

**THE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW
IN THE *COMEDIA***

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ABSTRACT

‘The Positive Image of the Jew in the *Comedia*’ by Andrew Herskovits

University College London, PhD Thesis

I will argue in this thesis that in the *comedia* the Jew was often but covertly portrayed with sympathy. In the Introduction some complex terms of reference, such as ‘Jew’, will be clarified. Chapter 1 describes the development, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, of the *converso* perspective, characterized by a critical attitude to the ruling ideology, based on individualism, heterodoxy and double language. This chapter also describes how the ideas of Christian Humanism were incorporated into the already existing, if limited, *converso* perspective to form part of the more ample intellectual equipment of Golden-Age dramatists. Chapter 2 deals with a form of subversive irony, as ^{an} expression of the *converso* perspective, which appears first in the double language of *La Celestina*; this is later enriched by incorporating Erasmian *dissimulatio*, theorized as ‘engañar con la verdad’ in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* and put in practice in Lope’s *comedias*. It is this technique that will facilitate the presentation, albeit covertly, of a positive image of the Jew. Chapter 3 contains the theory of transposition as a form of *engaño* in *comedias de honra* and the first appearance in these *comedias* of the positive image of the Jew. Chapter 4 traces the transposition of the ‘bad’ *converso* into the ‘good’ biblical Jew. Chapter 5 presents the positive image of the Jew created by mocking his stereotypical negative image. The last chapter contains a discussion of six *comedias* by Lope that present positive images of the Jew in their *converso* protagonists; as some of these characters in many ways resemble Lope, for example in their problems with *limpieza de sangre*, this chapter begins with a discussion of Lope’s origin. In all the foregoing I have tried to demonstrate that, contrary to general critical opinion, the Jew in the *comedia* was often delineated with sympathy.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	i
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
The Concept of the Jew	1
The Jewish Problem	8
Spanish Racism	14
The <i>Converso</i> Perspective	17
The Positive Image of the Jew	19
Plan	20
1 THE <i>CONVERSO</i> PERSPECTIVE AND CHRISTIAN HUMANISM	23
1.1 Thirteenth Century: Maimonidean Rationalism	23
1.2 Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries: First Spanish Humanism	25
1.3 Sixteenth Century: Alumbradism and Erasmism	35
1.4 Seventeenth Century: Humanism in the <i>Comedia</i>	43
2 DOUBLE LANGUAGE IN THE <i>COMEDIA</i>	47
2.1 The Double Language of the <i>Converso</i> in <i>La Celestina</i>	48
2.2 Erasmian <i>Dissimulatio</i>	52
2.3 'Engañar con la verdad'	58
2.3.1 The Aim of Drama according to the <i>Poetics</i> and the <i>Arte Nuevo</i>	61
2.3.2 The Action and Language of Drama in the <i>Poetics</i> and the <i>Arte Nuevo</i>	64
3 THE WOMAN AND THE IMAGE OF THE JEW	75
3.1 The Transposition <i>Limpieza/Honra</i>	78
3.2 The Transposition Jew/Woman	85
3.2.1 The Bases of the Transposition Jew/Woman	86
3.2.2 The Functioning of the Transposition Jew/Woman	93
3.2.3 The Passive Woman as Image of the Real Jew	94
3.2.4 The Active Woman as Image of the Ideal Jew	99
3.3 The Consciousness of Transposition	101

4	THE IMAGE OF THE JEW IN BIBLICAL <i>COMEDIAS</i>	108
4.1	David and the Transposition of the <i>Converso</i>	113
4.1.1	<i>El arpa de David</i>	115
4.1.2	<i>La venganza de Tamar</i>	118
4.1.3	<i>Los cabellos de Absalón</i>	120
4.1.4	<i>David perseguido y montes de Gelboé</i>	123
4.1.5	<i>Las lágrimas de David</i>	127
4.2	Ester, the Saint of the <i>Conversos</i>	131
4.2.1	<i>La hermosa Ester</i>	132
4.2.2	<i>Amán y Mardoqueo</i>	135
4.2.3	Transpositions in <i>La hermosa Ester</i> and <i>Amán y Mardoqueo</i>	145
5	THE SUBVERSION OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW	149
5.1	<i>El retablo de las maravillas</i>	153
5.1.1	The Stupidity of Racial Prejudices	155
5.1.2	The Villagers as Representatives of the Whole of Society	157
5.1.3	The Mockery of the Negative Image of the Jew	159
5.2	<i>El árbol del mejor fruto</i>	161
5.2.1	Mingo as the Comical Image of the Inquisition	165
5.2.2	Judas: the Jew as Innocent Victim	171
5.2.3	The Ridiculing of the Negative Image of the Jew	177
5.3	<i>Raquel</i> , the Jewess of Toledo	184
5.3.1	<i>Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo</i>	184
5.3.2	<i>La desgraciada Raquel</i>	194
5.4	<i>El niño inocente de La Guardia</i>	197
5.4.1	The Two Actions of the Play	202
5.4.2	The Dramatic Inversions	207
5.4.3	The Subversion of the Negative Image of the Jew	210
6	THE <i>CONVERSO</i> AND THE IMAGE OF THE JEW	220
6.1	Lope, a <i>Converso</i> ?	223
6.2	Six <i>Converso Comedias</i> of Lope	236
6.2.1	<i>La villana de Getafe</i>	236
6.2.2	<i>El galán de La Membrilla</i>	242
6.2.3	<i>El premio del bien hablar</i>	248
6.2.4	<i>El galán escarmentado</i>	253
6.2.5	<i>El Brasil restituido</i>	262
6.2.6	<i>La pobreza estimada</i>	270
	CONCLUSION	284
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	288
	INDEX	305

FOREWORD

Most Hispanists describe Spanish Golden-Age society as anti-Semitic, offering, for example, *El niño inocente de La Guardia* as confirmation that even great writers like Lope de Vega supported the marginalization of the descendants of *judeo-conversos*. This play was painful to read, but there was something puzzling in it that made me read it again. This time I found myself amused by parts that horrified me before; I began to suspect that, while on an explicit level the play was anti-Semitic, on an implicit level the negative image of some Jews could be seen as positive and the positive image of some Christians could correspondingly be seen as negative. This led me to study the dramatic production of the Golden Age to discover if *El niño inocente de La Guardia* was an exception. Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that this *comedia* was not exceptional in presenting, albeit covertly, a positive image of the Jew; this is surprising because it was produced in the midst of a society that encouraged intolerance. In this thesis I propose to trace the genesis and the development of this positive image.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AUT	<i>Diccionario de Autoridades</i> , in <i>Nuevo Tesoro Lexicográfico de la Lengua Española</i> , ed. by Real Academia Española < http://buscon.rae.es/ntlle/SrvltGUILoginNtlle > [accessed 10 March 2003]
BAE	<i>Biblioteca de Autores Españoles</i> (Madrid: Rivadeneyera, 1850-1872 – Atlas, 1946-56)
COV	Covarrubias Orozco, Sebastián de, <i>Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española</i> , ed. by Felipe C.R. Maldonado (Madrid: Castalia, 1995)
DRAE	<i>Diccionario de la Real Academia Española</i> , 21st edn (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1992)
RAE	<i>Obras de Lope de Vega</i> , ed. by Emilio Cotarelo y Mori (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1916-30)

INTRODUCTION

My aim in this thesis is to demonstrate that the image of the Jew in the *comedia* is more open to a positive interpretation than has previously been acknowledged by most critics. This positive presentation of the Jew by some Golden-Age dramatists may be related to their tendency to be critical of the ruling anti-Jewish ideology of their time and having a special way of looking at life which some critics have associated with descendants of *judeo-conversos*; it may also be related to some dramatists being of *judeo-converso* origin (Fernando de Rojas, Felipe Godínez, Miguel de Barrios and Antonio Enríquez Gómez, and perhaps also Miguel de Cervantes and Lope de Vega). As some of the terms of reference are ambiguous, such as 'Jew', 'racism' and so on, I will try and throw some light on them in this introduction.

THE CONCEPT OF THE JEW

What does the term 'Jew' signify in the Spanish Golden Age? As after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain there were officially no Jews in the Peninsula, 'Jew' may be thought to refer only to the period before 1492. While I will be writing about Jews in

biblical and historical *comedias*, my principal objective will be the contemporary ‘Jew’ in some plays in which the plot is set in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even so, a Jew in the Spanish Golden Age appears to be a paradox, as in this period there were no Jews in Spain, only the descendants of converted Jews. Would it therefore not have been more accurate to entitle this thesis ‘The Positive Image of the *Judeo-Converso*’? The problem is complex. Dealing with the Jew in the *comedia* one could adopt a historical methodology and speak of an observant Jew, or a Jew who converts for his beliefs, or a Jew who is converted by force, or a Jew who is converted by fear, by greed, and so on; one could be speaking of the son, the grandson, the great grandson of a converted Jew, who is a sincere Christian, or who is a doubting Christian, or who is a sincere believer in Judaism, or of a great many other possibilities. As will be argued later, most people in the Golden Age did not make these distinctions: a drop of suspected Jewish blood was enough to turn a third-generation Christian into a Jew; a *judeo-converso* and a descendant of a *judeo-converso* were equally identified as Jew. Apart from the above complexities, the term ‘Jew’ does not easily lend itself to definition, because it was not an innocent account of a man’s race or religion. When a third generation descendant of a *judeo-converso* was called a Jew, as happens often in *comedias* and in life, it was not meant to be a description but a valoration of his status.

There had been Jews living in the Peninsula since Roman times, with increasing numbers from the time of the destruction of the Temple and the diaspora. They formed a numerically insignificant part of the population, living mostly in urban *juderías*, theoretically under royal protection, and the term ‘Jew’ meant to be Jewish by race, culture and religion. Neither they nor anyone else disputed their status as Jews. This uncomplicated meaning of ‘Jew’ remained the same until the time of the mass persecutions and conversions at the end of the fourteenth century (1369-91) and their expulsion in 1492. These events created a new class of people, the *judeo-conversos*, and

with its new problems including knowing what the word 'Jew' meant. Most of these Jews did not convert because of their religious convictions and some of them continued secretly in their old religion, or in their old culture and habits. Many married into other *judeo-converso* families and continued living in their old houses in the *juderías*, exercising their old trades and professions. As a result, their conversion was perceived as false. This may not have been the truth, but the common perception by *cristianos viejos* of the *judeo-conversos* was that for all intents and purposes they were Jews, that Jews were by nature untrustworthy and that these new converts were Christians only in name. They were thought not to be true Christians, they were simply Jews. This is the ideological origin of the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, which, according to Julio Caro Baroja, were based on the belief that 'todos los conversos eran falsos cristianos'.¹ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz remarks that 'los estatutos puede decirse que estaban casi únicamente dirigidos contra los que tuviesen alguna ascendencia hebrea, alguna raza, como entonces se decía'.² It is important to note that, as the converted Jew had suddenly lost his religion and gradually his culture, 'Jew', in a sociological context for Christian Spain, was left with a purely racial meaning, defined only by blood. The *judeo-converso* was often perceived and spoken of by the *vulgo* and in some *comedias* as Jew, irrespective of his being a sincere Christian or a crypto-Jew (*judaizante* or *marrano*).

The *cristiano viejo* identification of *judeo-converso* as Jew goes back to the first part of the fifteenth century, when the *judeo-converso* class began to rise in social and economic importance. This resulted in ever-increasing animosity on the part of *cristianos viejos* who felt threatened in their privileges. They began to accuse *judeo-conversos* of being false Christians, of being really Jews. This antagonism may not have had a religious origin, but perhaps, as will be seen, a socio-economic nature. The *judeo-*

¹ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, 3 vols (Madrid: Ediciones Istmo, 1986), II, 287.

² *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1955), p. 55.

conversos may not have been hated for being Jews, but perhaps for being *conversos* who had converted only to make it easier for them to retain their old power and wealth as Jews and, when it was disadvantageous for them to remain Jews, to infiltrate *cristiano viejo* occupations and to compete with them. The massacres of *judeo-conversos* in 1449 in Toledo and Ciudad Real may have been manifestations of this conflict. Francisco Márquez Villanueva supports the view that this conflict was an economic and class conflict, with religion as part of the *cristiano viejo* ideology to justify the persecution of *judeo-conversos*.³ The fact that the theological arguments (mostly reducible to deicide) used to justify the persecution of Jews were the same as those used to persecute *judeo-conversos* suggests that in the mind of preachers and the common people the *judeo-conversos* remained Jews. Caro Baroja states the following in respect of *judeo-conversos* in high positions:

La ira popular se exagera al verlos en tales estados. Los argumentos económicos hubieron de basarse una vez más en argumentos teológicos. Y así como tiempo atrás los religiosos, frailes o clérigos, habían predicado a las multitudes contra los judíos, enfureciéndolas, en el siglo XV empezaron a predicar, y no menos violentamente, contra los conversos.⁴

Writing in general terms, Caro Baroja explains that ‘los judíos no fueron más pasto de ataques que los conversos y [...] lo que se atribuyó a unos se atribuyó también, casi siempre, a otros, cargándoles, sobre las demás tachas la de apóstatas’ (II, 417). Contemporary documents, from the middle of the fifteenth century, also begin to reflect this identification of *judeo-converso* as Jew. Caro Baroja relates that the village of Espinosa de los Monteros: ‘Obtuvo del emperador el privilegio de que no pudieran vivir judíos en ella ni estar de paso más que un día natural. Por judíos debe entenderse confesos’ (II, 309). Caro Baroja also quotes Cardinal Silíceo speaking of *conversos* as ‘de casta de judíos’ and on the same page the historian himself speaks of *conversos* as

³ See ‘El problema de los conversos: Cuatro puntos cardinales’, *Hispania Judaica*, 2 (1975), 51-75 (p. 59).

