair between Polonia and Santarén. A convention of the comedia does not allow them to marry before their master and mistress, so that even here Bernarda's
cupidity controls the plot. Their love-affair parodies in its frankly physical nature the timidity of Jusepa's love for Duarte and the dissimulated love of Bernarda for Fernando. Even more important, as will be seen later, is the part these servants play in the dénouement.

The psychological crisis of the play comes at the beginning of the third act, where Bernarda comments on the conflict between love and money which is taking place within her breast:

La codicia y la afición
pelean dentro en mi pecho,
y cada cual el derecho
alega de su opinión:

III.ii. p.582a

He understands why the fifteen-year old Jusepa should be reluctant to marry seventy-year old man. Bernarda, however, decides in favour of the marriage, because she argues that it is a better deal for Jusepa:

El viejo la está mejor
que es una boba mi hermana,
pues cien mil ducados gana
al primer lance de amor.

III.ii. p.582b

But this is only a rationalisation of Bernarda's own cupidity, for she admits:

pues perdiendo diez mil pesos
no tengo con qué casarme.

III.ii. p.582b

The falseness of her argument is evident. She does not need the old man's money to marry Fernando (who is himself rich enough), but automatically assumes that she does, forgetting that Fernando had, in his letter, offered "seis mil ducados de renta", asking her only to be "agradecida" and love him in return. More crucial is her failure to realise that it is the ostinate pursuit of her golden quarry which is leading her away from love. Bernarda is thus frustrating herself by the very means by which she seeks to attain happiness. So long as she insists on selling her sister, she must remain within the prison, inaccessible to Fernando. Bernarda, moreover, is unfair not only to herself but to Jusepa, since she now has absolutely no
reason - apart from her own cupidity - for wanting to sell her sister. She is using Jusepa as a mere instrument and depriving her of her right to freedom, while at the same time she is also attempting to deprive Jusepa of what she herself wants (and mistakenly hopes to get by selling Jusepa) - marriage to a rich, young man. Her attitude may conform to society's rules, but it is immoral and, because it frustrates nature, anti-vital.

The first stage in the dénouement takes place in the very next scene when Bernarda is informed that she has a rival for Fernando's love. The introduction of jealousy tips the scales in favour of love, and Bernarda's main concern now is not to lose Fernando and his "seis mil ducados".

Calous, confused, insecure, and desperate, Bernarda pays two surprise visits to Fernando. The parallelism of the play's structure requires Jusepa to visit her wooer. She is locked in, but the servants intervene and, with their help, Jusepa parallels Bernarda's exit through the torno by going through the sótano. Jusepa is compromised, Bernarda's monetary expectations are frustrated, and all ends happily.

The introduction of the sótano as the complement to the torno does not come as a complete surprise, since it occurs in the title, but the audience have been kept guessing till near the end how it will intervene in the action. The ending reinforces the play's symmetry and the trick devised moves the three strands in the action. The "discovery" of the secret passage (which is in fact created with the servants' help, since an opening must be made in the intervening wall) is, on the level of the action, a *sub ex machina*, since it does not grow out of anything that has gone before. This, however, is a fault in the action, not in the theme, and an analysis of the symbolism employed in the play will establish that the meddy has a sound structural unity. Character and parallelism have produced the plot-structure of the play; the symbols provide the logic which establishes the unity of that structure.
The house can be regarded as a prison because it symbolises, first, Bernarda’s and Jusepa’s loss of liberty, and, secondly, the amorous and sexual frustration of the sisters. It is thus the concrete representation of the effects of Bernarda’s cupidity on her sister as well as on herself. The house, however, is clearly a special kind of prison: its walls are white, there are no balconies, the windows that do exist are protected by a red, and a torno stands at the entrance. Now, a torno is the revolving dumbwaiter for passing objects into and out of a convent with enclosed nuns, i.e., those whose rules keep them immured for life, as distinct from the nuns who can come and go from and into the streets. The house is thus a convent. Therefore Bernarda announces to Jusepa her fate in these words:

que entre tanto que no venga
el capitán que te adora
has de ser monja.
I.vi. p.557b

Jusepa rebels, with this deliciously ironical remark, against the kind of life offered to her:

¿Yo monja del matrimonio?
II.vii. p.569a

Bernando describes the situation in similar terms:

Prevenido desta suerte
este humano monasterio,
donde en años primerizos
vive el amor recoleto, (2)
I.xv. p.563a

Bernarda’s speech later on confirms this view:

y esta casa es un convento
que los trae de dos en dos,
III.i. p.587b

The house and a convent both curtail individual liberty. But much more important is the fact that celibacy reigns in each. In a convent this is willingly self-imposed for the love of God; in "este humano monasterio", the other hand, it is enforced on unwilling subjects for the sake of
social "honour", and the deity Bernardo worships is the golden calf. The irony of the comparison introduces into the dialogue an important element of religious imagery. Not only is its ambivalence consistently exploited, but it is given a structural function.

Much of the wit and brilliance of the dialogue springs from the religious imagery. Some of it is of the kind frequently found in Tirso and does not follow necessarily and directly from the house = convent equation. Thus Polonia describes her reluctance to act as go-between:

En aquesto del terciar,
tengo cartujo el humor.
No soy tercera persona. (3)
I.iii. p.554a

And Santillana gives a grotesque twist to his description of the barber:

más almas tiene en el cielo
que un Herodes y un Neron;
conocenle en cada casa:
por donde quiera que pasa,
le llaman la Extrema-Unción.
I.xiii. p.561b

Gold has a rejuvenating power which likens it to the baptismal waters of the River Jordan:

[FERNANDO:] ..... un viejo
remozado en el Jordán
de un pedazo de aquel cerro
genovés, puesto que indiano. (4)
I.xv. p.567a

Much of the tone of Tirso's comedy depends on reverential things being touched on light-heartedly in this way. But the organic function of this kind of imagery becomes subtly apparent at the beginning of Act III, which is surely one of the finest scenes in the play. Here, the sisters, by pretending not to understand each other, and by speaking in an esoteric language, make their meanings very clear: Bernarda, herself guilty of being in love with Fernando, cannot openly accuse her sister. Jusepa has matured enough to stand up to Bernarda, and her naïve words are most eloquent. The religious imagery is all-pervading:
that midst of all this delicate, amorous sophistication, the physical love of Santarén and Polonia has a healthily pagan ring:

[SANTARÉN:] ... "Hermana perrensa, dueño de Santarén, que en ti desde ayer deseas dar dos nietos a Mahoma, que vayan después a Meca. - ¿Quién te echó por estas partes si no eres ánima en pena? - (6) III.vii. p.589a

... activities of Mari-Ramírez would also seem to qualify her for a mitre sorts:

[SANTARÉN] Di parte a Mari-Ramírez, y como obispo desea si vana Corozain, 

III.vii. p.589b

Since the celibacy of convent life has, by the irony of comic version, become the sexual frustration of the two enclosed "nuns", and Duarte are galanes de monjas, and the whole situation of the play is turned into a witty, ironical comment on the unreality of the ritual idealisation of love that has run through literature, and which never plays up to; human love should never be celibate, i.e., atonic. The play celebrates the triumph of a natural (because sexual) marriage over an unnatural (because unwillingly celibate) one, and the afflict between the two is indicated by the fact that a superstructure of
ambivalent, religious images is built upon the incidents of the plot. The stages in the development of this imagery are these. The house is first transformed into a convent, and Fernando and Duarte are galanes de monjas:

\[\text{BERNARDA:} \quad \text{y esta casa es un convento que los trae de dos en dos} \]

III.i. p.581b

Then, from the climax onwards, the humour of this beginning is converted into irony (note the clash of the sisters in III.i) and the emphasis shifts to the real, sexual meaning of the religious terminology; thus the love of Santarén and Polonia, by being referred to in terms of an "infidel" religion, is revealed as sexual rather than Platonic or spiritual love; instead of Polonia's wry humour: "tengo cartujo el humor" (I.iii), we get Santarén's reference to the pretensions of Mari-Ramírez to a "bishopric": "y como bisitar desea / si vaca Coromín" (III.vii). The final step in this process comes now in the dénouement where sexual terms are not just replaced by religious ones but religious situations are made to symbolise sexual ones.

The substitution of religious for sexual terms is begun so cleverly and progresses so imperceptibly that, at the crisis of the play, we are greeably surprised to discover that Bernarda is an immured "nun" because of her cupididity. The entry of jealousy into her emotional struggle gives her advantage to love. If the sexual-religious system of imagery is coherent, we should expect to see a new "religious" development in Bernarda, and this, in fact, takes place. On being told that Fernando is lying with another woman, Bernarda not only grows jealous, but is irked with an evangelical desire to save Fernando's soul from hell-fire; she hastily throws her manto over her shoulder and bursts into his room:

\[\text{Lastimada de que en vos} \]
\[\text{tan gallarda edad se pierda} \]
\[\text{en contagiosos peligros} \]
\[\text{donde el cuerpo y alma enferman,} \]
\[\text{olvidé mi propia causa} \]
\[\text{por la de Dios, cuya ofensa} \]
\[\text{siento tanto, que a los ojos} \]
\[\text{salen compasivas muestras.} \]

III.v. p.587b
However, there is a further reason for Bernarda's increased "religiosity", and to understand this we must examine the final and most important aspect of the house - the underground sótano that parallels the above-ground torno.

That the torno is a symbol and not an actual barrier sealing the use off from the outside world is shown by the fact that the sisters leave the house. But they leave it, in fact, only to go to church, which is, of course, consonant with the celibacy that the torno symbolises. In the end, this becomes a pretext, but it is kept up. Bernarda, tainted by jealousy, leaves her "convent" to preach a "sermon" to Fernando. Later at night, she repeats the trick: her thoughts torture her; she must see Fernando again. In beata fashion, she tells Jusepa she must go to church:

Yo prometí una novena
y la quiero comenzar
desde hoy en el Buen-Suceso.
III.ix. p.590a

Well, a novena is a petition of prayer lasting for nine days. But the bivalence of this religious language is exposed when Jusepa, who is not ped by it, comments cynically on her sister's sudden religious fervour, and reveals why Tirso chose a devotion of nine days rather than any of the scores other devotions that Catholic practice could offer:

Estas novenas de hagaño
suelen volver intereses
noventas de nueve meses
cuando las hace el ahaño.
Vislumbres muestra de amor
esto que la inquieta el seso.
¡Plea a Dios que al Buen-Suceso
no vaya del solrador!
que en Madrid alivia penar,
si se a fabulas dar quiero,
en las damas el acero,
y en las viudas las noventas.
III.x. p.591a

Jusepa, for her part, does not need the subterfuge of going to church in order to attain her parallel end. The wall dividing the cellars of the
houses in which she and the man she loves live is broken down from the man's side. The fact that Duarte becomes united in marriage with Jusepa by passing through this secret tunnel makes the sótano a clear sexual symbol.

The creation of the secret passage by piercing the wall which separates the cellars is effected by Polonia and Santarén, with the help of the tercera, Mari-Ramírez. Polonia and Santarén, as we have seen, represent the sexual aspect of love, and Polonia is Jusepa's guard. It was Polonia who allowed Santarén and Mari-Ramírez, disguised as a hawk and a toquera, to enter the house. Again, it was Santarén's love for Polonia which led him to recognize her voice in the cellar, and they, in collaboration with Mari-Ramírez, arrange for Jusepa to meet Duarte. Thanks, then, to the efforts of nature (represented by Polonia and Santarén), the inmates of the house merge with the outside world, and not only do Bernarda and Jusepa get their men, but Polonia gets Santarén as well as her freedom, for nature is no longer fettered. The struggle of love to attain fulfilment, in the face of the obstacles presented by Bernarda's cupidity and the fact that society condoned the "celibate" marriage of a young woman to an old man, is the central problem of the play and ends in the triumph of nature and love. Love and marriage, for Tirso, must be frankly based on the physical. Celibacy is an ideal only for real nuns, leading a real spiritual life; it should have no place in the love of man for woman, and sexual frustration, outside real convents, should not be falsely endowed with spiritual value and dignified by the language of religion.

Tirso does not, of course, make the point solemnly like this. He makes it with a delightfully humorous zest. The satire is witty from first to last. One amusing aspect is the "logic" of Bernarda's progression from cupidity to love. Her cupidity is obviously anti-vital: it leads her into the symbolic prison, which represents not only her loss of liberty in the
ttempt to deprive her sister of it, but also her own amorous frustration. Bernarda's actions thus boomerang upon herself. To escape from this prison - as she must if she would find love - her cupidity must be frustrated, and it is made to frustrate itself: Bernarda loves Fernando not only for himself, but in large measure for his "seis mil o renta":

[BERNARDA:] Alto, viudez, esto es hecho.
Perdón Dios al difunto.
¡Seis mil ducados! Hoy junto
a mi amor honra y provecho.
Su talle me ha satisfeito;
Aragón es su apellido,
¿quién duda que es bien nacido?
¡Seis mil ducados de renta!
Mejor me sale la cuenta
de lo que yo había entendido.
II.xii. p.573a

It is precisely as a result of Bernarda's eager pursuit of Fernando's "seis mil ducados" that she is frustrated in her attempt to sell her sister in order to get the old man's "diez mil pesos" and finds love instead. Money thus proves to be for Bernarda by turns an obstacle to or love, a bait, and thereby her ultimate salvation. Since this is comedy, she is saved in the long run by her own foible. It is interesting to note that Bernarda's desire for money is not totally frustrated. This is due to Tirso's ironic view of life: he is not a didactic, moralising romatist. Bernarda gets what is socially and morally licit.

The second witty aspect of this process consists in the fact that a moral weakness can only be transformed into a saving virtue by means of religion. When Bernarda enters the house she undergoes a sea-change: she goes in as a prisoner and comes out as a "nun". By ostensibly leaving her "convent" to worship God, she in fact leaves it to find a husband (who fortunately happens to be rich). Love and marriage are a natural and men "religion", which love of money by itself is not.
The creation of a secret, underground passage ("underground", because it stands for the earthiness of human love as opposed to the ideal of holiness which is "above ground" because it is supernatural) and Duarte's passage through it to unite with Josepa cannot after all be regarded as constituting an arbitrary deus ex machina to bring the play to an end. The ending is, on the contrary, a logical outcome of the symbolic structure of the play. The way in which torno and sótano are linked into structural unity by a whole system of appropriate imagery is an outstanding achievement of Tirso's brilliant wit. For el sótano y el torno, sadly neglected play, proves to be a structural tour de force in a highly original way and thus a superb example of Tirso's comic art.

There are a few other aspects of the play which must be mentioned briefly here. Understandably, Tirso's use of a dramatic structure of wit demands a somewhat looser, less rigorous structure than the causal structure employed by Calderón. But it is clear that, even with this basic difference allowed for, Tirso more often than not is not as economical with his material as he could be. The theatrical conventions of the early seventeenth century, of course, help to account for this: dramatists were more obliged to write for the needs of specific companies. An obvious instance of this lack of economy is the eight characters (out of a total of sixteen) who make only very brief appearances in the play. For Hartzenbusch, they are "enteramente útiles y necios". This criticism is perhaps slightly too harsh, but slightly. The large number of characters constitutes a picturesque gallery and add to the general animation of the play. But they are not organically linked to the action, and perform, for the most part, only incidental roles in the play.

Luis is the most important of these characters. In his short appearance in the first act, he performs a definite function. In I.ix,
informs us of the preparations being made for Bernarda to be bled, the direct presentation of the scene being perhaps necessary for reasons of decorum. Later on, he learns of Fernando's trick from the barber and causes the alarm. He thus helps to rouse Bernarda's suspicions and, consequently, her love for Fernando. Luis thus serves as an emotional catalyst, helping to initiate the change in Bernarda's character, which will be completed by the discovery of the secret passage.

He is also the rival of Duarte as well as of his uncle, the viejo. Such, he serves as a character foil to both. Though poor, he is young and would be a better husband for Josepa than his uncle. Compared with arte, he is not rich, and very different in character, as his crude behaviour in I.xii demonstrates. His language is coarse and insulting (he accuses Bernarda — quite wrongly — of double-crossing his uncle, which he himself had planned to do). He is, in short, very inferior to arte.

Just as Bernarda uses Luis in order to arouse Fernando's jealousy in .xvii, Fernando uses Da. Melchora as the bait for a trap he has set for Bernarda. The momentary appearance on stage of Melchora in III.iv is a visible confirmation of Santillana's story and forces Bernarda's second "religious" sally later that night. The mutual attempt by Fernando and Bernarda to arouse each other's jealousy carries on the parallelism which is so important in the play's structure.

The student and the two coachmen appear only in I.i-ii. Stenbusch finds the realism of those scenes offensive, although they not seem so to a modern reader and certainly must not have appeared offensive to Tirso's audience. Aubrun draws attention to the effectiveness of the play's opening for attracting the audience's attention and imposing force in the theatre. But the accident scene is, moreover, organically
and thematically linked to the rest of the play. In these scenes, too, the first scattered motifs of the religious theme are heard – even though most of them are in the form of oaths, exclamations, or prayers. Finally, the translation in the final line of the second scene:

RAMOS: ¿Qué es cochero en latín?
I.ii. p.552b

prepares us for the "translation" we shall have to make of the religious theme later in the play.

There are some notable features about the characterisation in this play. Hartzenbusch draws particular attention to the scenes between Bernarda and Santillana and Bernarda and Fernando in III.iii and III.v and comments: "Es imposible conocer mejor el corazón del hombre y retratarle en mas verdad" (p.124). In both these scenes, in fact, Tirso’s subtle e of irony to reveal character is not to be surpassed. Equally interesting the generous amount of background information we are given concerning the characters. We learn an enormous amount about the personal lives – past and present – of Duarte, Fernando, and even Mari-Ramírez in I.iv-v. We get the descriptive detail which helps to bring the characters to life and individualise them: compare, e.g., Fernando’s description of Bernarda in I.v. p.564a. Not only do we know how she is dressed, but we also learn that her hair is luxuriant and "ni muy oro ni azabache, / medio sí destos extremos".

I.iii, Polonia informs us of the relationship between Bernarda and Josepa. Two sisters are orphans, which suggests a certain amount of psychological security behind Bernarda’s need for money. Bernarda has been a mother to Josepa from birth, since their mother died giving birth to Josepa. Josepa’s slave obedience to Bernarda is thus understandable, and, also, all the more surprising is her defiance of Bernarda in III.xx, when love has turned her to a mature and independent woman. A fine touch concerning Josepa’s youth
is to be found in III.ix. p.590b:

[BERNARDA:] Ya tú sabes
entreter los trabajos
de una soledad, que allá
cerrada, tal vez celias
desmentir melancolías
muchas tardes. Bueno está.

JUSEPA: Sí, mas esta casa es nueva.

BERNARDA: ¡Guarda el duende, no te espante!

III.ix. p.590b

Here a window so to speak, opens on to Jusepa's past and we see her as a young, lonely girl whiling away sad evenings in an empty house.

Finally, I should like to draw attention to the closing lines of the play, which run thus:

[BERNARDO:] Esto sirva
de entreter soloamente;
no por que haya estas malicias,
que Por el sótano y el torno
Tirso escribe, mas no afirma.

III.xxii. p.598b

Two important points arise from this speech. The first has been noted by all Tirsian critics: the last line affirms Tirso's authorship, which, in view of the fact that the play was printed in the enigmatic Segunda parte, is of the utmost importance. It is thus one of the four plays which Tirso claims to be entirely his own.

The second point, which has so far escaped comment, is the fact that the closing formula is an unusual one, and, at first sight, seems to provide us with a further example of Tirso's curious sense of humour. Critics have often drawn attention to the supposed lack of verisimilitude in Tirso's plots. Professor Aubrun sums up this view in a reference to "Por el sótano y el torno: "La comedia est caractéristique de la manière romanesque de Tirso avec son appareil de passages souterrains, de tours mystérieuses et ses quiproquos .... Remercions M. Zamora Vicente d'avoir donné sous une forme agréable cet amusant et espiègle produit de la folle imagination du meréditore comédien." There is a strong possibility,
however, that there is a point to Tirso's express "warning" - "no por que haya estas' malicias" -, and that there were other sources of inspiration for the play besides Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*, which is mentioned in III.vii.