⁴ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 133. The next three references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

‘de raza judía’ (II, 229). This identification also appears explicitly in *El libro verde*, a best-seller from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, which listed the noble families that had Jewish blood: ‘The *libro verde* continued the negative genealogical-Jewish equation: if a person’s ancestor was a Jew, then that person is a Jew.’⁵ This typically Spanish identification was so strange to foreigners that they failed to understand it. Márquez Villanueva remarks that ‘a Francisco I [de Francia], por ejemplo, no le entraba en la cabeza que un cristiano siguiera contando como *judío* por el hecho de que lo hubieran sido sus padres o abuelos’.⁶ This same identification continues in the seventeenth century:

En 1630, el inquisidor J. Adam de la Parra dirigió al cardenal infante don Fernando [...] un memorial [...] contra las tentativas de enervar los estatutos y abrir un portillo por donde pudieron entrar a los honores que les estaba vedado a los judíos (así, crudamente, llama a todo el que padecía de alguna mancha en su genealogía).⁷

However, perhaps the most convincing testimonies of the identification of *judeo-converso* with Jew may be those provided by two men of the Golden Age. The first is the dominican Agustín Salucio, who in his *Discurso* on the proposed reforms of the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* (1600) says:

Para ser Christiano viejo basta ser hombre baxo y no saberse de sus abuelos, aunque uviesen sido judíos [...] Para tener raça basta un rebisabuelo judío, aunque los otros 15 sean rechristianísimos. Pues en qué seso cabe creer que el rebisnieto a de sacar la lançada del infiel más que la bondad de los 15 calificados. [...] Claro está que en la mayor parte de la gente ordinaria a este olvido se reduce la limpieza.⁸

The second man is Luis de Pinedo (1527-80?), who tells a macabre anecdote about a *judeo-converso*:

⁵ John Beusterien, ‘The *Libro verde*: Blood Fictions from Early Modern Spain’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1997), p. 70.

⁶ ‘Ensayo introductorio: Hablando de conversos con Antonio Domínguez Ortiz’, in Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, p. xii.

⁷ Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, p. 118.

⁸ Quoted by Eugenio Asensio in *El erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines: Conversos, Franciscanos, italianizantes*, Estudios y Ensayos; Serie Chica, 1 (Salamanca: Seminario de Estudios Medievales y Renacentistas-Sociedad Española de Historia del Libro, 2000), pp. 67-68.

El doctor Villalobos [...] entró en una iglesia a oír misa y púsose a rezar en un altar de la Quinta Angustia, y a la sazón que él estaba rezando, pasó por junto a él una señora [...] y como le vio, comienza a decir: -Quítame de cabo este judío que mató a mi marido (porque le había curado de una enfermedad de la que murió). Un mozo llegóse al doctor Villalobos muy deprisa y díjole: - Señor, por amor de Dios, que vays, que está mi padre muy malo, a verle. Respondió el doctor Villalobos: - Hermano, ¿vos no veis que aquélla que va allí va vituperándome y llamándome judío porque maté a su marido? Y, señalando al altar: - Y ésta que está aquí llorando porque dice que le maté su hijo, ¿y queréis vos que vaya ahora a matar a vuestro padre?⁹

This identification is confirmed also by critics. Jaime Contreras y Contreras observes that the *judeo-converso* was 'considerado siempre como judío'. Diane J. Pamp also agrees: 'En verdad [...] siete generaciones de cristianismo no borraban la mancha del antepasado judío'. What happened to the denomination 'Jew', happened to the denomination *converso*, as Américo Castro says: 'Los descendientes de los conversos continuaban siendo llamados "conversos", aunque los en verdad conversos hubiesen sido sus abuelos o bisabuelos'. Stephen Gilman agrees with Castro: 'The word "*converso*" [...] could signify anyone of converted lineage.'¹⁰ The *comedia* is also a witness of this identification. One example may be found in *El galán de La Membrilla* by Lope de Vega: Ramiro is a Christian and a rich *labrador*, but when Félix says that he is 'caballero y labrador, rico, ignorante y celoso', the farmer Tomé, suspecting that he is a *cristiano nuevo*, adds: 'Otra gracia tiene más. [...] Que es un judío.'¹¹

This identification of the *judeo-converso* as Jew was so much taken for granted by the Golden-Age Spaniard that it functioned equally well when inverted. This is the case in *El nuevo palacio del Retiro* (1634) by Calderón. The political dimension of this

⁹ Edward Glaser, 'Referencias antisemitas en la literatura peninsular de la Edad de Oro', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 8 (1954), 39-62 (p. 49).

¹⁰ Jaime Contreras y Contreras, 'Conversos y judaizantes después de 1492: Una relación desigual', in *Los judíos de España: Historia de una diáspora (1492-1992)*, ed. by Henry Méchoulán (Madrid: Trotta - Quinto Centenario - Fundación Amigos de Sefarad, 1993), pp. 60-70 (p. 68); Diane J. Pamp, *Lope de Vega ante el problema de la limpieza de sangre* (Northampton, MA: Smith College, 1968), p. 10; Américo Castro, '*La Celestina*' como contienda literaria (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1965), p. 44, and Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas: The Intellectual and Social Landscape of 'La Celestina'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 69. Also see Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 285.

¹¹ Lope de Vega, *El galán de La Membrilla*, p. 882 (for bibliographical details, see Chapter 6, note 36).

auto sacramental is demonstrated by Alan K.G. Paterson by means of the parallels between the theological and allegorical figures, and the principal political figures of the time, for example, Christ as King Philip IV or Hombre as Olivares, the latter with a policy of tolerance towards *judeo-conversos*, as will be seen in Chapter 1. Considered in this context, 'Judaísmo' served as a symbol of the *judeo-converso*, as the following exchange shows:

REY	¿Qué pretende el Judaísmo?
HOMBRE	En tus reinos asentar sus comercios, con que pueda hoy tratar y contratar con las más remotas islas.
REY	¿Y en mi reino han de dejar su ley?
HOMBRE	No, Señor; en ella han de vivir y han de estar como están en otras partes admitidos. (ll. 983-92) ¹²

Paterson underlines this identification of 'Judaísmo' as *judeo-converso*:

Desde una perspectiva doctrinal, Judaísmo representa a los que están excluidos del misterio eucarístico y privados de los beneficios de la salvación. Desde una perspectiva social, Judaísmo representa la otra comunidad en el Madrid austriaco, la clandestina, a los judaizantes que hacían sus negocios en los patios del Alcázar y solicitaban permiso para ejercer legalmente sus profesiones en Madrid.¹³

If the question is asked: who was a Jew in the Spanish Golden Age, the answer may have to be that a Jew was someone who was identified and valued by his society as a Jew. It did not matter that Julio in *El galán escarmentado* by Lope de Vega was a sincere Christian of Jewish origin, he was called and taken for a Jew. This was also the case during World War II: it did not matter if a German Jew or his father had converted to Christianity or thought himself to be a Christian, he was still considered a Jew. Bishop Berkeley has expressed it by *esse est percipi*. The lawyer Francisco de Amaya in

¹² *El nuevo palacio del retiro*, ed. by Alan K.G. Paterson (Pamplona-Kassel: Universidad de Navarra-Reichenberger, 1998).

¹³ 'Introduction' to *El nuevo palacio del retiro*, p. 55.

1623 confirms in his *Apología* that a Jew is someone who is identified as such by Spanish society:

El ser o no ser alguno cristiano viejo consiste en el arbitrio del juez... Es evidente que la pureza [...] no es algo esencial, corpóreo, real y palpable, sino algo que consiste en la opinión humana, en la *opinión del vulgo*.¹⁴

As I hope to show, this identification of the *judeo-converso* as Jew is the key to appreciating that, on one hand, the presentation of a positive image of the Jew in biblical and legendary *comedias* could suggest a defence of the contemporary *judeo-converso*, and that, on the other hand, the presentation of a positive image of the sincere *judeo-converso* in some plays with a contemporary setting could suggest a defence of the Jew. The use of the word 'Jew' to signify *judeo-converso* or a descendant of one in this thesis follows, therefore, that of the Spanish Golden Age. However, to simplify nomenclature, I propose to use the word *converso* to signify 'a *judeo-converso*' or 'any descendant of a *judeo-converso*'. It seems convenient to do so because, as will be seen, the converted Moor was rare and unproblematic, and because the word *converso* was generally applied to *judeo-conversos*, not only in the Golden Age but even in modern times, as is evident in the works of Castro, Caro Baroja, Domínguez Ortiz, and so on. To avoid misunderstanding, I will use the denomination *morisco-converso* when it is necessary to make a distinction.

THE JEWISH PROBLEM

This identification of the *conversos* with Jews meant that in Spain there remained still a Jewish problem after their expulsion in 1492. But was it really a Jewish problem or was it a problem of Spanish racism that applied equally to Moors? Were the *moriscos* not in the same marginalized position as the *conversos*? This is the stance that Henry Kamen seems to take:

¹⁴ Quoted by Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, p. 193. Italics are mine.

The travails of those of converso origin were, evidently, shared also by the Moriscos. The hatred of these for the Inquisition always included an element of fear. 'Out of fear', an Inquisitor of Granada reported in 1568, some Moriscos who have previously refused to do so 'very quickly learned' the Castilian language. 'Out of fear', some women 'began to dress like Castilians'.¹⁵

Yet, the 'travails' of *moriscos* that included having to learn Castilian are hardly comparable to those of the *judeo-conversos*, who were prosecuted by the Inquisition. Kamen eventually nuances his position: 'It is true that the repression of the Moriscos was not strictly comparable to the severity meted out to Judaizers. [...] This was because Moriscos were not usually treated as heretics but rather as infidels' (p. 225). The Jewish problem was different and exceptional, as will be seen by comparing Jews with Moors in the perception of Spanish *cristiano viejo* society.

Although there was a religious element in it, the Jewish problem was, by the fifteenth century, essentially socio-economic, while that of the *moriscos* was political. The origin of this difference lies in that there were at least two mass-conversions of Jews to Christianity in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries but there was no Moorish mass-conversion until after the fall of Granada in 1492. However, the Moors were given decades to adapt to the new religion and strict observance of dogma was not required of them, while from the *judeo-conversos* the Church expected total and immediate conformity as they were deemed to have converted voluntarily. There were few voluntary converts of Moorish origin, as opposed to the great number of forced mass-conversions after the rebellion of the Alpujarras. In practice these last Moorish converts continued unchanged in their religion, customs, language, diet, clothes, and so on. The only true *cristiano nuevo* in Spain was the ex-Jew.¹⁶ There is a semantic point to support the argument for the exceptional nature of the Jewish phenomenon: while *judío* in COV has 'judaizar' and 'judaizante' as derivatives, *árabe*, *moro* and *morisco* have no similar derivatives and the word *Islam* does not even appear in this dictionary. The

¹⁵ *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London: Phoenix, 1998), p. 178.

¹⁶ See Caro Baroja, *Los Judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, III, 15-16.

Jewish problem in Spain has been identified for centuries with *cripto-judaísmo*, but the problem of *cripto-islamismo* came into existence only after the final expulsion of *moriscos* in April 1609. However, *marrano* referred only to Jews and there was no equivalent word to refer to Moors. As the problem arose so late and lasted only for a short time, the concepts of *arabizar*, *islamizar*, and so on, did not come into the language. The *moriscos* did not have to hide their identity which was accepted and respected; it was only after 1609 that they had to 'lead a dual life, practising Christianity publicly and in constant fear of being apprehended by the authorities'.¹⁷ On the contrary, those Jews who wanted to retain even a small part of their old customs were, for centuries, obliged to hide every manifestation of it for fear of the Inquisition.

The Jewish problem appears to have been indeed singular. In the first place, historically, the Moors of the Peninsula were perceived by the Christian population as conquerors or at least as a respected enemy nation, and remained a war-like nation. Indeed, the Berber nations and the Turkish empire were always there to remind Spain that it could not freely persecute the Moors; María Soledad Carrasco-Urgoiti, speaking of the Alpujarras rebellion (1568), notes: 'The rebels sought aid from the Turkish-Berber empire, [...] a contingent of Turkish soldiers did fight at their side, and pirate raids against the Spanish coasts became more frequent and harmful.'¹⁸ As opposed to this, the Jews have always been peaceful and a part of Christian society. They had no country of their own and thus were without any possibility of outside help. While the Jews were expelled in 1492, the *moriscos* expulsion took place in 1609. The year 1492 is significant for two possibly inconsistent decisions by the Catholic Monarchs. On one hand, the Jews were to be expelled unless they converted. On the other hand, the *Capitulaciones* of Granada promised to respect the language, laws, religion, property,

¹⁷ Thomas E. Case, *Lope and Islam: Islamic Personages in his Comedias* (Newark: Juan de la Cuesta, 1993), p. 18.

¹⁸ *The Moorish Novel: 'El Abencerraje' and Pérez de Hita* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976), p. 37.

customs, and autonomy of the *moriscos*, and permitted them to continue living in Spain, despite constantly resisting conversion and despite repeated armed uprisings.

The difference between their treatment by the Inquisition was also significant.

As Ricardo García Cárcel observes:

El judaísmo fue, sin duda, la gran fijación de la Inquisición y el móvil, si no decisivo, sí principal del establecimiento de la Inquisición. Señalemos que la mitad de los judeo-conversos procesados por la institución valenciana antes de 1530 fueron condenados a muerte.¹⁹

The numbers of those tried by the Inquisition show that, although the *morisco-converso* was subject to the Inquisition, the Jews were its main victims. García Cárcel comments:

El total de procesados a lo largo de toda la historia de la Inquisición no sería superior a los 150.000, cifra bastante inferior, desde luego, a los 341.021 procesados reseñados por el historiador Juan Antonio Llorente. [...] De ellos un 50% aproximadamente serían judíos, un 12% moriscos, un 30% procesados por delitos ideológicos y un 8% por otros conceptos. (pp. 46-48)

The Arab was an enemy outside, whom the Christians had been fighting for centuries, while the Jew was an enemy within, to be always watched and punished for deicide.

Economically, the *moriscos* did not pose the threat of competition for the powerful middle and upper classes, because after the *Reconquista* the majority of *moriscos* left in Spain were agricultural labourers or farmers. The Jews, on the contrary, competed for the best posts in administration, finance, the law and even in the Church. They practically formed the emerging middle class, as Pamp observes: 'El converso formó un sector anómalo en la vida española, se daba el caso también de que era indispensable en ella. [...] Era la única clase media que hasta entonces ha tenido España, así como antes lo había sido el judío' (p. 6). After their conversion to Christianity the *judeo-conversos* even began marrying their way into the *nobleza*.²⁰

¹⁹ *La Inquisición* (Madrid: Biblioteca *El Sol*, 1991), p. 50.

²⁰ For the middle class, see Américo Castro, *De la edad conflictiva* (Madrid: Taurus, 1970), pp. 91-99, and Contreras y Contreras, p. 68. For extensive details regarding the nobility, see the anonymous *Libro Verde de Aragón* and *El tizón de la nobleza* by Francisco de Mendoza y Bobadilla in J. Caro Baroja, *Los Judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 269-80.

Sociologically, the *moriscos* were always self-sufficient, mostly territorial, defensible as a group, and a nation apart from Christian society. Only after the defeat of the Alpujarras uprising was there an attempt, not entirely successful, to disperse the *moriscos*. The *judeo-conversos*, on the contrary, were individuals dispersed all over the Peninsula and were represented in all classes of society. According to García Cárcel, the nobility always defended the *moriscos* as they were part of the economic base of the feudal system: ‘La sublevación de las Alpujarras obligó a la Inquisición a un control severo de los moriscos en toda España, contrariando los intereses de la nobleza, para la que muchos de estos moriscos eran mano de obra barata’ (p. 55). The *convivencia* between *moriscos* and the nobility ^{HAS BEEN} (was) illustrated by Trevor J. Dadson in the example of Villarrubia, a small town in the Campo de Calatrava. The Count of Salinas and the Christian citizens of this town not only hid *moriscos* in their homes and tried to prevent their expulsion in 1609, but after a few months aided and abetted their return to Villarrubia.²¹ The Jews, on the contrary, as they posed an economic threat, received no substantial help from the nobility. Caro Baroja sums up:

La gran diferencia que existe entre el modo de proceder de cristianos nuevos de origen hebreo y cristianos nuevos de origen moro, con relación a la sociedad española en bloque. Mientras los primeros la penetran de mil formas, los segundos quedan siempre como un cuerpo aislado de tan difícil asimilación que, por último, es expulsado casi en su mayor parte al Norte de África sin dejar rastro de su existencia poco después de realizada la expulsión. En cambio, los judíos conversos fueron con frecuencia hombres de extraordinaria capacidad en todas las esferas, según se va viendo, desde la Edad Media hasta muy avanzada la Moderna. [...] Los moriscos no dieron un contingente respetable de personas importantes en la vida española del Siglo de Oro. Se habla de bastantes autores famosos de ascendencia hebrea. Cada vez más. Los moriscos en bloque no demuestran tener ni la sutileza ni la combatividad de los judíos. [...] El morisco no puede acomodarse a una situación de bi-culturalidad como se acomoda el judaizante. [...] No se mezcla, por ejemplo en Aragón, como se mezclan los descendientes de judíos. [...] Ascende poco en la vida social. [...] El morisco había sido un hábil agricultor y artesano, pero ¿qué era esto para una sociedad despreciadora de los trabajos manuales?²²

²¹ See ‘Cooperation and Coexistence: Moriscos and Christians in the Campo de Calatrava’ (unpublished talk at the ‘Golden Age and Renaissance Research Seminar’, University College London, 1999).

²² *Los Judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 15-16.

There were two distinct perceptions of the *morisco*. On the one hand, linguistic evolution shows that in the end people in general had contempt even for the noblest Moor. Even the name ‘Abencerraje’ was eventually turned into a pejorative adjective: ‘Sinónimo de torpe, bruto; de bruscos modales. *Peor que un abencerraje*. Se aplica al obstinado y violento en sus pasiones.’²³ This adjective has been removed from the latest edition of DRAE. Yet in contrast to this there existed a romanticized image of the Moor as the noble and brave cavalier, a friend of a Christian knight who was a little more noble and a little more brave, and this Moorish cavalier in the end always made his sincere conversion to Christianity, a better religion than his. This image formed part of the mythology of the *romances moriscos*, novelas and many *comedias* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An outstanding example of this romanticized figure is Don Álvaro Tuzaní, the hero of *Amar después de la muerte o El Tuzaní de la Alpujarra* by Calderón. Carrasco-Urgoiti, writing about the anonymous short story *El Abencerraje*, says:

Castilians appear as more deeply concerned with the service of their king and their faith, while the Moors fight rather with the sense of sportmanship and are chiefly moved by the hopes, joys, or disappointments of romance. Though vehement, jealous, and impulsive, the young Moors of both sexes in the *Civil Wars* behaved as models of decorum and [...] with their witticism and coquetterie remind one of the type that will be developed subsequently in *comedias* of urban setting.²⁴

In contrast, the only perspective of the Jew as noble was restricted to figures of the Old Testament, as will be seen in Chapter 4. However, what best illustrates the difference between how Christian society perceived *moriscos* and *judeo-conversos* is the number of *comedias* with heroic and romantic protagonists of Moorish or Jewish descent; looking only at Lope’s works, there are more than seventy *comedias* with *morisco*

²³ *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, 112 vols (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1991-2001), I, 366.

²⁴ *The Moorish Novel*, pp. 120-21. Carrasco-Urgoiti refers to *Guerras civiles de Granada* by Pérez de Hita.

characters, heroic and romantic.²⁵ I know of no comparable romantic or heroic *judeo-converso* protagonists in the whole dramatic production of the Spanish Golden Age. The *morisco* question manifested itself as a political and military crisis of the Alpujarras rebellion in 1568 and never assumed the same social importance as the Jewish problem. This is why being Spanish was defined not by *not* being a Moor, but by *not* being a Jew.

SPANISH RACISM

Does the *cristiano viejo* attitude towards *conversos* suggest that the Spanish Golden Age was essentially racist? By the seventeenth century some inquisitors and legislators knew that not all *conversos* were *judaizantes*. However, a majority of people probably believed that, while theoretically they ought not to be discriminated against, in practice they ought to be excluded from high ecclesiastical and civil offices. Caro Baroja cites the words of the historian fray Prudencio de Sandoval, speaking about the *estatutos* of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Toledo:

No condeno la piedad cristiana que abraza a todos; que erraría mortalmente, y sé que en el acatamiento divino no hay distinción del gentil al judío; porque uno solo es el Señor de todos. ¿Mas quién podrá negar que en los descendientes de judíos permanece y dura la mala inclinación de su antigua ingratitud y mal conocimiento, como en los negros el accidente inseparable de su negrura?²⁶

However, not all *cristianos viejos* subscribed to the ideology of *limpieza de sangre*; in fact some fought against it; Caro Baroja states that St Ignacio of Loyola was always against the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, that he saw their adoption by the Company as a painful formal step – in fact, the Jesuit order was the last to apply them in 1593 –, that many ecclesiastic superiors of the order had *converso* origin, and that Isaac Cardoso, himself, the famous philosopher and defender of the Jews, studied with the

²⁵ See Case, pp. 186-87.

²⁶ *Los Judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, II, 326.

Jesuits. In fact, St Ignacio of Loyola often repeated that he would have considered it a special favour to have been born a Jew.²⁷

Spanish 'racism' of the Golden Age could be seen as *sui generis*. Jews were not considered racially inferior, as they were by the Nazis. On the contrary, they were in some respects, such as intellectual pursuits, considered superior. The problem was Jewish blood, the vehicle that transmitted the guilt of deicide: the position of the Jews was affected by the general assumption in the Europe of the Middle Ages that moral characteristics were heritable. According to one modern historian, there was:

The axiomatic belief that Jews were Christ-killers. Christians held not only the Jews of Jesus' time responsible for Jesus' death, but also Jews from all times. [...] Jews became symbolic Christ-killers, were seen as having approved of the crime and, if given the chance, were considered to be capable of repeating it.²⁸

However, while British, French and Dutch colonialists in general did not mix with natives, thousands of Spaniards married women of the Americas, which suggests that they were not racists. Yet, contrary to the high aristocracy that intermarried with wealthy *conversos*, the tolerance of the *vulgo* did not extend to the Jew or the *converso*. The word 'raza' is used by defenders as well as by attackers of the *estatutos de limpieza* and it seems that their concept of 'race' was generally accepted. Nowadays when we talk of racism, we think of the Nazis.²⁹ For them, a man whose four Jewish grandparents had converted to Christianity was officially still a Jew, because his genes were Jewish. In Golden-Age Spain, a man whose four Jewish grandparents had converted to Christianity and had lived as good Christians, was not officially considered a Jew. If the *conversos* had been officially considered Jews and therefore *judaizantes*, all *conversos* would have been processed by the Inquisition. *Conversos* were tolerated in Spain while in Hitler's Germany they were not. I would suggest that Nazi racism was pseudo-

²⁷ See II, Chapter 10: 'Los jesuitas y los conversos'.

²⁸ Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (London: Abacus, 1997), p. 50. See also Hyam Maccoby, *A Pariah People: The Anthropology of Antisemitism* (London: Constable, 1996).

²⁹ See Michael Alpert, *Crypto-Judaism and the Spanish Inquisition* (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 200.

biological, whereas Spanish Golden-Age racism was theological (in the sense that the theological guilt of deicide was transmitted by blood). Both Nazi and Spanish Golden-Age racism were practised by a majority of the people, but while the first was legalized by the State, the second was not. The *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* were promulgated by private institutions such as the Chapter of Toledo, some Universities and Military Orders. Apart from this, while the *estatutos* were undeniably racist, they were not retrospective as was Nazi racism.³⁰ According to Nazi laws, no Jew was allowed to continue to hold an official position, while the *estatutos* legislated only in respect of possible future *converso* candidates for official posts; for example, in Toledo the group of *canónigos* of *converso* descent who opposed the *estatutos* enacted in 1555 with the help of Cardinal Silíceo remained in their posts.³¹ The Nazis persecuted Jews, while Spanish rulers were more interested in eradicating Judaism. If Spanish racism had been similar to Nazi racism, Pablo de Santa María could never have become Bishop of Burgos and Cardinal Torquemada could never have risen to the post of Inquisitor General. The argument between the biological and the theological perspective of Spanish racism is well illustrated by Benzion Netanyahu's and José Antonio Escudero's views on the subject. According to Escudero, director of the Instituto de la Inquisición, Netanyahu's 'tesis principal y más novedosa es la que presenta a la Inquisición como instrumento racista que pretendía una "solución genocida": el exterminio de los conversos. Establece así un paralelismo de la actuación inquisitorial con el exterminio nazi'. José Antonio Escudero refutes this opinion in seven points, two of which are particularly important: the first is that the Inquisition persecuted not only *judeo-conversos*, but 'moriscos, protestantes, cristianos viejos, eclesiásticos, frailes, monjas,

³⁰ As support for this view, see Julio Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 167 and Américo Castro, *La realidad histórica de España* (México: Porrúa, 1954), p. 503 and 'La Celestina' como contienda literaria, pp. 12 and 63. Curiously, neither José Antonio Escudero nor Antonio Domínguez Ortiz have used this argument in their refutation of Benzion Netanyahu's thesis, as was seen before.

³¹ See Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, II, 298-303.

obispos, cardenal de Toledo, etc. [...] El único vestigio racista de la historia inquisitorial es la *limpieza de sangre*, fenómeno sobrevenido y posterior'; the second, that in Spain 'se trata de condenas en virtud de procesos individuales; con una lamentable presunción de culpabilidad y dudosas garantías, si se quiere, pero procesos individuales al fin. En otro [Germany], de masacres colectivas e indiscriminadas, realizadas sin juicio alguno.'³² To distinguish the two streams of Spanish Golden-Age racism, I describe popular racism as anti-Semitism and official racism (political, inquisitorial, administrative and literary) as anti-Judaism.

THE *CONVERSO* PERSPECTIVE

In the face of this 'racism', some *conversos* developed a special perspective, at the same time defensive and critical, which many critics have recognized as such but described in different terms. José Luis Abellán, writing about the Spanish pre-Renaissance of the fifteenth century, speaks about 'los nuevos deseos de expresión individual que personifican los conversos'.³³ Bruce W. Wardropper, Francisco Márquez Villanueva, Keith Whinnom and Regula Rohland de Langbehn, writing about *Cárcel de amor* (1492) by the *converso* Diego de San Pedro, have recognized a *converso* mentality in this work.³⁴ Writing in more general terms, Castro calls this perspective 'la *forma mentis* hispano-judaica dentro de la cultura española', Márquez Villanueva speaks of a 'mentalidad conversa', Gilman writes of 'the *converso* view of life' and Yirmiyahu

³² See Ben Zion Netanyahu's *The Origins of the Inquisition in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (New York: Random House, 1995) and José Antonio Escudero, 'Netanyahu y la Inquisición', *El País*, 16 January 2000, pp. 14-15.

³³ *Historia crítica del pensamiento español*, 8 vols (Barcelona: Círculo de lectores, 1992), I, 380.

³⁴ Bruce W. Wardropper, 'El mundo sentimental de la *Cárcel de Amor*', *Revista de Filología Española*, 37 (1953), 168-93; Francisco Márquez Villanueva, *Relecciones de literatura medieval* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, 1977); Keith Whinnom, 'Introduction' to Diego de San Pedro, *Prison of Love* (1492), trans. by Keith Whinnom (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), pp. 6-23, and Regula Rohland de Langbehn, 'El problema de los conversos y la novela sentimental', *Age*, 2 (1989), 134-43.

Yovel uses the term '*marrano* mentality'.³⁵ This world-view may be considered *converso* because at first, around the middle of the fifteenth century, many of the intellectuals who held it were *conversos*, while the majority of *cristiano viejo* intellectuals did not hold it; however, this perspective is not indicative of a *converso* identity, as it was not exclusive to the *conversos*: it came soon to be shared by liberal and sympathetic *cristianos viejos*. The *conversos* may have acquired this perspective as a result of their experiences in a hostile society and, as Abellán suggests, may have transmitted it to *cristianos viejos*, such as 'el marqués de Santillana, Fernán Pérez de Guzmán, don Enrique de Villena, etc., empapados de la nueva sensibilidad que imponen los conversos' (I, 380). As will be seen in Chapter 1, this perspective could have come from three sources: the experiences of *conversos* of being rejected by both Jews and Christians, the old Maimonidean philosophical background of most *converso* intellectuals and their newly acquired Christian Humanism. The salient characteristics of the *converso* perspective are described differently by the above mentioned authors, but may be summed up in the following three: individualism (strong belief in the dignity, liberty and equality of individuals), heterodoxy (a theologically and socially critical attitude), and double language (ambiguous communication).³⁶ The *converso* perspective in the *comedias* could well have had a mutually fruitful relationship with the first flowering of Spanish Christian Humanism in the fifteenth century, as well as with *alumbradismo* and Erasmism in the sixteenth century.

³⁵ Américo Castro, *De la edad conflictiva*, p. 187; Francisco Márquez Villanueva, 'Ensayo introductorio: Hablando de conversos con Antonio Domínguez Ortiz', p. xvi; Stephen Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 102, and Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Spinoza and Other Heretics: The Marrano of Reason*, 2 vols (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), I, 28.