In one of the amusing "Cartas de jesuitas", written from Salamanca by Andrés Ender and dated 4th February, 1634, we find an incident, some details of which remind us vividly of the action of the comedy:

Aquí ha sucedido un caso escandaloso: en el convento de monjas de Santa Ána estaban dos señoras seglares, y un coadjutor del arcediano de Alba de esta iglesia y un colegial del arzobispo don José Pantoja, cuyo padre está en esa ciudad; hicieron un agujero por una casa pegada al convento, y entraban los dos salían ellas, durando algún tiempo este trato. Descubriéronse el caso; prendieron al eclesiástico (que no estaba aún ordenado) en la cárcel del Obispo, y al colegial le dio el maestro-escola por cárcel la casa del corregidor con cuatro guardias. El Pantoja se huyó antes de anoche, tenerona de la vida, porque el Consejo llevó sangrientamente este caso y ha de venir juez pesquisidor, y uno que está ahora en Zamora sobre otro semejante de un caballero que entró a una monja, le tiene ya para cortar la cabeza. Las guardas también huyeron, y el corregidor se partió al punto a dar cuenta al Consejo. (12)

This story lends further support to the theory that there is a fairly close correspondence between the *comedia* and life in Golden Age Spain. Some details, such as, for example, the presence of "dos señoras seglares" in a convent, tempt one to try to seek a closer correspondence between the play and the incident than a mere similarity of situation. This, however, seems impossible. Miss R. L. Kennedy has made a strong case for supposing the play to have been written after late January, 1623. The fact that it was produced by Prado seems to lend support to this argument. (14)

On the other hand a curious coincidence must be noted. The *Segunda parte* was published in Madrid in 1635, with an *aprobación* dated 10th November, 1634. It is not impossible that Tirso knew of the incident related in the letter and, when preparing the play for publication, altered the ending, so that he could refer maliciosamente to the scandal, which may have been common knowledge. A small detail may possibly lend
support to this theory. Besides this play, there are only two others which are described as "written", viz., Antona García ("y el poeta que no ha escrito") and El melancólico ("... Tirso la ha escrito"). Miss Wilson has convincingly argued that Antona García may have been revised as late as 1625. The date of El melancólico, published in the Primera parte (1627) is more of a puzzle. Doña Blanca de los Ríos, in her introduction to the play, suggests that internal evidence points to the year 1611 as the date of composition. Miss Kennedy, on the other hand, also basing her arguments on internal evidence, argues that the play was written between November 11th, 1622 and 11th February, 1623, and thus suggests tentatively that El melancólico may be a refundición of dato si le es negociar. The bulk of the evidence would point the other way, if there is a possibility that El melancólico was retouched some time before publication. Thus it is possible that For el sótano y el torno, which also is a "written" play ("Tirso escribe, mas no afirma"), was touched before publication so as to allow Tirso to make a sly reference to the incident alluded to in the letter, and thus bring the play "up to date".

That such behaviour as is described in the play and the letter was not, any case untypical of the period is further supported by an account of one of Felipe IV's adventures with a nun in the convent of San Plácido. It, according to Hume, took place about 1638, three years after the publication of Tirso's Segunda parte and four years after the incident described in the letter. Marañón describes how access was gained to the nun's cell:

Vivía, en efecto, el protonotario en unas casas que se había hecho construir en la calle de la Madera, pegadas al convento, y le fué fácil abrir una comunicación, que daba a la bóveda donde guardaban el carbón las religiosas, dentro ya de la clausura. Por esta vía escrilega se proyectó el asalto a la monjita. (20)
Marañón suggests that such incidents took place with some degree of frequency in Spain at that time. It is clear, therefore, that the genesis of the plot of *Por el sótano y el torno* was very likely found in an incident in real life and was not entirely the product of Tirso’s overheated and "folle imagination".  

The two plays discussed in this section, *Marta la piadosa* and *Por el sótano y el torno*, have a number of features in common. The central problem in both is created by an attempt on the part of elders to force a young girl to marry a rich, old man for reasons which are both social and selfish. In both plays, the marriage is avoided by having recourse to a trick. This involves some form of dissimulation which is moral in character rather than physical (as would be the case with disguise). At the same time, there is some reinforcing use of disguise in the plays, although the problem of identity (physical as opposed to moral) is not as crucial in them as it is in the plays discussed in the first section. Both plays are also characterised by a "religious" atmosphere. Again, the elements of social and literary satire are fundamental to the structures of both plays.

Notwithstanding these important similarities, it is clear that, out of a basic situation common to the literature of the time, Tirso has created two original and distinct comedies as regards style, structure and general conception. The religious imagery in *Marta la piadosa*, an amusing example of a real "religion of love", is consciously introduced into the play by Marta as a part of her trick and is systematically developed by her and her accomplices. The religious imagery in *Por el sótano y el torno*, however, is not part of a consciously devised trick.
On the one hand, it creates a definite atmosphere in which the action takes place and, simultaneously, provides an implicit comment on that action. On the other hand, it also has a vital structural function in the comedy. Thus both plays indicate how important stylistic considerations are in any just appreciation of Tirso's plays, and this, not only on the surface levels of witty, brilliant dialogue, but on the deeper, structural levels.

As regards structure, while Marta la piadosa is still largely conventional, For el sótano is a striking experiment in dramatic structure and one which Tirso brings off with brilliant success. The play can be seen as an enormous conceit which cleverly links the two apparently quite unrelated terms: torno and sótano. The discovery that Tirso uses this unusual structure of wit must make us hesitate before we condemn his plays as structurally faulty, even though it seems that some of his plays cannot escape that charge.

Finally, in For el sótano we discern a somewhat subtler handling by Tirso of his material than in Marta la piadosa. In the latter play, there is a fairly clear division of the characters into butts and wits. The intellectual and emotional distance between the two groups is enormous, and we do not feel obliged to sympathise excessively with the gulls. Moreover, the authority-obedience problem is polarised between Marta and Gómez. Urbina is relegated to the periphery of the action, but he, like Lucía, is one aspect of the larger problem which Marta has to overcome.

In For el sótano y el torno, Jusepa has to circumvent Bernarda's plans. But Bernarda is not as unsympathetic a character as Marta's father. The situation is less grotesque and more finely ironical. Bernarda, too, is willing to submit to social conventions, but she does not do so in a wholly passive way. She wants to make Jusepa not so much the wife as the widow of the old man. She is thus cynically exploiting social conventions and an old man's folly both for her own and her sister's benefit. Bernarda
realises that her commission on the deal will make her more eligible. But she is, in the long run, after love and a secure, happy, equal marriage for herself as well as for her sister. The irony in the situation appears when we realise together with Bernarda that she can only be her sister's gaoler by becoming her co-prisoner. The absurdity of the situation is heightened when she finds she cannot accept love (which she really desires) because of her excessive desire to acquire money in order to gain love!

The inner conflicts in Bernarda (between love and money, between her sympathetic understanding of Josepa's reluctance to marry an old man and her certainty that she is, in the long run, acting in Josepa's interests,) and the overall absurdity of the situation reveal the mature Tirso of *la celosa de sí misma* and *el amor médico*. Thus Bernarda is not completely frustrated: we are sure that she prefers Fernando and his six thousand pesos to the old man's commission of ten thousand ducats. The satire here is more subtle. We do not merely laugh at the folly of others. Tirso almost seems to be laughing at us. Some of us would no doubt like to see Bernarda frustrated in the same way as Gómez is. But life is not as uncomplicated as that. Bernarda is not called upon to sacrifice willingly and heroically money for love. We are unlikely to do so. Why should she?

At the centre of all this, the problem of authority and obedience and the moral values associated with it are a constant and real preoccupation in Tirso. The extent to which social pressures affect the family relationship, the wider human relationship and the individual's morality is examined from various angles by Tirso. One such scrutiny is to be found in the next play I shall examine: *Ventura te dé Dios, hijo*. 
PART TWO

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE
SECTION THREE

SOCIAL ASPIRATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON PERSONAL AND CLASS RELATIONSHIPS.
que siempre fue la virtud
principio de la ventura
(El vergonzoso en palacio. III.1)
Ventura te dé Dios, hijo was published in the Tercera parte of Rso's plays, and, as Miss Kennedy has convincingly argued, was probably written in 1622. It is thus a late play. All the more surprising, therefore, are the two main problems which it presents: first concerns the governing idea of the play; the second, its structure.

If, as I shall stress in subsequent chapters of this thesis, Rso in some of his comedies makes a plea for a more fluid social structure in which the position of the individual is determined, not wealth or by birth, but by his own personal merit born of intellectual achievement, Ventura te dé ... is something of a puzzle. For, in it, learning fails to achieve anything, and the learned parvenu is systematically ridiculed. At first sight, we seem to perceive here a contradiction in Rso's thought, which, of course, is not impossible, since authors are in no way obliged to avoid contradicting themselves in order to humour critics who demand consistency of them.

Secondly, Rso seems to employ the episodic structure unblushingly in this comedy. A number of the episodes contain situations which are resolved by what seem to be a series of miniature deus ex machina contrivances. Inasmuch as these episodes constitute the proof the play's thesis that Ventura is superior to Saber, one's first action is that Rso has not made his point convincingly, for there was to be no explanation for Otón's Ventura unless we postulate a reverse, almost chaotic universe in which luck more often than not favours the ignorant.

However, a closer scrutiny of the play reveals a certain method this structural madness and also suggests that the play's theme does not constitute an inconsistency in Rso's dramatic thought. I propose to show in this analysis that the thesis in Ventura te dé ...
is of one piece with Tirso's views on society as expressed in other plays and that the structure of the play is an apt vehicle for this thesis and, simultaneously, a humorous comment on a conventional dramatic structure.

With Ventura te dé ... we move to a group of plays where the conflict between the individual and society becomes more accentuated. To be sure, this element is also present in the plays I examined in the first part of this thesis. Whereas in Don Gil the confrontation between Juana and Martín, brought about largely by their fathers' conforming to social conventions, exists primarily on the personal level, with the powerful, motivating social factors remaining in the background, the latter factors come to the fore in Marta la piadosa and Por el sótano ... . The result is that, while the conflict with society is oblique in Don Gil (Juana fights Don Andrés by making rings round Martín), it is much more direct in the latter plays, where Marta opposes Gómez and Jusepa opposes Bernarda.

Social convention, again, initiates the conflict in Ventura te dé ... But it is a conflict between different sets of values rather than one between persons or personalities. The personal conflict does exist, of course, although attenuated dramatically, and is subordinate to the theme which I see as an attempt to determine the basis of nobility.  

Hartzenbusch sees the central problem in the play as that of the inadvisability of a parent's forcing a child to follow a career for which he is not suited:

No quiso nuestro eminente poeta predicar el abandono del estudio; no pretendió ridiculizar el saber, ni mostrar con un ejemplo que la prosperidad es el patrimonio de los mentecatos; quiso manifestar que es injusto, que es desacertado violentar la inclinación del hombre en la elección de carrera ó modo de vivir, y que los decretos de la Providencia se cumplen á despecho de todos los cálculos de la humana cordura. (3)
Blanca de los Ríos also accepts this view. This problem is habitually an important one in the play, especially as it involves the parent-child relationship. But it seems to me that this problem in reality one aspect of a larger one which becomes clear to us if examine the reasons for Grimaldo's attempt to impose his will on his son.

Grimaldo is a nobleman, but he is poor. Now, in an agonistic society, one's social rank must be asserted if it is to be maintained. Since wealth is one of the most important factors - if not the most important one - in an assessment of social honour, Grimaldo, because of its lack of wealth, finds the position of his family threatened: this made clear when he voices his exasperation with Oton who is not as learned as Cesaro:

[GRIMALDO:] Y por última venganza, infame, para afrentarte, me dicen que, en vez del Arte te enseñe buena crianza. La del campo es la mejor; un labrador estudiante te infama, torpe, ignorante. Desde hoy serás labrador; que si a ser noble comienza, quiero, pues que te envileces, que por donde acaba empieces; quizá así tendrás vergüenza.