³⁶ See Yovel, p. 28. Although Yovel uses the term 'heterodoxy' in a strictly religious sense, that is to say, for a negation of a dogma, which is heresy, the concept could also be used in a secular sense, in which case we are dealing with deviancy or dissent. The distinction between religious and social heterodoxy is a modern one; from the Middle Ages onwards and certainly in Golden Age Spain, heresy was a civil crime. As Domínguez Ortiz says: 'La herejía era, a la vez que un pecado, un delito castigado por las leyes' ('Réplica amistosa a Ben Zion Netanyahu', *El País*, 15 March 2000, p. 12).

THE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW

It was this *converso* perspective that facilitated the presentation of a positive image of the Jew in the *comedia*. Many plays can be seen as not simply reflecting the anti-Semitism endemic in Spanish Golden-Age society and not simply presenting the Jew as stereotypically evil, as it is held by some critics. Although a negative image is true on the surface, I believe that there is a positive image of the Jew hidden in many *comedias*. What then is this positive image? It needs to be recalled that the presentation of an explicitly sympathetic Jewish hero in a *comedia* would have been rejected by the public and would have brought down upon the writer the suspicion of the Inquisition. It was more prudent to hide this positive image by presenting it indirectly. As was seen, 'Jew' is a complex concept, and so is the presentation of his positive image. The majority of Golden-Age dramatists could present an explicitly positive image only of the Old Testament and a few pre-expulsion Jews. However, they could and they did present, although indirectly, a positive image of the sincere *converso* in accordance with the Christian doctrine of the equality of all the baptized, denied in practice if not in theory by the *estatutos de limpieza*. The *estatutos* denied both Free Will and Grace, placed inherited honour above that acquired by virtuous acts and supplied Golden-Age dramatists with the key terms for a critical presentation of society's neglect of Christian principles. This positive image of the sincere *converso* clearly does not include the unconverted Jew on an obvious level, but it does have an unexpected implication for the image of the Jew. Since, according to popular perception the sincere *converso* was still identified as a Jew, the presentation of the sincere *converso* as good could be interpreted to mean that a Jew could also be good, that Jewish blood did not prevent a man from being good. Thus the positive image of the sincere *converso* in a *comedia* could imply a positive image of the Jew. This positive image could be seen as the fruit of a union of the *converso* perspective, shared, as will be seen, by some *crisiano nuevo* and *crisiano*

viejo Golden-Age dramatists, and of the influence of Christian Humanism taken to its logical conclusion. Erasmus, for example, although he had little liking for Judaism, believed firmly in the equality of all the baptized; this implied opposition to the *estatutos* and the popular negative image of the Jew, affirming that a baptized Jew could be a good and sincere Christian. Lope de Vega and other dramatists wrote for an audience that identified sincere *conversos* with Jews, therefore the positive image of the sincere *converso* may have conveyed to the *vulgo* a positive image of the Jew. However, this positive image drawn by Golden-Age dramatists is radically different from the positive image drawn by *antiestatutista* writers such as Alonso de Cartagena, Diego de Uceda and Agustín Salucio. Their objections to the *estatutos de limpieza* were directed precisely at the identification of the sincere *converso* with the Jew, their objective being to present a positive image of the former and not of the latter: they defended *conversos* but attacked Judaism. While the *antiestatutistas* reject the identification of *conversos* with Jews, Lope de Vega and his fellows not only accept it as a fact of life, but make it the subject of their drama in order to subvert it. Thus, while the *antiestatutistas* were defenders of sincere *conversos*, Lope and others could be seen, as I will try to show, to be sympathetic towards Jews.

PLAN

While this thesis is about the *comedia*, the *entremés* '*El retablo de las maravillas*' by Cervantes will also be analysed because it deals specifically with anti-Semitism. There will be also references to some *autos sacramentales*, but these references will be brief, because the Jew in the *autos sacramentales* is mostly a negative allegorical and theological figure in conformity with the demands of the Church: the *autos sacramentales* in general are concerned with 'Judaísmo' and 'Sinagoga' rather than directly with the Jew, with religion rather than persons, except for Calderón's *El nuevo*

palacio del Retiro, as was seen above. In any case, the *comedia*, presenting flesh and blood human beings, such as in *La judía de Toledo*, had more possibilities to subvert the negative image of the Jew.

Some of the above opinions question the majority critical view (held, amongst others, by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, Ángel Valbuena Prat, Marcel Bataillon, Alexander A. Parker, Edward Glaser, Victor F. Dixon, Gwynne Edwards, Anthony J. Farrell, including the Marxist José Antonio Maravall and the liberal Américo Castro) that Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina and Calderón de la Barca were anti-Semitic, subservient to and propagandists for the ruling hierarchy. The position expressed in this thesis corresponds more with that of critics such as Albert A. Sicroff, Antonie A. Van Beysterveldt, A. David Kossoff, Joseph H. Silverman, Melveena McKendrick, Alix Zuckerman-Ingber, Jonathan Thacker, Diane J. Pamp, Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano, Alan K.G. Paterson, Charlotte Stern, David Gitlitz, Gerald E. Wade, Martin A. Cohen, Georgina Dopico Black and Juan Diego Blanco, who see the *comedia* not as underpinning the dominant ideology of the time but as criticizing it. Thacker writes:

What we can recognize even today, in Golden-Age comedy, is a more general corrective criticism of society – its institutions, its norms and expectations, its stereotypes, its rigid modes of behaviour [...] it seems fair to claim that those critics who have begun to erode the view of the *comedia* as a conservative force in an increasingly turbulent society, are almost certainly on the right track.³⁷

Dopico Black goes further:

I would argue [...] that seventeenth-century Spanish theater was not [...] a mechanism of reinforcing and reinscribing the dominant ideology of the ruling elites, but also a powerful and useful tool for questioning and dismantling that same ideological system.³⁸

This study is in two parts: the first (Chapters 1 and 2) is more theoretical, the second (Chapters 3 to 6) is devoted more to the application of these theories to the

³⁷ 'Role-play and the World as Stage in the *Comedia*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 1997), pp. 213 and 216.

³⁸ *Perfect Wives, Other Women: Adultery and Inquisition in Early Modern Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 117.

analysis of specific plays. Chapter 1 describes the *converso* perspective in its historical context, from the Medieval persecution of the Jews to the situation of the *converso* in the seventeenth century under the government of Olivares. This chapter also shows how the ideas of Christian Humanism/Erasmism were incorporated into the already existing, if limited, *converso* perspective to form part of the more ample intellectual equipment of Golden-Age dramatists. Chapter 2 deals with the evolution of a special form of a subversive irony, as expression of the *converso* perspective, which appears first in the double language of *La Celestina*. This subversive irony and this double language are later enriched by incorporating Erasmian *dissimulatio*; they are finally theorized as ‘engañar con la verdad’ in the *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* and perfected in practice in Lope’s *comedias*.³⁹ It is this technique that will permit the presentation of a positive image of the Jew, but in a way that could only be indirect. Chapter 3 contains the theory of transposition as a form of *engaño* in *comedias de honra* and the first appearance in these *comedias* of the positive image of the Jew. Chapter 4 traces the transposition of the ‘bad’ *converso* into the ‘good’ biblical Jew. Chapter 5 presents the positive image of the Jew created by mocking his stereotypical negative image. The last chapter contains a discussion of six *comedias* by Lope that present positive images of the Jew in their *converso* protagonists; as some of these characters in many ways resemble Lope, for example in their problems with *limpieza de sangre*, this chapter begins with a discussion of Lope’s origin. Among the work of these writers Lope’s is the key to this study. His interest in Jews (biblical, historical or *conversos*) is exceptional in comparison with others of his time and leads eventually to what seemed impossible to many critics, including Castro, the presentation of the *converso* as a *comedia hero*.

³⁹ *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, l. 319 (for bibliographical details, see Chapter 2, note 16).

1

THE *CONVERSO* PERSPECTIVE AND CHRISTIAN HUMANISM

1.1 THIRTEENTH CENTURY: MAIMONIDEAN RATIONALISM

This chapter is not intended to be another history of the Jews in Spain, but a brief examination of those parts of their history, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, that were the formative elements in the evolution of the *converso* perspective. The successors of the Roman Empire in the Peninsula, the Arian Visigoths, at first favoured the Jews, but after the conversion to Catholicism of their kings, the Jews suffered systematic persecution, including forced conversions.¹ The Berber armies conquered most of the Peninsula in 711 and because of their treatment by the Goths,

¹ I have used the following works as sources for this historical review for the period up to 1492: Evelyn Kenig, *Historia de los judíos españoles hasta 1492* (Barcelona: Paidós, 1995); Howard M. Sachar, *Adiós España: Historia de los sefardíes*, trans. by Ersi Marina Samará (Barcelona: Thassàlia, 1995); Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 2 vols (Philadelphia-Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1966) and Cecil Roth, *A History of the Marranos* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947).

many Jews welcomed them. However, they had no real protection under Islamic law: they were *dimmi* (enemies). The Al-mohads began to order forced conversions to Islam and the Jews had, again, to pretend to be sincere converts in order to survive. Among those who fled from the Al-mohad of Córdoba in 1135 was the Maimon family, together with their young son, Moshe, later to be known as Maimonides, the philosopher. This philosopher and later *conversos* had a great deal in common, as Yovel points out:

Maimonides had also undergone Marrano-like experience under the intolerant Almohades, who had forced Jews and Christians to convert to Islam. Maimonides either did so in fact (insincerely) or at least behaved as if he did and let others believe so. (p. 232)

He may have learned dissimulation after his 'conversion' to Islam from the Muslim doctrine of *taqiyyah* which permits a Muslim to lie and cheat in order to defend his faith.²

Maimonides embodies the importance the Jews placed on scholarship and the rational aspect of religion. His greatest achievement was *The Guide of the Perplexed*, which, while setting out the Torah in simple terms, offered an ambiguous rationalistic view of Judaism that eventually would find an echo in the *converso* perspective of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, according to the Bible, the world is not eternal because it was created, while, according to Aristotelian reason, the world is assumed to be eternal; in this case, the Bible could not be interpreted allegorically, because the eternity of the world cannot be proved by Reason. Thus, according to Howard A. Sachar, Maimonides gave preference to Reason over Faith (p. 43), while, according to Copleston, Maimonides gave preference to Faith over Reason.³ Here there are two contradictory interpretations of Maimonides's philosophy. In his

² See Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, *Taqiyah*, in *Ahlul Bayt Digital Islamic Library Project* <<http://www.al-islam.org/taqiyah/1.htm#1>> [accessed 22 August 2003] (para. 13 of 117) (Chapter 1, Question 2). My attention was drawn to *taqiyah* by Ángel M. García Gómez, who is in the process of writing an article on the relation between *taqiyah* and the post-Renaissance notion of *dissimulatio*, for example in Torquato Acceto's *Della dissimulazione onesta* (1641). I propose to discuss Erasmian *dissimulatio* in Chapter 2.

³ See *A History of Philosophy*, 9 vols (New York: Image Books, 1993), II, 206.

Guide Maimonides suggests, on one hand, that the world is not eternal because he believes in the creation of the world by God, and, on the other hand, he affirms that the philosophical arguments founded on the theory of the eternity of the Universe can be used in order to arrive at the truth regarding the nature of God:

The true method, which is based on a logical and undubitable proof, consists, according to my opinion, in demonstrating the existence of God, His unity and His incorporeality by such philosophical arguments as are founded on the theory of the eternity of the Universe. I do not propose this method as though I believed in the eternity of the Universe, for I do not follow the philosophers on this point, but because by the aid of this method these three principles, viz., the existence of God, His unity and His incorporeality can be fully proved and verified irrespectively of the question whether the Universe has had a beginning or not.⁴

Here appear, for the first time in Jewish writing the rationalism, the doubt and, what is most important, that double language which was the heritage of many of the *conversos* of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

1.2 FOURTEENTH-FIFTEENTH CENTURIES: FIRST SPANISH HUMANISM

After Maimonides, the problem for the Jews in Spain could be summed up in the bitter irony that they were always being punished for not accepting Catholicism and, when they did convert in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they were punished for doing so because, although many converts were genuine, the general belief persisted that all *conversos* were judaizers. Until the fourteenth century the Jews in Christian Spain enjoyed some measure of political and cultural tolerance as well as economic prosperity; this ended with the massacre in Toledo (1369), ordered by Enrique of Trastámara as punishment for the Jews taking the part of Pedro I in the Castilian civil war. The gradual withdrawal of the Moors and the rise of Christian power brought on a

⁴ *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. by M. Friedlander, 2nd. edn (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1951), p. 111.

century of economic crisis. The spread of the plague also contributed to the growth of Christian intolerance; beginning in 1391, ghettos were established, followed by blood-libels, pogroms and forced conversions. The situation of the Jews worsened. Economic and health crises, together with the anti-Jewish sermons of friars like Fernán Martínez, arch-deacon of Écija, encouraged mobs to destroy the Jewish quarters in Seville, Toledo and Madrid in 1391. The kings and the nobles failed to protect their Jewish subjects. Threatened with death, thousands of Jews preferred conversion, amongst them Fernando de Cavallería, the powerful counsellor and treasurer of the king of Aragón. To complete the process of mass conversions beginning in 1391, Vicente Ferrer, another friar, preached in the synagogues of Castile and Aragón, a Torah in one hand and a cross in the other, achieving the conversion of many thousands more Jews. In the course of time, all these events culminated in the re-establishment of the Inquisition by the Catholic Monarchs, this time as a powerful organ of State-control, and in the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492.

Behind the Inquisition and the expulsion loomed an ideology, perhaps sincerely held by the Catholic Monarchs as the best for Spain. The majority of historians including Cecil Roth maintain that the Catholic Monarchs were sincere in their intention of solving the problems that had arisen as a result of the mass conversions of Jews. The ideology was one kingdom, one identity, one religion, one nation (the political principle that Martin Luther later called *cuius regio, eius religio*). Ferdinand and Isabella held it to be their first duty to unify Spain and to excise this irritant, the Jew, from the body-politic. Yitzhak Baer confirms this interpretation:

In planning the religious policy, the Jewish question loomed up before them as a highly important problem which demanded an immediate solution. The sovereigns were profoundly moved by the conviction that, just as they were in duty bound to obliterate every trace of Muslim rule from the soil of Spain, so it was incumbent upon them to restore unity of religion within their borders. (II, 313)

Márquez Villanueva, on the contrary, sees the expulsion, the Inquisition and the subsequent persecution of *conversos* as an attempt by the Monarchy to control and suppress the power of the emerging middle classes, whose ranks contained many influential *conversos*:

Los motivos de orden religioso venían a ser enteramente secundarios. [...] Aquella burguesía conversa estaba a punto de desarrollar su propia conciencia política [...] y en este momento decisivo intervino el genio de los Reyes al establecer la Inquisición: un organismo político que lanzaba una sombra de amenaza sobre todos y cada uno de los conversos, que permitía traspasar a la Hacienda Real gran parte de sus riquezas. [...] La Inquisición como instrumento de 'unidad religiosa' es un mito como tantos otros.⁵

Whatever the motivation of the Catholic Monarchs may have been, one thing is certain: the Jewish presence in Spain had become undesirable. After the expulsion in 1492 of those Jews who would not convert and after the conversion of those who would, the *cristianos viejos* began to see the *conversos* as enemies within the walls. For the Inquisition, on the other hand, the conversions had an unforeseen consequence: when the Jew became a Christian, an accusation of practising Judaism could turn him into a heretic, totally in the power of the Holy Office. Paradoxically, only after ceasing to be Jews could the 'Jews' be accused of being Jews. The Catholic Monarchs gave the Inquisition total power over the *conversos*, including the power to arrest even the most respectable when accused of judaizing. Inquisitorial law failed to respect rights recognized by civil and ecclesiastical law. One could be arrested merely on the strength of being denounced, often anonymously, and one's property seized; for months, the accused was not informed of the nature of his supposed crime or of the identity of his denouncer and thus was hampered in his defence. As Cecil Roth says:

The rules of evidence were so devised as to exclude all witnesses likely to be serviceable to the accused, on the ground that their testimony would be untrustworthy. No such scruples prevailed with regard to witnesses for the prosecution, who were frequently inspired by mere venom. (pp. 104-05)

⁵ 'El problema de los conversos', pp. 70-71. Martin A. Cohen and Henry Kamen support Márquez Villanueva (see Martin A. Cohen, 'Towards a New Comprehension of the Marranos', *Hispania Judaica*, 2 (1975), 23-35 and Kamen, p. 36).

The accused had to pay all the cost of his prosecution and imprisonment and as these processes often lasted for years, even the wealthiest could lose everything, before he was convicted or, as happened in a few cases, acquitted. As regards the independence of the inquisitorial judiciary, Roth notes:

When a condemnation resulted, all this property devolved on the Holy Office, which thus had every inducement to bring in a verdict of guilty. [...] Thus in the Toledo tribunal, the acquittals between the years 1484 and 1531 averaged less than two yearly. (pp. 104 and 118)

Kamen concludes: 'The "converso danger", it can be argued on this evidence, was invented to justify spoliation of conversos. Much of the evidence for judaizing was thin, if not false' (p. 41). However, even if the good faith of the Inquisition were to be admitted, it was unreasonable on its part to expect that these newly converted Jews could be transformed miraculously into correctly observant Christians; centuries-old traditions could not be suddenly forgotten and new customs could not suddenly be acquired; it is easy to understand how ignorance could confuse habits with doctrines. For example, the Inquisition identified not eating pork with judaizing, confounding culture with faith. There must have been thousands of *conversos* facing similar problems and no doubt there must have been others who had retained their faith in Judaism and practised it in secret.

In the face of such oppression, an attempt at physical opposition by the *conversos* was not surprising; according to Kamen, there was armed resistance in Seville in 1481 to the establishment of the Inquisition (see pp. 46-47). This city was one of the main centres for *conversos*, where the heads of the community organized armed resistance to the Inquisition. The conspirators were arrested and executed. When the inquisitors wanted to establish themselves in Toledo, plans for a similar uprising were discovered in 1485 and those implicated were also executed. The Aragonese courtiers Sancho de Paternoy, *mestre racional*, Gabriel Sánchez, treasurer, and Francisco de Santa Fe, privy counsellor, joined forces to resist the Inquisition; they arranged the

assassination of the Inquisitor Pedro Arbués, Canon of the Cathedral of Zaragoza.⁶ Their complicity in the crime was discovered and together with them more than two hundred *conversos* were executed or imprisoned. However, as Kamen notes, 'the most remarkable case of resistance [to the Inquisition] in the whole of Spain occurred in 1484 in Teruel' (pp. 51-52). Kamen adds that the city claimed:

This is a kingdom of Christians, that there were no heretics and that heretics in any case should be approached with warning and persuasion, not force. Ferdinand replied with an order in February 1485 to all his officials in Aragón, asking them to raise arms and help the Inquisitors. The response to this was not adequate, so Ferdinand also called on troops from the border of Castile to help in the enterprise. Faced with such massive coercion, the city was easily reduced to obedience. (p. 54)

After these disasters, the *conversos* at last understood that they were not only too few and too weak to fight for their rights, but that they were also disunited: 'De hecho, ni siquiera la Inquisición fue suficiente para unirlos en un frente colectivo.'⁷ Such events may have been a new impetus to the further development of the *converso* perspective and behaviour; they had to learn to be indirect and ambiguous, which they could from Maimonides. Abellán indicates that the *conversos* of the fifteenth century had access to and were directly influenced by the views of Maimonides:

El judío converso Pedro de Toledo, hijo del maestro Juan del Castillo, también ha pasado a la historia por su versión de la *Guía de los descarriados*, de Maimónides. El cuñado del Marqués de Santillana, Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, le había encargado dicha traducción, cuyos dos primeros libros fueron acabados en Zafra, en 1419; el libro tercero se concluyó en Sevilla en 1432. (I, 403)

What was significant in this was what Baer says about the majority of these *conversos* educated in the doctrines of Averroes and Maimonides:

Those individuals [were those] who habitually looked down upon the simple masses who scrupulously observed all the commandments and were not afraid, even in the time of national or religious emergency, to proclaim their faith; these same men, when the test came, lacked the spiritual fortitude to prefer death to

⁶ Francisco de la Torre y Sevil wrote a play entitled *San Pedro de Arbués* (date of composition uncertain, approx. 1660); curiously Arbués was beatified in 1664 and canonized only in 1867, but must have been revered locally as a saint, similar to the 'Santo' Niño de La Guardia, who has never been beatified (see *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, LXII, 1308-09).

⁷ Márquez Villanueva, 'El problema de los conversos', p. 55.

apostasy. In much the same spirit as they had previously denied the authority of biblical law, they now accepted the rites and ceremonies of an alien religion; ultimately they remained faithful to their 'religion of the intellect', the crowning article of faith for all Averroist⁵, whether Jewish or Christian. (II, 138)

Juan Goytisolo is of the same opinion as regards the 'religion of the intellect' when he notes the later preponderance of Jewish intellectuals in Golden-Age Spain and speaks of the 'relación causa/efecto que cabe establecer entre el cultivo de las artes y del pensamiento y la pérdida de la fe religiosa'.⁸

It was alongside these educated *conversos* of the fifteenth century that the first Spanish Humanists appeared. Although culture, science and philosophy were still dominated by scholasticism, according to Abellán there were the beginnings of a new movement in Spain that was not characteristic of the common culture of the time:

Durante el siglo XV se va creando un ambiente que propicia el surgimiento de nuevas actitudes hacia la cultura y el saber. En estas actitudes se insinúa ya una concepción filosófica diferente de la escolástica y su fundamentación teológica. En España, esta concepción apenas es aprehensible, salvo en unos cuantos espíritus avizor [*sic*] que se adelantan a su época y que surgen de ese ambiente castellano prerrenacentista. (I, 405)

This new 'concepción filosófica' was developed in Spain by a small group of educated men, some of them *conversos*, as Abellán explains:

Un aspecto todavía insuficientemente estudiado, pero que aclararía considerablemente esta época, es la influencia creciente de esta nueva clase intelectual de los conversos, hasta llegar a constituir una élite que se caracterizó por su alianza y simpatía con el estamento aristocrático. Entre los conversos parece que hay que incluir a hombres tan representativos como los dos Cartagena, Alfonso de la Torre, Alonso de Palencia, Mosén Diego de Valera, Juan de Mena, Diego de San Pedro, Juan de Lucena y Fernando de Rojas. (I, 380)

Among the above, Alonso de Cartagena, a second-generation *converso* and Bishop of Burgos, stands out as a translator of Seneca, a critic of Aristotle's ethics and an innovative thinker, 'el primer humanista' in Spain according to Abellán, who adds:

Un análisis más profundo de Cartagena nos revela, junto a la admiración por los ideales humanistas italianos, que probablemente nadie representaba mejor que él, una cierta distancia crítica respecto a los clásicos. [...] Probablemente, ello es

⁸ 'Intelectuales y judíos', *El País*, 22 December 2001, p. 17.

consecuencia del relativismo cultural que a Cartagena le proporcionaba su origen judeo-converso. (I, 407)⁹

The individualism of Cartagena's perspective may also be seen in his criticism of 'honor' and defence of *virtud*; as the translator of Cicero's *De officiis*, Cartagena must have found in this work *honor* (entirely exterior) separated from *virtus* (entirely interior) although not opposed to each other, because, according to Cicero who follows Aristotle's *Ethics* (IV, 3, 15), honour was the reward for virtue.¹⁰ Cartagena also sees honour and virtue as separate, but values only virtue:

Como el honor sea una cosa de fuera e estrinseca, e esté más en el que la fase que el que la recibe, [...] pequeño galardón sería para la virtud, [...] por cuanto entre las cosas mundanas el honor es el más alto bien que los homes pueden dar, por ende dan honor al virtuoso porque no tiene otra cosa mejor que dar.¹¹

As Abellán says:

Al mismo tiempo que se pronuncia tan decisivamente a favor de la virtud, [Cartagena] no concede gran valor a su manifestación externa, que admite estar sujeta a cambios históricos y valoraciones diversas. Una vez más su origen converso parece situarle en una perspectiva relativista. (I, 413)

This criticism of 'honor' pre-dates such famous definitions as Lope's in *Los comendadores de Córdoba* or Calderón's *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza* and it could be seen as the basis of Ramón Menéndez Pidal's distinction between *honor-opinión* and *honor-virtud*.¹² Apart from his personal knowledge that a *converso* can be a sincere Christian, Cartagena's Humanist belief in virtue led him to raise his voice in their defence and thus put himself in a position then considered socially heterodox, that is, doubting that all *cristianos nuevos* were false Christians. The blanket condemnation of *conversos* was challenged by Cartagena in his *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* in 1450. In this work he attempted to lift the weight of race-guilt off the shoulders of the

⁹ See also Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 137, where he refers to Alonso de Cartagena's *Defensorium unitatis christianae*.

¹⁰ See Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*, trans. by Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), p. 11.

¹¹ Quoted in Abellán, I, 413.

¹² See *De Cervantes y Lope de Vega* (Madrid: Austral, 1958), p. 146.

Jews, suggesting that the guilt of the Jews of the time of Jesus should not be attributed to Spanish *conversos* of his time. Apart from individualism and heterodoxy, the double language is also present in Cartagena's writing as part of his attempt to promote the *converso* cause, as pointed out by Netanyahu. On one hand, Cartagena argues that all baptized, of whatever race, are equal as Christians, while on the other hand he maintains the racial superiority of *conversos* who have conserved the purity of their blood and whose biblical aristocracy is more ancient than those of any *cristiano viejo*. Netanyahu sums it up as follows:

Despite his repeated affirmation that Christianity is heading toward the abolition of all birthrights, all carnal distinctions and ethnic differences, Cartagena voices unequivocal support for class differentiation based on hereditary rights. Here we see again the kind of dichotomy we have notice in his thinking on the race question – that is, when he emphasized the unity of man's origin, on the one hand, and the superiority of the Jewish nation, on the other.¹³

Another outstanding Humanist *converso* of the fifteenth century listed by Abellán was Fernando de Rojas, the author of the definitive version of *La Celestina*. I would argue that this work is inseparable from its social context and the *converso* perspective; as Gilman puts it: '*La Celestina* is [...] a coherent and profound revelation of the *converso* view of life.'¹⁴ There are schools of criticism, Marxist, structuralist and deconstructionalist, that consider irrelevant the biography of an author; the text is all-important: it 'appears as an autonomous, self-contained entity, isolated from its author, its social context and its public'.¹⁵ However, the early experiences of an artist, especially if they have been traumatic, may affect his work. This could have been the case with Rojas, whose father-in-law, Álvaro de Montalbán, was condemned by the Inquisition to life imprisonment. This is how Gilman relates the event:

Álvaro de Montalbán, a man of some seventy years more or less, the father in law of Pedro de Montalbán, the Royal Master of Lodgings [...] went with his son

¹³ See Netanyahu, p. 554.

¹⁴ *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 102.

¹⁵ Charlotte Stern, 'Lope de Vega, propagandist?', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 35 (1982-1983), 1-27 (p. 1).

in law and daughter [...] and Alonso Ruiz, parish priest of San Ginés, and the present witness, to a country property of Pedro de Montalbán not far from the gardens of Leganés [...] to enjoy themselves and take their ease. [...] When they had eaten and were returning to town, the present witness remarked, 'you see the pleasures of this world pass by; for we have enjoyed ourselves and it's all over. *Todo es burla sino ganar para la vida eterna*'. At this Álvaro de Montalbán replied: '*Acá tuviese yo bien, que allá no sé si hay nada*.'¹⁶

As was customary in inquisitorial processes, there was no official accusation, but Montalbán may have been found guilty of heresy, because that was what his accuser Alonso Ruíz maintained that Montalbán had uttered: 'I wish I hadn't heard it, because I shall have to report it, for it is heresy.'¹⁷ Gilman also produces 'documentary evidence' that 'when Rojas was perhaps twelve years old his father was arrested, imprisoned, tried, found guilty and in all likelihood [...] executed by fire in an *auto de fe*. The horror of the fact needs little imaginative decoration'.¹⁸ However, I do not consider that an artist's experiences determine his art; they only form a part of it, a part necessary but not sufficient to an understanding of the whole.