I.viii. p. 1645b. (5)

The factor of birth is not enough to allow one to maintain one's position in the social hierarchy, especially since entry into the upper classes is open to those who can acquire sufficient social honour. This puts pressure on those already belonging to these classes to justify their positions if they would retain them. That is why Grimaldo is insistent that his son should be good at something, that is, prove his worth (and, a facto, his nobility), a sentiment which, of course, is not out of place with modern sensibility. If Oton cannot do this, he cannot claim
to have any worth:

**GRIMALDO:** Quien ni por pluma ni espada, 
Octavia, medrar procura, 
¿qué puerta abierta hallará 
para conseguir valor?  
I.vii. p.1644b.

With wealth, the prime determinant excluded, Grimaldo falls back on learning. This is not primarily because he is convinced of the intrinsic value of learning; one gets the impression that he would be happy enough if Otón were to learn his grammar parrot-wise:

**GRIMALDO:** Aun un tordo, un papagayo, 
una urraca, un cuervo, en fin, 
estudia lo que no entiende, 
y si le enseñan aprende 
a hablar romance o latín; 
con que afrentándote están, 
pues saben lo que te no. 

**GILOTE:** Es verdad; también habló 
la borrucha de Balán. 
Mas de eso, ¿qué culpa tien 
mi capote? ¡Aquí de Liez!  
I.ix. p.1646b.

Rather is he conscious of the value of education as a means of achieving social honour. As Fulvio explains, Grimaldo's intention is that Otón should occupy a position befitting his rank. If Otón studies, his relatives promise to make him a man:

**FULVIO:** Señor Otón, vuestro padre 
tiene, por ser principal, 
más nobleza que caudal; 
y porque el estado os cuadre 
a vuestro valor debido, 
que estudiéis a cargo toma; 
porque sus deudos, que en Roma 
por las letras han valido 
hasta alcanzar el capelo, 
prometen haceros hombre: 
estudiad, y no os asombre 
la incapacidad que al Cielo 
querréis, ocioso, imputar.  
I.ii. p.1639b.

But there is a difficulty. Otón considers himself too old to study. He also recognises that he is no good at book-learning:
Aunque tengo padres, soy de edad varonil, que encierra más valor para la guerra que para el arte en que estoy; y si es bien que en esto notas, no son mis años capaces de facultad que a rapaces muestran palmetas y azotes.

I.i. p.1639b.

His failure as a student irritates Grimaldo, who now considers his already precarious social position definitely lost. What exacerbates the situation in Grimaldo's eyes is the social elevation of Cásero and his family. The honours conferred on the latter and their insulting, vulgar and unmanly behaviour offend Grimaldo's noble social responsibilities. His resentment is clearly shown in I.viii, and his ungrammatical and unrefined language is evident in I.viii. He can find no other outlet for his impotent rage than to turn on Otón, vilify him and Octavia, and degrade him to the status of a villano.

Social pressures, then, have affected the father-son relationship as well as the husband-wife one, to a lesser extent: consider Grimaldo's ungrammatical remarks to Octavia when she tries to defend Otón:

OCTAVIA: ¿No soy su madre?
GRIMALDO: ¿No es razón que a mi hijo acuda?
Sí, no sé; pero estoy en duda
si le habéis dado otro padre.
Desde hoy tiene de guardar
los bueyes.


Grimaldo also uses insulting language to Otón. But, in addition, he degraded himself (thus, ironically, degrading himself). His attitude is ungrammatical.

This is not to imply that Grimaldo is presented in a completely unfavourable light. He is concerned with nobility not only for his own sake, but also for his son's. Implicit in his attitude is the belief that nobility must be won and retained by personal achievement. Once Otón's luck starts to turn, we see the more paternal (and doubtless
genuine) side of Grimaldo's character. His farewell speech to Oton is genuinely paternal in tone; he recognises Oton's genius now (ventura, of course) and reminds him of the need for "virtud". His speech has moments of bitterness: he is probably a man who has been unfairly treated by society:

[GRIMALDO:]

las ésta [la ventura] te favorece,
usa de ella con valor;
el Duque te hace favor;
en Palacio sólo crece
(del modo que en la milicia)
la ventura; en él verás
quedarse el mérito atrás
y arrinconar la justicia;
sólo medra el venturoso.

Il.vii. p.1659b.

As, like so many other Tirsoian characters, Grimaldo has wronged Oton (as he thinks) the latter's own good. But was he right in his earlier attempt to compel Oton to study? And even though he later concedes that arms may be better suited to Oton, the latter does not precisely distinguish himself by his prowess on the battlefield!

The validity of learning as a possible basis of nobility is considered in the person of Césaro, who is, to some extent, the type of person Grimaldo would have Oton be. Césaro is a brilliant student and the best jurist in Italy:

[AGUDO:]

y para poner remedio
en tan ptiljo interés,
mandó que buscar hiciesen,
al más ilustre letrado
que las leyes conociesen,
en cuyo estudio y cuidado
sus pleitos comprometiesen.
I.iii. p.1644a.

s reputation as a scholar leads to his being appointed by the Pope to arbitrate between the Count and the Marquis. His efforts to find a compromise which would leave both sides happy are rewarded with honours, of which is the position of privado to the Duke. Honours are stowed on his relations, too, and there is a promise of more to come:
[AGUDO:] Vinieron los dos en esto, y a Césaro aficionados, en el gobierno le ha puesto el Duque de sus estados; y el Marqués, que ve compuesto tan a su satisfacción pleito tan largo y reñido, en muestras de su afición de joyas le ha enriquecido, y una villa en posesión y mayorazgo le ha dado, premio de su mucha ciencia; y para vos [Rosela] ha alcanzado, siendo dama de Clemencia, esperanzas de un Condado con el esposo que os dè; ved lo que el estudio alcanza. I.iii.p.1641b.

Learning, in fact, has put Césaro well on the way to becoming a noble. As Rosela puts it: "Só que a tu sangre enriqueces" (I.vi. p.1643b). Césaro's family has, in the course of three generations, risen steadily in the social scale:

[ROSELA:] Villano padre dio el ser al mío, que mejoró con el trato mercader; bieal en varas trocó y el sembrar por el vender. I.iii. p.1641b.

There is an obvious irony here, of course, if we recall the prejudices of Golden Age society: one would be inclined to wonder whether the change from the status of villano with its attendant limpieza de sangre to that of a merchant with its implied Jewish connexions constituted an improvement! Be that as it may, Césaro, by virtue of his learning, is but a step away from nobility:

CÉSARO: Yo sé, Rosela querida, lo que basta a ennoblecem mi linaje, sangre y ser. I.vi. p.1643b.

So sure is Rosela of this that she no longer considers Oton good enough for her:

[ROSELA:] Pero pues la diligencia de mi hermano le sublima
a tan noble preeminencia, y en fe de su mucha estima he de privar con Clemencia, Otón mude de cuidado, que ya los cielos serenos de mi amor se han anublado, porque no pienso ser menos que esposa de un titulado. A eso y más puede animarte Césaro, del mundo espejo.

1.iii. p.1642a.

Enrato se es her as the wife of "un Colona o un Gonzaga" (I.vi. p.1643b); the Duke himself is prepared to marry her to a nobleman:

ROSELA: De mi hermano no hay dudar siendo César, que presuma juntar la lanza a la pluma y vencer como estudiar.

DUQUE: Si él con la victoria sale, con Griselio os casaré.

CLAVELA (ap.): ¡Ay Cielo!

DUQUE: Y Conde le haré de Regio, para que iguale el estado a su valor.

ROSELA: Eres Gonzaga; no puedes hacer menores mercedes.

II.xiii. p.1664b.

At the beginning of the play, then, Césaro is on the threshold of becoming a noble. But in the middle of Act II, the Duke is still promising him the tantalising nobility. Learning, then, over and above his wealth, is insufficient to confer nobility on him. He and Rosela have to wait until the end of the play for Otón to grant them the desired status as an act of generosity towards his enemies. The irony of the situation is heightened when we consider that Otón was previously despised and rejected by Césaro and his relations, and also that Otón, having been degraded to the status of a villano in the middle of Act I, has in the course of the play risen and re-entered the ranks of nobility. The insufficiency of learning as the basis of nobility is clearly implied. Why is this?

The play, in the first place, shows learning as inadequate to cope
with actual situations in real life. Comedy, it has been said, deals with unexpected occurrences and man's ability to cope with them. The unpredictable element in life is precisely what Césaro is unable to cope with. His education has produced a mechanistic mentality in him. For Césaro, the problems of life can be solved by logical, intellectual means. This is a miscalculation, for over and over again, his plans are frustrated.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate this. Césaro's proposed solution for ending the war is a marriage between Enrique and Clemencia. In the abstract, this is a perfect solution, not original or novel, to be sure, for it is a time-honoured one, but a good compromise. However, Césaro does not reckon with unknown and unpredictable human elements. This marriage por razón de estado does not take into account the wishes of Clemencia, who loves Criselio and who considers it grotesque to be compelled to marry a person she has never seen:

Clemencia: ¿Y sólo me dan marido.
No sé si mi padre yerra,
pero sé que mi hija soy
y que es fuerza obedecelle.

Clavela: Hoy, prima, tienes de velle.

Clemencia: Y también me casan hoy.
¿Cuándo has visto tú, Clavela,
boda y vistas en un día?

I.xii. p.1648b.

Nor does Césaro foresee or even expect Criselio's reaction to the threat posed by the marriage to his ambitions and happiness. The marriage is not only not based on love (thus defying the moral-dramatic, romantic conventions of the comedia) but also violates Clemencia's individual liberty. She is used as a mere instrument, and, like Enrique, finds her destiny entrusted to Césaro. The quite acceptable moral result is that the proposed marriage is frustrated.

Similarly, Césaro's military tactics fail. What he proposes to
Cricelio in II. viii is little more than a Trojan horse ruse. He is confident that wars can be won by means of tricks devised by intellectuals:

[CÉSARO:] Lo más de la guerra estriba en ardides e invenciones, que aunque el esfuerzo derriba murallas y torreones, la industria el valor aviva. Por eso es tan estimada la soldadesca de Flandes, porque en su región helada consigue victorias grandes el ingenio, y no la espada. II. viii. p. 166 Ca.

Alas, Césaro does not allow for every contingency possible: he forgets that there may be enemy spies observing his movements; he forgets to keep a watch on the enemy; he forgets to ensure that there is more than one escape route from his hiding-place. Underlying all these omissions is, perhaps, a naïve confidence in the intellectual - and, therefore, military - inferiority of the enemy.