A brief analysis of *La Celestina* will show that its author's perspective on life was typically *converso*, an amalgam of Rojas's Jewish origins and his literary and philosophical Humanism. The importance given to the individual is an integral part of *La Celestina*. Rojas's individualism, consisting of his belief in the dignity, liberty and equality of individuals, is presented, for example, in the prostitute Areúsa's words: 'Ruín sea quien por ruín se tiene. Las obras hacen linaje, que al fin somos todos hijos de Adán y Eva. Procure de ser cada uno bueno por sí, y no vaya a buscar en la nobleza de sus pasados la virtud.'¹⁹ This individualism led Rojas to reject the idealized world of chivalric romances and to write instead about the world that he seemed to know

¹⁶ *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, pp. 68-75.

¹⁷ Gilman, *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 83.

¹⁸ *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 45. See also Alan Deyermond, 'La Celestina', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, 12 vols (Barcelona: Crítica, 1980-), I: *Edad Media*, ed. by Alan Deyermond, pp. 485-97 (p. 485), and Dorothy Sherman Severin, 'Introducción' to Fernando de Rojas, *La Celestina*, ed. by Dorothy Sherman Severin, 5th edn (Madrid: Cátedra, 1991), p. 15.

¹⁹ Fernando de Rojas, *Celestina*, ed. by Dorothy Sherman Severin (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1992), p. 230.

intimately, an under-world of prostitutes, pimps, corrupt servants and foolish masters.

Rojas created credible individuals, different from Medieval literature, as María Rosa

Lida de Malkiel observes:

Asombran, en particular, las criaturas del hampa, representadas desde dentro, tal como ellas se ven, no desde un punto de vista sobrepuesto, satírico o moralizante. [...] Para apreciar debidamente este aspecto de *La Celestina*, ha de recordarse que se opone a la literatura antigua y mucho más a la de la Edad Media.²⁰

Severin also recognizes this anti-idealist nature of *La Celestina*: 'Mi opinión es que

Calisto es una parodia [...] de Leriano, el héroe de la *Cárcel de amor* de Diego de San

Pedro.'²¹ This literary individualism of Rojas has a Humanist character, as it is

recognized by Francisco Rico:

En el marco del legado clásico, una voluntad de fabulación que se conjugara con un interés pragmático por la realidad y con una gustosa percepción de la particularidad de cada individuo difícilmente podría explayarse más que en el género dramático, y en principio, sólo de acuerdo con el repertorio de tonos, temas y personajes sancionado por el teatro romano. En esa delicada confluencia de solicitaciones compuso Petrarca la *Philologia*, floreció la comedia humanística y se concibió *La Celestina*.²²

The Christian element in *La Celestina*, however, is doubtful, as its perspective is not just heterodox but almost atheistic. The characters in the play fall into two groups: the first is that of the hypocritical atheists, like Sempronio, Pármeno and Celestina, who always speak of Christ, God, religion and the Church, but insincerely. All the characters who die during the play die without confession and ironically the only person asking for confession before death is the heterodox 'witch', Celestina. The second group is that of the honest practising atheists, like Calisto and Pleberio, who, whilst not denying the possible existence of a deity, live as if God did not exist; they never pray, and never speak of religion as believers (the Church for them is just a meeting place). Rojas

²⁰ 'La originalidad artística de *La Celestina*', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, I: *Edad Media*, ed. by Alan Deyermond, pp. 498-504 (p. 501).

²¹ 'Introducción' to *La Celestina*, p. 29.

²² 'Introducción' to Fernando de Rojas (y 'Antiguo Autor'), *La Celestina: Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea*, ed. by Francisco J. Lobera and Guillermo Serés (Barcelona: Crítica, 2000), p. xxii.

presents a world of deception without religion, a 'world of pure immanence', as Yovel says (p. 116),²³ or, as Goytisolo thinks, 'of cautious agnosticism, and at times overt atheism [...]; the Christian elements are few in number and, in most cases, obviously fraudulent in intent'.²⁴ With this heterodoxy of religious beliefs goes a heterodoxy of social behaviour; as Goytisolo argues, 'if the universe has no meaning, egoism is the one rule: amorous self-regard in the case of Calisto and Melibea; self-interested greed in the case of Celestina, Sempronio and Pármene' (p. 25). Thus *La Celestina* may have offered a mirror to the Christian society of its time to contemplate itself and perhaps reform. The play may indeed be, as Goytisolo judges it, 'the most virulent and subversive work of literature ever written in Spain' (p. 17). Naturally, heterodoxy in *La Celestina* could only be indirectly expressed; this leads to the use of double language, to be discussed in Chapter 2, together with Erasmian *dissimulatio* and Lopean *engañar con la verdad*, because these three literary techniques are intimately related.

1.3 SIXTEENTH CENTURY: ALUMBRADISM AND ERASMISM

By the sixteenth century the problems of the *conversos* had become intractable. The wealthier and more influential often intermarried with the nobility, and some of them achieved the highest posts at Court. The Cavallería family is just one example. Pedro was *mestre racional* (chief administrator) of the Court of Aragón. All his sons attained high positions: Alfonso became vice-chancellor of Aragón; Luis, chief counsellor of Kings Juan and Jaime, a close personal friend of King Ferdinand the Catholic; one of

²³ Yovel uses *immanence* in the philosophical sense of 'non-transcendence', implying that there is no other reality beyond this world.

²⁴ *Saracen Chronicles: A Selection of Literary Essays*, trans. by Helen Lane (London: Quartet Books, 1992), pp. 20 and 21. The next two references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

Pedro's brothers, Samuel, had a high position in the Church; another, Fernando, was vice-rector of the University of Zaragoza and another brother, Felipe, was president of the *Cortes*; the youngest brother, another Luis, became chief treasurer of the kingdom of Navarra; another Pedro, Fernando's son, was instrumental in bringing about the marriage of Ferdinand of Aragón and Isabella of Castile, while Martín, another member of the family, was admiral of the fleet of Mallorca. Other examples are Pablo de Santa María, Bishop of Burgos; Juan de Torquemada, Inquisitor General; Hernando de Talavera, Archbishop of Talavera; Alonso de Oropesa, General of the Order of St Jerome, and the Enríquez family, from which came King Ferdinand's grandmother.²⁵

WE HAVE
As (was) seen, (Pamp has already suggested and) WITH PAMP'S SUGGESTION
Márquez Villanueva agrees that
the conflict between *cristianos viejos* and *cristianos nuevos* was an economic and class conflict, with religion as part of the *cristiano viejo* ideology to justify the persecution of *conversos*. Cohen comes to the conclusion that 'the operative distinction between Old Christians and New Christians rested primarily not on religion, nor on ethnicity, but on social locations. *Limpieza de sangre* if not politically conceived was politically applied' (p. 32). The first *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* were enacted in Toledo around the middle of the sixteenth century, significantly at a time of a severe economic crisis, when this class conflict was at its bitterest. Contreras y Contreras interprets the *estatutos* not only as an attempt to put a brake on the *conversos*' socio-economic ascent, but as a means of permitting the *villanía* to overtake the *conversos*:

El honor, concepto fundamental de la nobleza, podía ser compartido por la plebe, gracias al racismo imperante. El honor era la revancha del villano, postergado durante tanto tiempo, ya que los Estatutos suavizaban las desigualdades sociales, ofreciendo a los que se encontraban en los estratos más humildes el trampolín del odio al converso, considerado siempre como judío. (p. 68)

The decrease in the economic influence of the *nobleza*, brought about by the increase in the power of the monarchy under Ferdinand and Isabella, coincided with the

²⁵ See Roth, pp. 22-24.

rise in the economic strength of the *conversos*; the economic crisis of the sixteenth century was blamed on the intrusion of the *conversos* into the aristocracy, as Márquez Villanueva points out:

La densidad judía del estamento dirigente se hace aún mayor si añadimos a esta cuenta la mucha sangre de conversos infiltrada en las grandes familias nobles y que incluso llegó a salpicar la dinastía. [...] El cardenal Caraffa, futuro Paulo IV, llamaba judío a Carlos V en sus momentos de furia.²⁶

The rejection of *conversos* by *cristiano viejo* Spain was made more intense by the economic crisis and may have lent the *conversos* further motivation at the beginning of the sixteenth century to embrace the spiritual reforms of the *alumbrados* and of the *erasmistas*, and the practical reforms of Cisneros: he was the founder of the University of Alcalá, the patron of the *Biblia Políglota* and the reformer of the Franciscan Order.²⁷

Eugenio Asensio suggests the following motivation for the disproportionate activity of *conversos* in movements of intellectual and religious reform:

Verosímil es que la inquietud de los conversos – ‘inquietos’ es la acusación que se les lanza a menudo, y ya Santo Tomás alegado por Salucio [...] escribe que ‘la inquietud de los confesos nace de la opresión con que se ven afligidos’ – les haya llevado a todos los movimientos de renovación intelectual y religiosa.²⁸

The ideas propagated by these new movements may have been a comfort for *conversos* and a support for their individualism, heterodoxy and double language. In the midst of all this ferment for reform, Maimonidean philosophy remains influential in Spanish intellectual circles. In Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore*, one finds long quotations from the Jewish philosopher's *The Guide of the Perplexed*. The *Dialoghi*, translated into Spanish in three different versions, was popular in sixteenth-century Spain and is

²⁶ ‘El problema de los conversos’, p. 59.

²⁷ See Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España: Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI*, 2nd edn (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1998), pp. 1-71.

²⁸ *El erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines*, p. 71.

mentioned ^{JUAN}in Luis de Vives's *De anima et vita*, Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana* and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.²⁹

One of these new religious movements was *alumbradismo*, which had some fundamental characteristics in common with the *converso* perspective, as will be seen. In fact, many *conversos*, such as Isabel de la Cruz, Francisca Hernández, Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, the Cazalla, the Ortiz and the Vergara families, played important roles in the movement. Bataillon recognizes that some leading *alumbrados* were *conversos* and that in this case their individualism took the form of searching for a radical religious freedom:

El erasmista Juan Maldonado [...] registra el rumor general de que los alumbrados del Reino de Toledo son conversos en su mayor parte. [...] Desarraigados del judaísmo, estos hombres constituyen en el seno del cristianismo [...] un fermento de inquietud religiosa. [...] Los cristianos nuevos de España aspiran tanto más ardientemente a la libertad religiosa cuanto que se sienten amenazados en sus personas y más todavía en sus haciendas por la Inquisición.³⁰

The connection between *alumbradism* and *conversos* existed not only in the beginnings of the movement, but persisted after it had ceased to be a movement. One representative of this continuation was the *converso* dramatist and preacher Felipe Godínez, as noted by Carmen Menéndez Onrubia:

Su pensamiento religioso encuentra solución a sus conflictos en una forma de cristianismo de tan larga trayectoria autóctona española desde la fundación cisneriana de Alcalá y, aún antes, en las reformas jerónimas y franciscanas del siglo XV. El iluminismo, modalidad religiosa en la que confluyó de forma coherente la doctrina erasmista y que, participando en parte del luteranismo, del alumbradismo y de movimientos místicos centroeuropeos, judíos y sadilíes, bordeaba continuamente la ortodoxia católica hasta salirse de ella a veces. Así [Godínez] consiguió formar una peculiar amalgama ideológica donde se compenetraban sus creencias judaicas con la doctrina cristiana.³¹

²⁹ See Andrés Soria Olmedo, 'Introducción' to León Hebreo, *Diálogos de amor*, trans. by David Romano (Madrid: Tecnos, 1986), pp. xix-xx.

³⁰ *Erasmus y España*, pp. 180-81.

³¹ 'Hacia la biografía de un iluminado judío: Felipe Godínez (1585-1659)', *Segismundo*, 25-26 (1982), 1-42 (p. 95).

The rejection by *alumbrados* of communal vocal prayer in favour of individual and inner prayer, and their practices of *dejamiento* and mystical union with God may have quenched the thirst of *conversos* for a religion that gave their individualism more space. Apart from their desire for the spiritual reform of Catholicism, their search for religious freedom could have been influenced by the Sefardi view of the individual. While Christianity was a hierarchical religion with authority to command the power of the State, Judaism in the diaspora was an egalitarian religion in which neither nobility nor clergy had civil power or special access to God. One may recognize in *alumbradismo* traces of a Jewish rejection of priestly intermediaries. Although never convicted of judaizing, Alcaraz was accused of the particular heresy of denying the sacraments.³² In any case, according to Bataillon, the *converso alumbrados* wanted to be free of the formalities of Catholicism as much as of the formalities of their former religion:

¿Quién sabe si la inspiración religiosa y moral de los profetas no resurgirá en ellos, floreciendo en inquietudes mesiánicas? ¿Quién sabe si liberados de las prescripciones minuciosas del Levítico, no acabarán con el lado ceremonial del Catolicismo para buscar un comercio directo con el Dios de Isaías?³³

Rejection of all forms of ceremony and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, added to their negation of heaven and hell, qualified *alumbradismo* as a new heterodoxy. According to Antonio Márquez: 'Los alumbrados no representan una solución de continuidad dentro de la heterodoxia cristiana de Occidente, sino un nuevo estadio de su desarrollo.'³⁴ Márquez also recognizes that *alumbradismo* was influenced by the experiences of *conversos* and by their heterodox opposition to rituals:

El punto de partida de los alumbrados no es la virtud ni la metafísica, sino un hecho concreto: las condiciones sociales determinadas por una religión imperial e inquisitorial, de un lado; y del otro, su condición de conversos o hijos de conversos. Frente a estas condiciones, la 'altísima libertad' de los alumbrados significa, ante todo, romper con todas las 'ataduras' sacramentales y rituales,

³² See Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992), p. 69.

³³ *Erasmus y España*, p. 61.