Finally, his persecution of Otón backfires. Although he realises that his persecution may only lead to Otón's advance, his envy cannot be controlled. His attempt to poison the Duke against Otón is unsuccessful: Otón's "punishment" for loving Clemencia is a governorship. The attempt to assassinate Otón very nearly ends in the assassination of the Duke.

Césaro's best laid plans go awry.

This is no surprise, for the play makes it clear that Césaro's learning is powerless against Otón's ventura. After the military débâcle, Césaro himself is compelled to recognise the importance of ventura in the affairs of men:

[CÉSARO:] No eches la culpa al ingenio, Cricelio, cuyas ventajas a tu pesar reconocen las fuerzas más celebradas. Catedras lee la milicia que Universidades pagan, y a especulación reducen.
but there is more to Césaro's failure than the mere unpredictability of events. Learning ought to have fitted him for coping with this, while it is clear that it has not. Even so, a man cannot properly be ridiculed - as Césaro is - merely because events fail to conform to his calculations. If it were so, this play would be no more than a farce.

Yet no one can deny that there is a certain moral justice in Césaro's failure. It is right that his plans should fail because his character is riddled with moral flaws. There is not only the mental automatism and the atrophied imagination produced by his intellectual training. His education itself makes him conceited.

Césaro himself recognises that "la ciencia es madre de la prudencia" (I.vi. p.1644a). But it is not a lesson that he properly understands. The difference between knowing and understanding is clearly demonstrated in Césaro's character. His knowledge is superfluous book-learning, absorbed by the intellect, but without any beneficial influence on his soul. Learning does not make him humble, but proud, and his pride infects his father and sister as well:

CÉSARO:

Yo sé, Rosela querida,
lo que basta a ennoblecer
ni linaje, sangre y ser.
Prevé que luego tu partida,
quien te espera dos carrozas.

ROSELLA:
ROGNATO: ¿Quieres eso te ha espantado?

ROSELLA: ¿Y que te esperan dos carrozas?

ROSELLA: ¡Ay padre! el Cielo lo haga.

ROSELLA: Saber y ensobrecer
todo es uno. La ambición
de éstos me ha causado risa.
I.vi. p.1643b.

His attitude towards Otón and his family betrays an arrogant
superiority. He is contemptuous of Otón in I.vi and his taunts move
Césaro to anger:

[CÉSARO:] ¿Azótele el preceptor?
OTÓN: Por la licencia honra fuera;
mas si el verdugo los dijera
en caso de algún labrador,
fuera afrenta conceída.

CÉSARO: ¿Tú presto se ha de picar?
OTÓN: Muchos suelen azotar
porque dan mala medida.
Como mercader no fui
no temo azotes por esto.
I.vi. p.1644a.

Grimaldo congratulates him, his tone is condescending and
ridiculously patronising, betraying an ignorance of good manners (I.vii).

While the social ambitions of Césaro and his family are under-
standable, their envy of the ignorant Otón is hard to reconcile with
their self-arrogated superiority. Césaro, seeing that his learning is
able to carry him further, is exasperated by the good fortune of a
whom he regards as an inferior being:

[CÉSARO:] y de Otón vengado yo,
que su ventura me tiene
tal que fuera de mí estoy.
III.vi. p.1673b.

Even this envy might be excused as an understandable human
knee, and would only mean that Césaro is, like all of us, less than
fact. But Césaro cannot control his envy any more than he can temper
his pride. At the first sign of Otón's good fortune, he determines to stop him. And to stop Otón, Césaro himself will stop at nothing.

His denunciation and accusation of Otón, as we have seen, fail to convince the Duke that anything more than sending Otón away as governor is needed. Then Césaro turns to murder, and enlists in his aid Enrique. The latter's consenting to assassinate a man who treated him so nobly on taking him prisoner does not say very much for his character.

In short, Césaro, for all his learning, lacks nobility of soul. His wealth and his learning, the play seems to suggest, are not enough to confer nobility on him. If anything, his learning is what exaggerates and brings out his moral flaws. It is in these flaws in his character rather than in the incidents of the play themselves that we must see the explanation for his failure. In a sense, in this comedy, character is the plot. This becomes clearer if we consider Otón's character.

Tirso having argued that learning and wealth are inadequate to secure nobility, it is clear why these two factors are eliminated in his portrayal of Otón. The latter must therefore have qualities which Césaro lacks. Tirso is not arguing that nobility is the preserve of the uneducated, poor man. Nor does he imply that birth is of much use, for Otón is deprived of his hereditary status at the beginning of the play. The symbolic importance of this is driven home by the stage "business". Octavia declares:

No he de sufrir tal agravio,
aunque muriendo os resista.
Cada cual su traje vista:
tosco, el tosco; sabio, el sabio.

I.ix. p.1646b.

Grimaldo is intransigent and Otón must don the garb of a villano;
In other words, Oton is placed on an even lower level than Cesaro and, like the latter, he, too, must find his appropriate place in the social hierarchy. A significant parallel is thus established between Oton and Cesaro, which leads the audience to compare and contrast these two characters.

It is important to note that Oton's loss of rank is not entirely arbitrarily engineered by Tirso for the purposes of his thesis. In a sense, Oton deserves his loss of status. In the scene with his tutor, (I.ii), his attitude is not respectful. This is understandable because of his exasperation and anger. When he throws away his grammar book and storms out of the room, he is rebelling against parental authority, albeit justifiably. But it is perhaps not being finical to note that his rebellion is indirect: he sends his refusal to study to his father through the tutor (I.ii). The fact that Oton's father has abused his parental authority, that the tutor is a pompous, conceited man, and that the rebellion is therefore justified and also indirect all ensure that a tragic ending is averted and that Oton's "punishment" should not be too severe. The moral responsibility for one's actions, which governs the factor of poetic justice, is at work here, of course, but the situation, as is often the case with Tirso, is a complex and delicate one.

But, to return to Oton's moral failings, revolt is not all. Oton is at first too ready to take his status for granted. As he tells the tutor:
y a mi padre le decid
que no fuerce el natural
de su hijo con violencia,
que es hacer al cielo agravio,
y si me quiere hacer sabio
que me dé la suficiencia.
I. ii. p. 1640b.

He is implying that his inheritance (however small) along with birth
will be enough to maintain his position. And, when Rosela jilts him,
he forgets his manners and insults her:

ROSELA: Pues tú, ¿qué sabes de amor,
si aún no has llegado a amo, amar?
Anda, vete a sum, as, hui.
OTÓN: Si huyó, que soy caballero,
y seré siempre el que fui,
y el ser villano y grosero
de un terren al que hay en ti.
Yo, soy yo.

ROSELA: ¿Dame lición?
OTÓN: Y tú, eres tú.
ROSELA: A conjugar
	te vas enseñando, Otón;
	mas tu amor no ha de llegar
	onmigo a conjugación,
	ni a ser amante tampoco,
	que más adelante pasa.
I. iv. p. 1642b.

(Here it is interesting to note how often Tirso puts his characters
under the stress of powerful emotions in order to bring out basic
traits, be they flaws or virtues.) Not yet recovered from Rosela's
rejection of him, Otón comes face to face with the insolence of
Césaro and Honorato. At first, he is courteous towards Césaro. But
the insolence of the parvenu and his gratuitous insults are too much
for Otón, who insults him in turn. In this encounter, neither side
emerges with much credit, and almost immediately (I. viii) Otón is
humiliated by his father.

If Otón, then, has neither wealth nor learning as positive
advantages, and loses the advantage of birth because of pride (and
is his pride he has a common trait with Césaro), what does he have?

At first sight, the suggestion is that Otón's true calling is
that of the soldier. The importance of arms is not underplayed. The Duke would see a successful military campaign as a further factor in the perfection of Césaro's personality:

**DUQUE:** Libro es la guerra también; las espadas son sus hojas, hues sois en las unas sabio, sed en las otras valiente. Tinta es la sangre caliente, con ella escribid mi agravio; y pues por mí sentenciasteis y mi justicia entendéis, id y mostrad que sabéis defender lo que estudiasteis; que si volvéis con victoria, por letrado y capitán, Marte y Minerva os darán laurel de eterna memoria. II.v. p.1658a.

Grimaldo hopes Otón will prosper in war:

**GRIMALDO:** Agora tengo de ver para lo que eres, Otón. Las armas ventura son, si méritos el saber; pues para aquéstas no has sido, en las otras te avantaja. Gente humilde, pobre y baja, por las armas ha subido hasta la suprema altura que en el Imperio se encierra. Verás siguiendo la guerra, que todo en ella es ventura. II.vii. p.1659a-b.

Otón is old enough to bear arms, and, as he explains to Gilote, war and travel help to perfect a man:

**OTÓN:** Vente conmigo y te haré hombre.
**GILOTE:** ¡Bueno! ¿cómo sería hombre? ¿Pues soy yo mujer?
**OTÓN:** No es hombre quien de su tierra no salga. Prueba en la guerra tu esfuerzo. II. i. pp.1658b-1659a.

Otón is sure that arms will bring him honour:

El esfuerzo suplirá lo que falta a la experiencia; pues no soy para la ciencia, la guerra me enalzará. II.xi. p.1662a.
But we get no real proof of Otón’s prowess at arms. He arrives too late for the battle, which Crisélio and Césaro have already lost. He happens to find Enrique and Alberto alone and, in an "equal" fight (for, since Gilote says "no soy más que cero" II.xii. p.1663a, Alberto leaves - to summon help), he vanquishes Enrique - although luck is against the latter, for he loses his sword. Similarly, we recall Clemencia's praise of Otón's valour in defending her:

[CLEMENCIA:] Cyólas un labrador, en cuerpo y traje robusto, puesto que noble en los hechos, a quien mi vida atribuyo, que con un tosco bastón, despojo de un roble duro, contra el bárabo atrevido sirvió a mis quejas de escudo. II.iii. p.1655a.

But we know that Clemencia's account is only an invention:

CLEMENCIA (aparte): Lo que Enrique intentó hacer dije, anticipadamente: industria ha sido prudente; aborrezco y soy mujer, Destruyase Lombardía, y no destruya mi honor quien se casa sin amor. II.iv. p.1657a.

All we are sure of is that Otón did not hesitate to offer to protect her when she implored his aid (I.xvi). Clearly, the question of Otón’s actual valour is of secondary importance for Tirso.

What is much more important is Otón’s moral character. The one thing which Otón does possess is ventura, good fortune. This is at the root of his success. He himself confesses this when he leads Enrique prisoner into the Duke’s presence:

OTÓN: Atribuye a mi ventura y no al valor que me falta el ofrecerlo, señor, a Enrique preso a tus plantas. Vencedor, viene vencido. Yo tengo pocas palabras; tarde al campo me enviaron cumplimientos de mi casa;
halle al Conde que con otros
su victoria celebraba;
pedi ayuda a mi fortuna,
y de muerte me acompaña;
que, en fin, "vino, vi y venci".
II.xv. p.1666a.

His father also has had to recognise that ventura is Otón's fate.

And the importance of ventura is something Octavia had been stressing from the very beginning. Even Césaro himself has been forced to acknowledge the importance of ventura, which he lacks. But it is fit to ask why ventura should be conceded to Otón while it is denied to Césaro. In other words, what is Tirso trying to say when he places ventura above wealth, learning, birth and valour? Obviously, Hartzenbusch recognised, Otón has ventura because he deserves it:

"Si la estrella de Césaro se oscurece luego ante el astro espléndente de Otón, no hay que extrañarlo: justo es que brille más la virtud que l orgullo y la envidia" (p.386). This, I think, is the real point of the play. It is indeed true, as Hartzenbusch points out, that parents must not force their children to follow a career for which they are not suited and that "los decretos de la Providencia se cumplen despecho de todos los cálculos de la humana cordura" (p.383). But it is also true that Otón must deserve — indeed, earn — his ventura.

There is little doubt that Otón does earn his ventura and, consequently, his rank. In spite of the failings pointed out earlier, there is a basic moral awareness in his character. Although incapable of academic study, he is not stupid: his eyes are not closed to the viles in society:

OTON:  

El presente es bien bellaco,  
si el Cielo no lo socorre.  
Henchida de vellón corre  
y llaman Venus y Daco;  
labra casas la lisonja;  
et pesquera de caña  
la verdad, la lealtad daña;
la ambición se metió monja.
la ciencia la presunción;
ingénio la oscuridad;
el mentir, sagacidad,
y grandezza, el ser ladron.
Vividor, el que consiente;
buhonería, la hermosura;
vende báculos la usura ..., 
y éste es el tiempo presente.

Even more important are his specific moral virtues. He studies in
order to please his father, and this is made clear from the beginning:

OCIÓN:  ¿Qué es hice yo, estrellas pias,
quen tanto me perseguis?
¿Qué confusión fundís
en estas potencias mias?
Un un año que ha que intento,
por dar a mis padres gusto,
estudiar, y el Arte ajusto
a mi torpe entendimiento;
por más que, a costa del sueño,
niego a la cama el tributo,
y decorando sin fruto
soy más incapaz que un leño,
la primer conjugación
aun no ha pedido aprender,
ni el primer tiempo saber,
tarea de mi licción.
I.i. p.1638a.

The only example of his refusal to obey his father is his indirect
rebellion in I.ii, which is carried over into I.iv:

[OCIÓN:]  Si me enojare mi padre
porque en su gusto no vengo;
ya le cuadre o no le cuadre;
a tu amor por padre tengo
y a tu hermosura por madre.
Abrir el amoroso labio,
honrare tu si dichoso,
no hagas a mi fe agravio
que más quiero ser tu esposo
que, no siéndolo, ser sabio.

In this, he is no longer a rebel. His father's insistence on
bushing him in Giloto's clothes offender his pride, but respect
prevails:

GILOTO:  ¿Gil de escolar?  Oh, qué bien!
OCIÓN (aparte):  Que esto mi padre permítá!
Su respeto me acobarde.
I.ix. p.1646b.
This is underlined at the end of the scene:

OTÓN (aparte): ¿Posible es, tiempo tirano,
que me has de afrentar así?
Hijo tuyo soy, señor; (Alto)
hez de mi cuanto quisiere.

GRIMALDO: ¿Mi hijo? Mientes! Tú eres
hijo de algún vil pastor.

OTÓN: Madre, adiós.

GRIMALDO: Ven.

COTÁVIA: Chedecerte oije.

OTÓN: Ventura te dé pico, hijo,
que el saber poco, te basta.


COTÁVIA: Ventura te dé pico, hijo,
que el saber poco, te basta.

I.ix. p.1647a.

Otón's attitude is one of not resisting evil. His submission to parental authority marks the abandonment of pride, for it means his social degradation.

but, at this low point of his fortunes, socially, his moral qualities come out more strongly. In a poetic soliloquy, he turns to nature for instruction:

[OTÓN:] Ya que letras no entienda,
en que la gente funda sus caudales,
sublima ingenios y establece grados,
en vosotros aprenda
mi dicha, pues esos libros naturales,
por el Abril curioso encuadernados:
darán a mis cuidados,
por fin de mis congojas,
las aves, plumas; vuestros ramos, hojas.


He wishes to find ventura, but does not know how he is to set about doing so:

[OTÓN:] Mi madre me aconseja
que busque mi ignorancia a la ventura;
pero ni sé quién es ni adónde mora.
Decidme de ella ahora,
que es tormento dejarlo
el ser a un tiempo y desdichado.


The entrance of Clemencia is the first of a series of situations assigned to establish whether Otón deserves ventura or not. He does not hesitate to help Clemencia, and he is not motivated by the prospect of
gain:

OTÓN: No me obliga el interés:
noble soy y soy certés,
aunque a las letras odioso.
I.xvi. p.1651b.

In the same speech, he shows an understanding of Grimaldo's character:

[OTÓN:] Una granja está aquí cerca
de un padre, que por castigo
de que el estudio no siga,
que ni se hereda ni merca,
en este traje me ha puesto.
Tiene condición terrible,
y si os ve, será posible
que os maltrate, descompuesto,
sospechando si allá os llevo
lo que los años prolijos
culpan en los mozos hijos.
I.xvi. p.1651b.

His forecast, as we see at the beginning of the next act, is quite accurate (II.i). But Otón's intention and actions were noble enough, and for this he and Grimaldo are rewarded. Otón is made captain and Grimaldo given lands (II.v).

War brings out other qualities in Otón. His father had advised him in II.vii to be brave:

[GRIMALDO:] No por esto te aconsejo
que del valor, que es espejo
para el noble y valeroso,
apartes tu juventud;
que si en él la dicha manda,
muchos más puede cuando anda
al lado de la virtud.
Dios una y otra te dé
para que no degenes
en la ocasión de quien eres.
II.vii. p.1659b.

Significantly, although Grimaldo presumably is thinking primarily about colour, the word he uses is "virtud", which has much wider connotations. Otón, like a good son, promises not to forget this advice:

OTÓN: Adiós, señora;
padre, adiós. Vaestros consejos
serán desde hoy mis espejos
en que me mire cada hora.
The encounter with Enrique does not tell us very much about Oton's valour, but it does illustrate his virtue. Oton twice resists temptation. He refuses to go over to Enrique's side:

CONDE: Si del Duque eres soldado, déjale y mi campo sigue, que yo capitan te haré.

OTÓN: A la lealtad que heredó no hay interés que la oblige, que en mi vida fui traidor.

II.xii. p.1663a-b.

e refuses to accept a bribe:

CONDE: La espada he perdido y en un brazo me has herido: mostrado has bien tu valor.

OTÓN: Disparate es que con el oro pruebes mi lealtad. Allá has de ir preso o quedar sin vida aquí.

II.xii. p.1663b.

hen Enrique is forced to accept his fate, Oton behaves generously and nobly. By attributing the fortunes of war to hazard and chance, he avoids implying that Enrique is a poor soldier, thus mitigating the latter's humiliation. He offers Enrique a bandage for his wound, and his own horse to ride on:

CONDE: ¿Eres noble?

OTÓN: Y caballero.

OTÓN: ¡Cielos! Después de la gloria de tan feliz victoria, tal azar! Tu prisionero soy; haz, soldado famoso, de mí lo que más gustares.

Todo es encuentros y azares la guerra: sufre, animoso. Ata a la herida este licenzo y esta banda aplica al brazo; que cortés rendirte trazo, ya que en las armas te venzo. Y en ese caballo mío sube, que en el de éste iré.

II.xii. p.1663b.
Gilote, of course, is deprived of his horse for having been a coward! Enrique is forced to recognise Otón's noble qualities:

**CONDE:**
Tu noble y hidalgo trato,
aunque enemigo, me obliga
a que envidioso te siga.

**Il.xii. p.1663b.**

In the presence of the Duke, Otón modestly disclaims any credit for his exploit (and rightly so!). But he gives a further indication of his nobility when he pleads for clemency for Enrique:

**OTÓN:**
Solo ante te suplico
que mires que eres Gonzaga,
y que el valor resplandezca
en ti más que la venganza.
En tu poder está el Conde;
el que es generoso paga
agravios con beneficios;
perdóname si te agravís.

**Il.xv. p.1666a.**

The Duke recognises Otón's nobility and confers the title of Count on him. Moral and social nobility are now made to coincide:

**DUQUE:**
A vuestras cortas razones
y a vuestras hazañas largas,
con largos premios promete
juntar cortas alabanzas.
Mi honor os debo dos veces:
vencido habéis otras tantas
a Enrique y restituido
a su ser mi antigua fama.
Luego me deais un Conde preso,
bien será que Conde os haga.
Conde sois de Val Hermoso.

**Il.xv. p.1666a.**

The tables are now turned, and when Césaro and Rosela congratulate Otón, the latter gives them an object lesson in good manners (II.xv. p.1667a-b). The parallelism between this scene and I.vi-vii underlines the contrast Tirso is seeking to make between Otón and Césaro.

Finally, even at the height of his fortune, Otón retains his respect for authority and his generosity. In the penultimate scene (III.xxxi) he does not offer resistance when the Duke orders his arrest, and when Césaro is at his mercy, he rewards good for evil. Rosela, too,
gets her count, and one supposes that she is satisfied:

DUQUE: Otón, pues Césaro quiso daros muerte, ejecutáis en él o haced vuestro gusto.

CÉSARO (aparte): ¡Cielos! esto me faltaba.

OTÓN: Doyle, en fe de esa licencia, dos villas, porque así paga a las letras envidiosas, cuando es noble, la ignorancia.

CÉSARO: Disculparme es ofenderte. No hay en el mundo venganza como es el dar bien por mal, que afrenta y obliga.

OTÓN: Basta. A Raúl, porque cumpla de ser Condessa las ansias que ha tanto la traen inquieta, con el Conde he de casalla de Florel.

III.xx. p.165b.

The above examination of Otón's character suggests that, as in the case of Césaro, there is a connexion between his character and his fate. The latter, in other words, depends on the former. Support for this view can also be found in the partial frustration of the hopes of Criselio and Enrique. Both are contenders for Clemencia's hand, but neither is successful. Criselio is egoistic and self-seeking. He does not have scruples about lying to Clemencia about Enrique. Not only does he slander the latter, but he also plans to abduct Clemencia. He does this not merely because he loves her, but because he is interested in his father's successor. He seems to be for him only an instrument for attaining his own ends, and when, at the end, he says:

Pues mis celos no me matan;
poco a Clemencia he querido.

III.xx. p.184b.

no can sense Tirso's double-edged irony here.