³⁴ Antonio Márquez, 'Origen y naturaleza del iluminismo en Castilla (1525-1559)', *Salamancaensis*, 17 (1970), 339-62 (p. 349).

mediante las cuales se ejerce la coacción religiosa. Por esta razón se proclama la abolición de todas las ceremonias y se exalta el culto interior. (p. 357)

Apart from individualism and heterodoxy, double language also had to be a part of the *alumbrados* arsenal and attraction for *conversos*; it was one of the weapons used, for example, by María de Cazalla to defend herself from inquisitorial attacks, as described by María Laura Giordano:

María es muy cauta en el uso de las palabras [...] Utiliza el mismo lenguaje de los inquisidores [...] En la dialéctica con el inquisidor María no se niega, no se esconde, al contrario, se reafirma, justamente, en estos continuos deslizamientos entre su verdad y la de los acusadores.³⁵

The second great reformist movement in the sixteenth century was Spanish Erasmism, derived from the reformulation of the doctrines of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. After his ordination to the priesthood (April 1492), Erasmus assumed the life of an itinerant teacher and received papal dispensation to live and dress as a secular scholar, while he studied further and wrote religious and educational treatises. By 1516 Erasmus was famous, having published *Adagia*, *Praise of Folly* and *Enchiridion*. In the same year he published an erudite edition of the New Testament, giving the original Greek text next to the Latin. In all his works Erasmus, as other Christian Humanists, applied classical sources to Christian learning: the application of classical Greek and Latin literature and philosophy to a renewal of Christianity was the essence of Erasmism and Christian Humanism in general. The above definition of Christian Humanism has only recently been proposed: early historians of the Renaissance, for example, Jacob Burckhardt, emphasized the irreligious nature of Renaissance Humanism. More recent historical scholarship, however, has demonstrated that such an image is not supported by the evidence. For example, Lewis Spitz suggested the religious nature of Humanism in the north of Europe; Charles Trinkaus similarly denied the pagan character of Italian Renaissance Humanism. Much evidence, therefore,

³⁵ *María de Cazalla* (Madrid: Orto, 1998), pp. 39-40.

suggests that the Renaissance Humanists were mostly Christian. This is especially true of Erasmus, the 'Prince of the Humanists'.³⁶

Erasmus's reformist doctrine was based on the central idea of a Christianity as an interior, spiritual religion; this involved a critical view of the exterior, formal parts of Catholicism (scholasticism, ritualism and superstitions), and a return to the purity of original Christianity through a reading of the New Testament in the vernacular so that everyone should understand it. These ideas not being too far from Lutheranism, many Roman Catholics accused Erasmus of being a Lutheran, while Lutherans often accused him of being a Papist; the truth may be, as will be seen later, that Erasmus was a master of *dissimulatio*.³⁷ As a result, his doctrines were accepted by Rome until the Council of Trent (1545-63) adopted the hard line of the Counter-Reformation; after this, Erasmus's principal works were included in the *Index*. In the first part of the sixteenth century, Erasmus was also accepted in Spain; Spanish Erasmists were protected by Charles V from accusations of heresy and the Spanish edition of *Enchiridion*, published in 1525, was very popular. According to Bataillon, there was no country in Europe more Erasmian than Spain.³⁸ It seems that *converso* intellectuals found attractive not only *alumbradismo* but Erasmism too, as one can see in this short list of some well known *converso* Erasmists, mentioned by Bataillon, Asensio and Abellán: Juan y Francisco de Vergara, Diego Gracián de Alderete, Alonso y Juan de Valdés, Juan Luis Vives, Juan Maldonado, Bernardino Tovar, Doctor López de Illescas, Jorge de Montemayor, Fray Luis de León, Cristóbal de Villalón, Andrés Laguna and Cervantes.

³⁶ See Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. by Samuel G.C. Middlemore (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990); Lewis Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), and Charles Trinkaus, *In our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* (London: Constable, 1970).

³⁷ I owe the above data to James D. Tracy's *Erasmus of the Low Countries* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

³⁸ See *Erasmus y España*, p. 802.

Why was Erasmism so attractive to Spanish *converso* intellectuals? The attraction may have been its usefulness. Erasmism, that considered the external trappings of religion as Judaic, served the *conversos*, suggests Asensio, to demonstrate that, with their criticism of the externals of Catholicism, they have rejected all traces of their old religion.³⁹ Another attraction could have been that the inner and egalitarian Christianity in Erasmus's doctrines could be interpreted as a response to the exterior and 'racist' Catholicism in Spain that suspected all *conversos*.⁴⁰ Erasmus advocated inner Christianity by valuing individual mental prayer over that of communal vocal prayer, and supported egalitarian Christianity by defending the universality of *pietas*.

The above ideas may have given the *conversos* a strong theoretical support for their individualism, but Erasmism was also useful for heterodox *conversos*. According to Bataillon, after the failure of the *alumbrado* movement, Erasmism was sometimes used as a haven by those *converso alumbrados* who wanted to practise their beliefs in some safety.⁴¹ At the same time, Erasmus's *dissimulatio*, which will be examined in the following chapter, could have been seen as a model for the double language of the *conversos*. Gilman recognizes that:

The immediate popularity of Erasmus with members of Rojas's caste, not only of his proposals for religious reform but also because of his mastery of ironical expression. Indicative is the merging of the two traditions in the *Quixote*, the product of a mind that was educated by an Erasmist and was almost surely aware of remote converso origin.⁴²

All the above may go some way to explain, as already suggested by Bataillon, the extraordinary success of Erasmism in Spain, the only country with a Jewish problem. Significantly, Abellán notes that a *converso*, Alfonso de Valdés, was called 'más "erasmista que Erasmo" (*erasmicior Erasmo*)' (II, 76). It has to be said that

³⁹ *El erasmismo y las corrientes espirituales afines*, pp. 78-79.

⁴⁰ See Abellán, II, 84.

⁴¹ See *Erasmo y España*, p. 190.

⁴² *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 20.

alumbradismo and Erasmism were different in some important aspects: the first was anti-intellectual and experiential, while the second was scholarly; the essence of *alumbradismo* was mysticism, whereas Erasmism was essentially theological.⁴³ However, as these two movements shared the characteristics of individualism, heterodoxy and double language, they combined with and enriched the *converso* perspective.

1.4 SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: HUMANISM IN THE *COMEDIA*

As was seen, taking into account the political events from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries helped to understand the emergence of the *converso* perspective; appreciating the political events of the seventeenth century, by which time the *comedia* is established as an art form, may add to understanding the influence of Christian Humanism on the *comedia*. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Jewish problem in Castile seems to have been losing some of its intensity.⁴⁴ However, as from 1601, twenty one years after Portugal's annexation by Spain, and after the restrictions on the entry of *conversos* from Portugal were lifted, there began a steady flow of Portuguese *conversos* into Spain. As Portuguese policy regarding judaizing had been less rigorous than the Spanish, these immigrants were generally so much suspected to be false Christians that the word 'portugués' came to be known as a synonym for 'judío'.⁴⁵ Their presence once again

⁴³ See Melquiades Andrés Martín, 'Corrientes culturales en tiempos de los Reyes Católicos y recepción de Erasmo', in *El Erasmismo en España: Ponencias del Coloquio celebrado en la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo del 10 and 14 de Junio de 1985*, ed. by Manuel Revuelta Sañudo and Ciriaco Morón Arroyo (Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986), pp. 90-102 (p. 94).

⁴⁴ I owe the data in this section to Domínguez Ortiz, *La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, pp. 81-86 and John H. Elliott, *Spain and its World (1500-1700)* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 162-209.

⁴⁵ See Glaser, 'Referencias antisemitas en la literatura peninsular de la Edad de Oro', p. 41.

exacerbated the Jewish problem to such an extent that in 1610 further immigration from Portugal was prohibited. In 1623, when the Count-Duke of Olivares came to power as the *valido* of Philip IV, he set about immediately to remedy what he saw as the moral and economic sickness of Spain. As the State's coffers had been emptied by continental wars and fiscal policy was in ruins, he encouraged the immigration of wealthy Portuguese *conversos*, partly to use them as competition to obtain better interest rates from Genoese bankers, partly to increase trade and industry. Olivares's sympathy for the *conversos* was so open that in 1621, before he became the king's favourite, he helped convene a commission to consider an amnesty for all Inquisition prisoners and stop *autos de fe*. A typical example of Olivares's open sympathy for the Jews was his patronage of Manuel López Pereira, who, as Ángel M. García Gómez notes:

Abandonó Amsterdam para volver a España. Después de una breve estancia en Sevilla, se asienta definitivamente en Madrid alrededor del año 1629, contándose pronto entre los miembros más sobresalientes de un pequeño grupo de expertos que aconsejaban al conde-duque en política económica. Para 1636 ha sido ya nombrado contador de relaciones con asiento en el Consejo Real de Hacienda.⁴⁶

The *junta* produced a positive decision about the amnesty, but King Philip refused to ratify it. Despite all of Olivares's attempts to alleviate the condition of *conversos*, the Spanish government continued its intolerant attitude towards them; in the Toledan *auto de fe* of 13 October 1637, five years before Olivares's fall from favour, the wealthy Portuguese *asentista* Juan Núñez Sarabia was condemned as a judaizer, obliged to *abjurar de vehementi* and pay a fine of 20,000 ducats.⁴⁷ A hardening of official attitudes towards all libertarian ideas and movements was accompanied by this worsening situation of the *conversos* in the seventeenth century. As a response, many *conversos*

⁴⁶ 'Una historia sefardí como posible fuente de *La española inglesa* de Cervantes', in *Actas del Segundo Coloquio Internacional de la Asociación de Cervantistas: Alcalá de Henares, 6-9 Nov. 1989 (II-CIAC)* (Barcelona: Anthropos, 1991), pp. 621-28 (p. 623). García Gómez bases this information on Jonathan I. Israel, 'Manuel López Pereira of Amsterdam, Antwerp and Madrid: Jew, New Christian and Adviser to the Conde-Duque de Olivares', *Studia Rosenthaliana*, 19 (1985), 109-26.

⁴⁷ See Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, II, 75. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

emigrated to more tolerant countries; Caro Baroja notes that the Spanish-Portuguese physician and philosopher Isaac Cardoso (1615-80) took with him to Holland the memory of Maimonidean philosophy and a yearning for freedom of individual expression:

Ese anhelo de libertad intelectual, que convierte en principio de su filosofía, está patente ya en el mismo título de su libro [*Philosophia libera*, published in Venice in 1673], y le emparenta con la tradición de la filosofía hispano-hebrea, desde Maimónides a Spinoza. (III, 385)

However, the clearest sign of this hardening of official attitudes was the prohibition after Trent of the propagation of the doctrines of Erasmus, which have come to be seen as a vehicle of *converso* response to society; this made it more difficult, if not impossible for *conversos* to give expression to their individualism and heterodoxy. Erasmism itself had to resort to its equivalent, *dissimulatio*, as will be seen in the next chapter. With the repression of Erasmism by the Counter-Reformation, double language was to become all important, as it was to be the only safe way the *conversos* could voice their dissatisfactions and desires. The *comedia*, with its double language, may have become an important expression of the *converso* complaint against society.

While the influence on the *comedia* of Humanism in its classicist and stylistic dimension has received some critical attention, for example in Wardropper's article about Juan de la Cueva, there appears to be a scarcity of studies on its influence in its philosophical and socio-critical dimension on the *comedia*.⁴⁸ Amongst the few Hispanists who have considered this question are Stanislav Zimic and Marcel Bataillon. According to the first, the influence of the work of Erasmus is already present in the plays of Bartolomé Torres Naharro, especially in *Comedia Himenea*, a play which satirizes the concept of *honra* in the Golden Age and the double standards of morality

⁴⁸ Bruce W. Wardropper, 'Humanismo y teatro nacional en Juan de la Cueva', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, 12 vols (Barcelona: Crítica, 1980-), I: *Siglos de Oro: Renacimiento*, ed. by Francisco López Estrada, pp. 586-90. In the *Bibliografía de la Literatura Española desde 1980*, ed. by María del Carmen Simón Palmer <<http://ble.chadwyck.co.uk/>> [accessed 11 September 2003] I found no references to Humanism in its philosophical and socio-critical dimension in the *comedia*.

practised at the time: 'Podemos asegurar que en este escritor no falta ninguna de las posturas fundamentales de lo que conocemos como erasmismo.'⁴⁹ Bataillon also recognizes that, later, Cervantes wrote in the critical Humanist tradition about *honra*, and he also applies this observation on Cervantes to Lope, Tirso and Calderón: 'Frente a la honra salvaje, frente a sus exigencias a menudo sanguinarias, él levanta una ética menos instintiva, dispuesta al perdón y a la resignación.'⁵⁰ After examining the criticism of *honra* by Golden-Age dramatists at the end of Chapter 3, I hope to show the similarities between the attitudes of Christian Humanism and the *comedia* regarding the question of *honra*.

Apart from the above, as will be seen in Chapters 4-6, the *converso* perspective together with Christian Humanism is also present in the *comedia* as criticism of the negative image of the Jew and the *converso*. This criticism of *honor-opinión* and of the negative image of the Jew could only have been achieved by means of double language and *dissimulatio*, as will be seen in the following chapter.

⁴⁹ 'El pensamiento humanístico y satírico de Torres Naharro', *Boletín de la Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo*, 52 (1979), 377-79 (p. 379).

⁵⁰ *Erasmus y España*, p. 782.

2

DOUBLE LANGUAGE IN THE *COMEDIA*

In this chapter I will examine Lope's *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* as a theory of the technique of double language, which, I will argue, he and his followers put in practice in their *comedias*. I will call Lope's technique in his own words 'engañar con la verdad', which could be seen, as I hope to show later, as something more complex than dramatic irony. I will also look at some similarities between Rojas's *converso* double language and Erasmus's *dissimulatio* on one hand, and Lope's literary ideas and practices on the other. The importance of *engañar con la verdad* consists of permitting these dramatists to question received opinions and expressing their individualism and heterodoxy.

2.1 THE DOUBLE LANGUAGE OF THE *CONVERSO* IN *LA CELESTINA*

As Castro has shown, double language is an indication in *converso* authors of a split between two perspectives: ‘La objetiva de lo literariamente concebido y la del *animus creandi* del autor frente a su público [...], el *animus tacendi*’, that is to say, between what the author says overtly and what he says covertly.¹ Goytisolo, speaking of Rojas, observes:

An author such as Rojas was forced to dissent in a language that inherently extolled a great deal of what he wished to reject. [...] Ambiguity is here not an abstraction for critics or a strategy for poets, but a way of existence. [...] Writing is then a subtle act of treason.²

Yovel also declares that double language is not only a stylistic characteristic of *La Celestina*, but one of its central artistic motives, almost its central theme and perhaps Celestina herself is its central symbol.³ She not only deceives society by her pretended piety and by her cosmetic and sexual arts, but she is herself the central means by which Rojas deceived his public.

This double language appears in the Old as well as in the New Testament, as evidenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition of interpreting the Bible in its literal and spiritual meanings. As regards the Jewish tradition, this is described by Hyam Maccoby:

A biblical passage may sometimes carry double or multiple meanings simultaneously [...] An Aggadah might be fact, or it might not be; it was a matter of individual judgement to decide which [...] The Talmud, including its Aggadic elements, was held by them [the Jews] in the utmost reverence, as the repository of accumulated Jewish wisdom; but the wisdom was not necessarily on the surface.⁴

As regards the Christian tradition, there are four classical ways of interpreting the Bible, as quoted by Henri de Lubac:

¹ ‘*La Celestina*’ como contienda literaria, pp. 67-69.