Enrique is not a very positive character. At first, he seems a other wishy-washy romantic person. He is madly in love with a woman he has never seen and bewails his loss of her:

CONDOS: No mudes

impedirme de esa suerte
He listens to Clemencia's denunciation of him without once trying to contradict her. He only protests at the end: can this be out of excessively good manners? Hartzenbusch found it curious. When taken prisoner by Otón, he tries to bribe the latter to let him go. But what offends us is his preparedness to ambush and kill the man who had behaved so generously towards him. To plead jealousy as an excuse is hardly enough. In trying to assassinate Otón treacherously, he associates himself not only physically but morally with the pusillanimous, envious and cowardly Césaro. It is no surprise that he, like Criselio, loses Clemencia.

Now, this link between character and event is important if we want to see the play as more than a jumble of haphazard events. Otón has ventura precisely because he is morally superior to his rivals. But the link between his moral virtues and his good fortune is not a direct one. His acceptance of Christian morality often means that he cannot aggressively claim his rights or his desert. He accepts the degradation his father imposes on him; his generous treatment of Enrique does not ensure him the latter's undying friendship. But this is the cross the Christian must bear, and the view of the world implied is a pessimistic one.

Within the play itself, however, this view is turned to comic effect. As Hartzenbusch has noted: "El bien de Otón nace de la persecución que sufre, del mal que le quieren hacer" (p.384). The religious overtones are clear enough in this situation to need no stressing. Otón's good fortune reflects divine justice. His virtues earn him heaven's favour, and it is surely God who confers ventura.
on him. He is fortunate not because he is ignorant or poor, but because he is good. Virtue is the basis of all true nobility.

The structure of the play becomes rather easier to understand now. The absence of direct causal links in the plot-structure seems to be deliberate. It is a reflection of part of the philosophy which underlies the play, namely that there is always an element of the unpredictable in life. One cannot cope with this with mere book-learning or wealth. Césaro, who expects life to be predictable, who takes for granted the element of causality in life, is frustrated. What is needed is prudencia, and, in this case, it comprises both a flexible approach to life, an ability to cope with an unexpected situation as well as a certain amount of ventura. This structure is an implicit humorous comment on the dramatic principle of causality with its underlying philosophical assumptions.

Ventura, however, is not to be equated here with mere chance. The proverb explicitly refers to ventura given by God. It is only by observing the teaching of religion that one can make oneself worthy of this God-given ventura. There is, therefore, a sort of causality established in the play, but it is one which is established by God. The various deus ex machina devices which ensure Otón's triumph must be seen as precisely and literally that: the intervention of God in human affairs in order to ensure that justice is done. This is the same principle as operates in the structure of La prudencia en la mujer, (which, as Miss Kennedy has shown, is roughly contemporaneous with Ventrura te dé ... ) and in Don Quijote.8

The overall structural pattern of the action is thus simple, and resembles that of el condenado por desconfiado. It consists of two intersecting trajectories (which represent the graphs of the careers
of Oton and Césaro) which move in inverse directions one to the other. Césaro descends from the height of success to the final humiliation of being pardoned and rewarded by the man he despised and tried to kill. Oton, on the other hand, rises from his early humiliation to triumphant exaltation and success.

This pattern draws our attention to a few interesting points, which I shall touch on only very briefly here. Césaro's fall conforms to the pattern which we normally associate with that of the tragic hero. It is thus not the change from happiness to unhappiness in itself which determines the tragic effect, for Césaro's fall is not tragic. Nor is it, surely, the existence of a tragic flaw: Césaro's sin is hubris; this is the cause of his fall. But it arouses neither fear nor pity. Césaro's humiliation, we feel, is deserved. A "tragic" pattern is used to ridicule Césaro.

The reverse of the situation is found in Oton's fortunes. His progression from unhappiness to happiness is not wholly comic. Again, we feel his success is deserved; it is his reward for virtue. And this is a serious enough point. It is, therefore, not primarily in the individual careers of these two characters that the comedy lies.

The comic effect of the play as a whole arises out of the interplay of these two careers, and the way in which the situations created by the clashes of the two trajectories are engineered in order to illustrate the counter-productive nature of the efforts of both Césaro and Oton. Césaro is made to frustrate himself, while Oton, almost in spite of himself, ensures his success. This is so because a "normal" causality is deliberately flouted, or, so to speak, short-circuited in the play. Causes do not produce the expected effects.

The inevitable effect of this is the irony which pervades the whole play and which is a characteristic feature of Tirso's dramatic
art (comic as well as tragic). The full irony of the play is, of course, to be seen most clearly on the second viewing (or reading), when the audience knows from the start what the final fates of Césaro and Otón are to be. Then it is that one appreciates the irony in lines such as these:

CÉSARO: Yo sé, Nonela querida, lo que basta a ennobecer mi linaje, sangre y suer.
I,vi, p.1643b.

Even so, the almost inevitable conclusion that one draws, viz., that pride must go before a fall, helps to create an ironical atmosphere even for the new spectator. This is reinforced by the title of the play, which itself invites the audience to complete the refrain (que el saber poco te basta). It implies that, in the play, the person who "sabe poco" will triumph. And the irony does not end here: Otón, notwithstanding all his "ignorance", knows more than Césaro does about what is needed in order to acquire nobility.

A closer view of some aspects of the play's structure is now possible. An overall unity is secured by various means. Perhaps the most obvious is the background events of the war: this struggle reflects the one which goes on simultaneously within the social structure and which provides the main action of the play. Out of this background grows a tenuous story which helps to move the action along. Césaro's attempt to end the war by means of arbitration and compromise ends in failure. This leads to a resumption of hostilities which are ended by Otón's capture of Enrique (end of II). Finally, the question of the Duke's succession is solved.

On this bare, tenuous framework of a story, which remains in the background, Tirso builds a superstructure of events in which the motivations of the main characters are examined. What is really
Important here is what has been referred to by H. Brooks as the "harmonic structure", and which is brought to the fore by the absence of a strong causal structure. The result is that the attention of the spectator or reader is drawn to the comparisons and contrasts which Tirso makes between the bases of the actions of the various important characters. This interconnexion of motifs will be clear in the points I shall now touch on.

Romantic love is not given much attention in this play, even though it is at the core of so much Renaissance comedy. While some other element of romance—battles, "adventure", and, of course, "coincidences"—are retained in Ventura te dé ..., it is not wholly within the traditional framework of seventeenth century comedy. That is because, in a sense, it is a more "serious" play. But for Otón's Ventura to be complete, he needs a wife, and love, lost in the first act, comes back into the play in the final act. (This, of course, helps to secure structural unity.)

The importance of love in the perfection of a man's character is often stressed. It is a point Tirso makes, as we shall see, in El malandrín. The theme recurs at the beginning of the third act of Ventura te dé ..., when Clavella and Clemencia are discussing the latter's love for Enrique:

[CLAVELA:] Si rico fue aborrecido,
no sé cómo pueda ser
cuando tan pobre, querido.

CLEMENTIA:
Nazañas son del poder,
a Dios siempre parecido.
Añadir al oro, prima,
estables cuando por sí
el mundo tanto le estima,
no es mucho; ni que a un rubi
o un diamante que sublima
hasta el sol su resplandor,
guarnece al oro opulento
y realce su labor;
pues halla, en fin, fundamento
el trabajo en su valor.
Mas de una materia baja
hacer una pieza noble,
un escritorio, una caja, una imagen, que de un roble, al oro puro aventaja, ésa es majestad guardada a Dios sólo y al poder, que con grandeza elevada, se autorizan con dar amor y valor a lo que es nada.into mismo hacer procura mi amor, pues porque a luz salga su poder y mi hermosura, busca un marido que valga, prima, no más que la hechura.

III.i. p. 1668a-b.

The power of love is likened to that of God. But if it is so great, it ought to be bestowed on a worthy object. While the subject of the conversation is Enrique, it could also easily be Otón or Césaro. In one sense or another, all are striving towards such a transformation.

In III.i, Rosela, regretting her earlier haughtiness, asks Clemencia to be her tercera. There is more than a hint of opportunism here. Seeing that Césaro is no nearer to getting her a Count for a husband, she would return to Otón, now a Count, pressing the claims of love.

But if love's function in this play is to elevate the person on whom it is bestowed, Rosela's alleged love (which is really personal ambition rather than a reflection of divine love) is incapable of doing this. In III.iii, Clemencia begins her plea for Rosela. Her opening words sound the thematic note of the play:

Clemencia: Conde, uno muestra ser Dios amor con vos, que se hospeda en el más rústico pecho como en el alma más rica?

III.iii. p. 1669b.

He means it in one sense, but Otón interprets it in another: for him, he, not Rosela, is the "rústico pecho", and Clemencia, not he, the "alma más rica".

As his speech reveals, he owes much to Clemencia. She disclaims any responsibility, but her words themselves bring out the symbolic
value of her name. She has been the unconscious divine instrument of Ctón's success:

CLEMENCIA: Vos, ¿qué me debéis a mí?

CTÓN: Todo el ser que me ha ilustrado:
la privanza a que tuí;
el haberme acreditado,
ingaudiendo que yo venía
al Conde Enrique; el sacarme
de una granja al cargo honoroso
con que he venido a ilustrarme
y el haberme hecho dichoso:
que es lo más que podéis darme.

CLEMENCIA: La dicha que os con exceso
es deuda al Cielo debida:
yo no tengo parte en eso.
Fingí de Enrique la huida;
mas trayéndole vos præco
bien habéis beneficiado
lo que dije en profecía;
el título que os ha dado
mi padre a intercesión mía,
vuestro esfuerzo le ha ganado.
antes os soy tan deudora.
que si es la paga mejor
la que el amor atesora,
os he de hacer acreedor
de un alma, ctón, que os adora.
III.iii. p.1670a.

He will complete his venture:

CTÓN: ¿qué espero?
Imaginación, sí os digo;
imitar-Pastones quiero.
¡Válgame Dios! ¡si madama,
pasa ensalzar mi ventura
de todo punto, me una?
III.iv. p.1670b.

She is his venture:

[CTÓN:] Sal, confusión oscura
pues ánimo me asesura
el ser Clemencia mujer,
y lo que es más mi ventura.
III.iv. p.1671a.

Ctón's almost incredulous joy in III.iv helps Tirso to underline deliberately the social inequality of the marriage. Ctón stresses that it is not unnatural, although he looks at it as a love between a man and a woman in which social attributes are of secondary importance:
[OTÓN:] Has ¿no es Clemencia mujer?
¿Qué imposibles no ha allanado
del amor el real decoro?
Dicha, de mi parte os hullo;
hombre soy, no la enamoro
como a la aciria el caballo
o como a Pacife el toro.  
III. v. p. 1671a.

But we are not allowed to forget the ennobling power of love.

The Duke wishes to use Clemencia in order to elevate someone, his
sentiment coinciding with those expressed earlier by Clemencia
herself to Clavela:

DUQUE: ¿Y no es eso en ansi, concluyo
con que ya tengo escogido,
mi Clemencia, un noble esposo,
no de suerte poderoso
que a título de marido
siendo hay soberbio, añada
el título de señor,
sino a quien siendo menor
que tú, la vida privada
y estando por ti mejore,
a tu gusto se sujete,
por señora te respete
y por esposa te adore.
III.v. p.1671b.

The Duke intends to marry her to Criselio, of course, but the dramatic
irony at work in this play will make his words apply to Otón.

Clemencia is unwilling to marry Criselio:

CLEMENTIA: Antes por ser tan cercano
ni le admito ni apetezco;
que bodas con parentesco
no se logran.
III.v. p.1672a.

But the Duke insists:

Este es mi intento.
Sobre sangre, casamiento,
dicen que es sobre azul, oro.
III.v. p.1672a.

Ironically, to add "azul" to "oro" is not what love is supposed to do
in this play. Ironically again, Clemencia says she will marry anyone
but Criselio:
Como ese hombre no me des casame con quien quierieres.

 Ejecutaré mi gusto
 o probarás mi rigor;
 mas no sufriría mi amor
 que la care a mi disgusto.
 Qué grande felicidad
 fuera si un padre encendrara
 como en el tallo y la cara,
 en el alma y voluntad
 su semejanza! Vas Dios
 cria el alma y la da el ser,
 y así es milagro el hacer
 una voluntad de dos.

 III.v. p.1672b.

The Duke's angry reaction re-introduces the opening motif of the play: again a father is attempting to abuse his authority, and again a child is led to rebel.

The re-appearance of this motif signals, on one hand, that the play has come full circle: structural unity is strengthened. On the other, it leads to Césaro's final and desperate attempt to halt Otón in his career upwards. The Duke has a sense of paternal responsibility and loves his daughter, and asks Césaro for advice.

Now the threat of a reversal of Otón's fortunes appears:

Si probases
 lo que acabas de afirmar,
 yo la dicha trocaría
 de Otón, de suerte que hiciese
 que envidiosos no tuviese.

 III.vi. p.1673a.

Césaro foresees revenge. But when the Duke seems to have proved to himself that Otón loves Clemencia (and ironically, Césaro's lie turns out to be true), Césaro is unable to secure Otón's death. The Duke's sense of justice does not allow it:

Bien probaste tu intención.
 este es de Clemencia amante;
 indicio he visto bastante
 en su necia turbación.
 ¿qué haremos?

Darle la muerte,
 que el crimen de deslealtad
 es de lesa majestad.
DUQUE: No pagaré de esa muerte bien lo mucho que le debo.
Ya no pretendo casarle con tu hermana, mas sacarle
de Mantua.

He understands that love is blind and has blinded his daughter.

Otón is not at fault:

DUQUE: ¿No dices que amor es ciego?
Pues si es ciego quien le lleva,
y le da mi hija ocasión,
cualquier yerro le disculpa;
Clemencia tiene la culpa.
Riendo de Mantua a Otón
y enviándole al gobierno del despojado Marqués,
podrá Criselio después
no malograr su amor tierno;
con este título honesto
los inconvenientes quise.

CÉSARO: Lo que le amo manifesté.

DUQUE: ¿Y quién es su dono? 

III.viii. p.1675a.

Césaro is again frustrated:

CÉSARO (aparte): Mi envidia en vano porfía a este idiota derribar.
DUQUE: Cruel eres para juez.

CÉSARO (aparte): Gobernador Otón ya?
CÉSARO (aparte): ¿Mas que su Estado le da si le persigue otra vez?
III.viii. p. 1675a-b.

The final question is, of course, to be answered in the affirmative,
for Césaro is again to try to foil Otón by attempting to kill him.

Césaro's last try and the Duke's insistence on marrying Clemencia to Criselio bring matters to a head. But Otón's ventura cannot be changed simply by the will of the Duke, Césaro, or anybody else. Otón gets the letter the Duke intended for Criselio. This is the final honour and Otón can claim that he is not unworthy to be Clemencia's husband and the Duke's successor:

[OTÓN:] De sangre ilustre desciendo:
los Grimaldos y Freyosos,
en Italia generosos,
me dan el ser que pretendo.
No perderá calidad
conmigo su ducal casa.
III.xii. p.1678b.

As we see in III.xiii, love has even made Otón intelligent enough
to be impatient with the almost illiterate Gilote:

OTÓN: leer!

GILOTE: Y como que sé.

OTÓN: ¡lue es lee aquí!

GILOTE: ¿a, u, e, que?

Por q comenzó, ¿qué esperas?
Bel lace agüero, por Dios.

OTÓN: vuelta, torpe.

GILOTE: Lee, ingenioso.
III.xiii. p.1679b.

The opening motifs, now inverted, continue to recur: it is a fine
stroke of irony which leads Tirso to inform the uneducated Otón of
his highest ventura by means of letters! (The irony becomes more
complex when we consider that this "erudite" form of communication is
not fool-proof - even though the mistake ensures that the honours go
to the really deserving person.) Clemencia is forced into rebellion,
but she is not passive as was Otón. Rosela, ironically, hands
Clemencia's letter to the Count (for she, of course, thinks of Otón
as a "Count" rather than as "Otón" simply).

The ending marks Otón's supreme elevation. He now occupies the
second position in the social hierarchy, as successor to the Duke, and
has found his identity. The significance of the opening motif is now
apparent: Otón was unable to conjugate "sum, es, fui" because he had
not found his identity. At the end of the play, he has. And Gilote,
of course, in his first steps towards literacy and self-knowledge, seems
to discover that Otón's cloak may not have solved his marital problems
in the way he hoped it would. After all, as the saying goes: "l'habit
ne fait pas le moine!"

Little need be said concerning the other characters. Tirso's
method of characterisation in this play is by now evident: it is to present us with a series of vignettes designed to illustrate various facets of a person's character. The same method is employed in *la prudencia en la mujer*. This method is used when characterisation (as opposed to action) is essential to the theme of the play.

*Ventura te dé ...* is a good example of the workings of poetic justice (allied not to physical but to moral causality) in the fates of the characters in a play.

The play illustrates different forms of goodness and achievement in the various characters. Thus the contrast between Ctón and Césaro is only one aspect of the larger thematic assessment of the values on which nobility is to be based. This also explains why Criséllo is also contrasted with Ctón and Césaro. He, rather than Ctón, is the man of action, the soldier. But morally he is inferior to Ctón.

Likewise, the three fathers in the play serve as foils one to another. It is interesting to note that none of them is "perfect": Tirso, as I have already noted, does not always present the elders of society in a favourable light. Quite often they are seen to constitute the dead wood, so to speak, of society, the part that needs to be pruned. In them are to be found the prejudices and the inertia of society. The three fathers in this comedy meet with varying degrees of frustration. Grimaldo and the Duke are contrasted in order to explore the father-child relationship, how its nature may be affected by external, social pressures. Honorato, as Hartzenbusch observed, is not necessary to the plot, but he does help to enrich the theme. From the point of view of social honour, he is a parasite, living off the honour of his son: in this sense he is "honoured" - and proud of being so. But his encounter with Grimaldo only serves to reveal him
as an offensive, insulting old man, lacking in civility.

There is a contrast, too, between Clemencia and Nosela. The latter is little more than an egoistic opportunist. Clemencia's attitude is more altruistic. Her fate is not, I think, to be seen as being dishonoured, as Hartzenbusch was tempted to see it: rather it marks the intervention of Providence to ensure that the nobility which she can confer on the man she marries goes to the right person.

At the same time, it is her "punishment" for rebelling against her father. The theme of the play explains the non-romantic treatment of love here: justice is what is important.

Perhaps a brief comment on Octavia is apt. Da. Blanca draws our attention to her as one of the rare mothers on the Golden Age stage. She is understanding and consoles her son. She stands up for Otón against Grimaldo, risking his displeasure, for maternal love is deep and unselfish. The comparison with Ma. de Molina is inevitable. Octavia's presence in Ventura te dá... would suggest a chronological proximity to La prudencia en la mujer.

A few brief remarks on style must suffice. The religious overtones of the language in this comedy are obvious. The frequent references to classical myths and history are in perfect harmony with the atmosphere of learning in which Otón has to struggle. What is amusing is that once his luck has turned, Otón himself finds that classical and scholastic allusions come easily to his lips. He describes Clemencia thus:

Clemencia a Enrique desprecia
y con ella no fue casta
Penélope ni Lucrecia.
III.iv. p.1671a.

He is aware of carrying on a formal debate within himself:

- OTÓN: Ingenio siempre ignorante,
  íde cuándo acá discurrís,
conjeturais y argúis,
si soy tan torpe estudiante?
Dejad tanta consecuencia,
y ya que hacerlas queréis,
probad que os desvanecís
y que no me habla Clemencía.

He even uses culto terminology:

OTÓN:      Esta noche gozo a un sol.
GILOTE:    ¿Sol de noche? No sé adónde
            le haya.

There is no doubt that Otón need no longer envy more learned men.
learning, too, like nobility, has been added unto him.

To conclude, the main points I have been trying to establish may
be summed up thus. The main theme of the play is to determine the
true basis of nobility: we have, therefore, a comedy with a thesis.
Tirso argues that moral virtue is the true form of nobility, and this
is demonstrated by the triumph of Otón. The relative failure of
others is an implicit refutation of the claims of wealth, birth
and learning to be the criteria by which nobility is to be established.
This thesis explains the structure of the play.

If it is accepted that the structure of a work of art reflects
the way of seeing the world contained in that particular work, the
rejection of a structure based on mechanical causality in Ventura
de dá... is significant. Causality, of course, presupposes the
existence of an "ordered world". At first sight, the structure of
this comedy would seem to imply just the contrary and it can thus
be seen as a witty comment on the more "orthodox" structure based on
causality. This implication is, I suggest, deliberate, in order to
raise the question of how the world is ordered. It is by the way in
which this question is answered that man's attitude to life is to be
determined. One of the interesting implications of the structure of
the work concerns the extent to which contingency planning can be taken.
In other words, to what extent are events predictable? As is well known, this problem is explored by Calderón in such plays as

La vida en sueño and Ese y Narciso. In these, as in Tirso's comedy, imperfect knowledge breeds pride and error. Attempts to impose one's own order on events fail to take into account all pertinent factors. The fact is that all these factors cannot be foreseen: there is an element of the unpredictable, the "unfixed" in the universe: it is the point in human affairs where only prudencia is of any help, and this is, at bottom, the real knowledge, based on an awareness of moral values and the teachings of religion. The practical implications of this view for the structuring of society are important. In the context of ideas prevalent in the seventeenth century, they are an attempt to make the social order match the Christian one and, ipso facto, revolutionary and subversive.