² ‘The Spain of Fernando de Rojas’, p. 31.

³ See Yovel, p. 108.

⁴ *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1996), pp. 43, 45 and 47.

*Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.*⁵

The letter teaches what happened, the allegorical what you are to believe, the moral what you are to do, the anagogical where you are going. For example, Jerusalem (literally) is the city; Jerusalem (allegorically) is the Church; Jerusalem (morally) is the human soul; Jerusalem (anagogically) is heaven. Steve T. Katz demonstrated the close connection between the Jewish and the Christian traditions of the four-fold interpretation:

I begin with the widely employed technique that is called, by the medieval Jewish mystics, PaRDeS (orchard), an acronym derived from four Hebrew words used to describe four different levels of textual reading: *Peshat* = literal (or 'plain'); *Remez* = allegorical; *Derash* = homiletical; *Sod* = mystical. This method has a close, though not an exact, parallel among Christian mystics, who, as characterized in one wellknown Latin couplet, held, 'Littera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria, moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia'.⁶

In parallel to this Jewish tradition of the multiple interpretations of the Old Testament, there existed also a Talmudic tradition of justifying the practice of what Christian theologians have called 'mental reservation', which means not saying all that one thinks. The following is a fair example of the practice:

Halakhic support for the validity of the mental reservation theory may be found in *Nedarim* 62b. In this case, Rava asserts that one may claim to be a 'servant of fire' in order to be exempt from paying a poll tax. To the Persian government, such a statement would suggest that the person is an idolator. In reality, he has professed no loyalty to fire worship; he meant either that he was a servant of a pagan who accepted this form of idolatry, or that he was a loyal Jew who worshipped the one God who, in *Deuteronomy* 4: 24, is designated as 'consuming fire'.⁷

Rojas shows that he was conscious of such double language, already present in the works of Maimonides and Cartagena. In 'El autor a su amigo', speaking of the unknown author of the first Act, he says:

⁵ *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, trans. by Mark Sebanc, 2 vols (Grand Rapids, MI; Edinburgh: Eerdmans-Clark, 1998), I, 103.

⁶ 'Mysticism and the Interpretation of Sacred Scripture', in *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture*, ed. by Steven T. Katz (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 7-67 (pp. 21-22).

⁷ Mark Dratch, 'Nothing but the Truth?', *Judaism*, 37 (2001), 218-28 (p. 221).

Gran filósofo era. Y pues él con temor de detractores y nocibles lenguas, más aparejadas a reprehender que a saber inventar, quiso celar y encubrir su nombre, no me culpéis si en el fin bajo que lo pongo no expresare el mío. (p. 6)

The mention of ‘nocibles lenguas’ suggests that Rojas was acutely aware of the possibility of accusations of heterodoxy and therefore that there was a need to ‘celar y encubrir’. Later, in the Acrostic Poem, Rojas mentions the ‘reproches, revistas y tachas’ of the ‘nocibles lenguas’ and that he had already suffered as a writer who ‘mucho habla sin mucho sentir’, comparing himself to the flying ant. He thinks that ‘callando obstara’, but, as a writer, he has no choice but to continue with writing (‘insisto remando y los puertos seguros / atrás quedan todos cuanto más ando’); he hints at the necessity and nature of double language:

Como el doliente que píldora amarga
O la recela o no puede tragar,
Métela dentro de dulce manjar,
Engañase el gusto, la salud se alarga.
[...]
Acordé dorar con oro de lata
Lo más fino tibar que vi con mis ojos.
Y encima de rosas sembrar mil abrojos. (p. 8)

The manifest intention of the ‘píldora amarga’ in the ‘dulce manjar’ is to offer a moral message by means of an immoral story, the moral hopefully justifying the immoral; but what Rojas may really be doing is the opposite, delivering, as was seen, a heterodox message under the pretext of offering an orthodox one. The use of double language for the denizens of *La Celestina* was necessary in the world in which they lived, a world of suspicion, pretence and deceit, a reflection of the society of its time. Words like ‘engañar’, ‘fingir’, ‘mentir’, ‘burlar’ and ‘simular’ appear ninety-eight times in the play, apart from many other expressions of the same meaning like ‘hacer que no...’, and so on. Calisto deceives Melibea, his love is not as pure as he swears and deceives himself as well; Sempronio, Pármeno and Celestina deceive Calisto and Melibea, as well as each other; Melibea deceives her parents and herself; Celestina’s profession is to deceive. In this world double language is the most adequate form of communication.

An example of double language and dramatic irony as a means of deception is when Sempronio arrives in Celestina's house, where Elicia, his lover, is entertaining another of her lovers:

SEMPRONIO	¿Qué pasos suenan arriba?
ELICIA	¿Quién? Un mi enamorado.
SEMPRONIO	Pues créolo.
ELICIA	¡Alahe! Verdad es. Sube allá y verle has.
SEMPRONIO	Voy.
CELESTINA	¡Anda acá! Deja esa loca, que ella es liviana y, turbada de tu ausencia, sácasla agora de seso. Dirá mil locuras. Ven y hablemos. No dejemos pasar el tiempo en balde.
SEMPRONIO	Pues, ¿quién está arriba?
CELESTINA	¿Quiéreslo saber?
SEMPRONIO	Quiero.
CELESTINA	Una moza, que me encomendó un fraile.
SEMPRONIO	¿Qué fraile?
CELESTINA	No lo procures.
SEMPRONIO	Por mi vida, madre, ¿qué fraile?
CELESTINA	¿Porfías? El ministro el gordo. (p. 46)

The two women deceive the street-wise Sempronio as if he were a child and, what is more, they deceive him with the truth: Celestina tells him that Elicia 'dirá mil locuras', which is precisely what Elicia does and with which Sempronio is well satisfied. What is also significant is that characters of inferior social status (Sempronio, Pármeno, Celestina) use the double language of religious hypocrisy and spurious reason not only to exploit their masters, but also to attack the religious and the social hierarchy. Van Beysterveldt agrees with this interpretation of Rojas's use of double language; for him, *La Celestina* is more than anything a covert attack on the aristocracy.⁸

Double language appears even in the names of the characters, loaded with inversion and irony. Pleberio, a man of honour and wealth, has a name which clearly refers to the *plebs*; the name of the *alcahueta*, Celestina, on the contrary, refers to heaven; the ignoble Sempronio bears the name of illustrious personages of ancient Rome belonging to the family Sempronia, such as Sempronio Atratio, a Roman Consul of the fourth century AD. Pármeno's name recalls various Christian martyrs, such as St

⁸ See 'Nueva interpretación de *La Celestina*', *Segismundo*, 11 (1977), 87-116.

Parmenio of Códula or St Parmenio of Alexandria, and the ironic reference could be to Pármeno's possible *converso* status and to the religious persecution that both Christian martyrs and *conversos* suffered. The prostitute Areúsa (the Greek Arethusa), again ironically, bears the name of the most virginal nymph of all the nymphs of Diana, who was transformed into a fountain for refusing sex with the river Alpheus. The name of the 'heretical' Calisto, originally the name of a nymph and a constellation, is that of numerous Popes and anti-Popes, and his name is interesting because of its reference to the *calistinos*, a heretical pre-Lutheran sect in Bohemia at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Melibea was the name of a virgin in a myth of Ephesus; she loved the youth Alexis and, forced to marry another, threw herself from the roof of her house, but was saved by Aphrodite, who carried her to her lover, another bitter irony about Melibea, who fell to her death.⁹ It is difficult to believe that all these (and others I have not researched) could be the result of simple accident; more probably, these names also contribute to the ambiguity and double language of *La Celestina*.

2.2 ERASMIAN DISSIMULATIO

The double language in *La Celestina* appears to have signalled the beginning, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of what Perez Zagorin calls the 'Age of Dissimulation', when people tried to discuss, as best they could, the unmentionable problems of Jews living amongst Christians, Protestants amongst Catholics and vice-versa, and Christian sects. Kevin Reed describes this age:

At times, dissidents within [...] despised minorities were forced to react to life amidst hostile surroundings. Many resorted to modes of speech and action which concealed or obscured their inner convictions; some went along outwardly with prevailing customs, leaving the impression that they shared common opinion;

⁹ All references to names were obtained from *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*.

while others, when pressed, denied their secret beliefs outright, reserving their real convictions to themselves and others of a kindred mind.¹⁰

In this context, Erasmus has to be considered as one of the most important practitioners of dissimulation. He ^{LIKE} ~~(was, as well as)~~ ^{WAS} Luther, a radical reformer who wanted to improve the Catholic Church by returning it to its original purity. The difference between the two men was that, at the moment of meeting official opposition from within the Church, Luther was not against severing his ties with Rome, whereas Erasmus was determined not to break with the Pope. Thus, for Erasmus double language was a necessity, having regard to, on one hand, his determination to remain within the Church and, on the other hand, the determination of parts of Church hierarchy to suppress any signs of radical reform. Rome maintained that ordinary Christians were not the equals of the clergy, a doctrine based on the scholastic distinction between 'precepts' (strict rules for all) and 'counsels' (for the clergy only) on which the power of the clergy was founded, while Luther flatly denied this. Erasmus, however, said only '*Monachatus non est pietas*', but with this affirmation of the universality of *pietas* he also, like Luther, affirmed in cogent theological terms the equality of all Christians: the Sermon on the Mount is addressed equally to all baptized. ^{THE} Erasmus called this double language *dissimulatio*, relating it to classical examples such as its use by Seneca, Lucan, Persius and Tacitus, who had to write under Nero's tyrannical rule.¹¹ Erasmus's defence of *dissimulatio* implied a criticism of the scholastic condemnation of irony because it was deemed to be a denial of the truth, such as was lying, hypocrisy, and boasting.¹² James D. Tracy sums up *dissimulatio*:

¹⁰ 'Religious Dissemblers and Theological Liars' (Review of Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990)), in *Still Waters Revival Books*, <<http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualnls/relliars.htm>> [accessed 3 October 2003] (para. 3 of 35).

¹¹ See Vasily Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetoricization* (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 6-7.

¹² See St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, cura Fratrum eiusdem Ordinis, 5 vols (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1952), II-II (qq. 110-13).

Erasmus's term for what might be called strategic tact, that is, refraining from stating views that would likely provoke a quarrel, but without belying one's true opinion. In his annotation to Gal. 2 : 11, where Paul tells how he reproved Peter for abandoning the practice of eating with gentile Christians, Erasmus noted St Thomas Aquinas's opinion that Peter had sinned because of the scandal occasioned by his *dissimulatio*, that is, his feigned acceptance of Jewish Christian scruples about eating with gentiles. Yet in Erasmus's view Peter 'would have sinned more gravely by not dissimulating, for he would have given greater scandal to his own people, for whom he ought to have had more consideration'. (p. 122)

Erasmus often wrote in a deliberately ambiguous manner and justified this by referring to the examples of Christ: 'Erasmus models this tactic of accommodation on Christ's own use of the rhetorical strategy of dissimulation, at times to the point of dissembling his divine nature, yet without obscuring the truth.'¹³ Tracy quotes a telling example of Erasmus's casuistry:

He [Erasmus] will not oppose 'the Roman Church, which does not differ, I conceive, from the Catholic Church'; 'the Church of Rome I recognize and think it does not disagree with the Catholic Church. From that church death shall not tear me asunder, unless the church is sundered openly from Christ.' [...] Erasmus was professing loyalty to the one Catholic Church, only secondarily to the papacy that presided over it. (p. 123)

Spanish Erasmists, especially of *converso* background, also practised *dissimulatio*. This was the case of Juan de Valdés, who tried to create a bridge between Catholicism and Erasmism, and who, like his mentor Erasmus, managed never to break his connection with either.¹⁴ Erasmus's situation between Catholicism and Lutheranism was not dissimilar to that of Valdés and other *conversos*, trapped between Judaism and Catholicism, not fully accepted by either, and his technique of *dissimulatio* was also similar to *converso* double language. In fact, the *Lingua* of Erasmus, that presents the most interesting examples of Erasmian ambiguity, was a favourite book of *conversos*:

La *Lingua* de Erasmo, aparecida en el conjunto Barcarrota, fue un libro de gran difusión entre los perseguidos judeoconversos, que debieron sentirse identificados con la denuncia que en ella se hace de la maledicencia o 'males de la lengua desenfrenda'. El sincretismo erasmista y su espiritualidad esencial, su

¹³ Kenneth Lloyd-Jones, 'Erasmus and Dolet on the Ethics of Imitation and the Hermeneutic Imperative', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 2-1 (1995), 27-44 (p. 30).

¹⁴ See Hamilton, p. 130.

modo de entender la religión – nada formulario y ritual – debió de constituir el bálsamo que necesitaban aquellas criaturas afligidas, víctimas en muchas ocasiones de una íntima y sincera escisión de conciencia. También los falsos conversos (los criptojudíos) pudieron encontrar apoyo espiritual en este alegato erasmista en pro de la tolerancia, el ironismo [*sic*] y la verdadera caridad.¹⁵

Marcel Bataillon and Fernando Serrano Mangas quote two concrete cases of *converso* physicians, the doctors López de Illescas and Francisco de Peñaranda, who owned and read the *Lingua* of Erasmus, and therefore were hounded by the Inquisition.¹⁶

The *conversos*, reading in the *Lingua* about ‘maldicencia’, could have been forgiven for thinking that Erasmus was writing of their fate in the following:

¿Cuántos se han muerto por falsa acusación? ¿Cuántos han sido desposeídos de sus bienes por falsas relaciones? [...] Pero mucho más grave cosa es adulterar la fama de su prójimo. El que mata algún hombre con hierro solamente le quita la vida que, así como así, había de perder. El que causa falsamente que la hacienda de otro sea confiscada por el rey, con el mismo hurto degüella a muchos: a la mujer, a los hijos, y a la familia; pues causa que vengan en hambre y desesperación.¹⁷

Anyone familiar with the work of Fernando de Rojas would perhaps recall the ‘nocibles lenguas’ so strongly condemned in *La Celestina*.

Apart from the above attacks on *maldicientes*, the *Lingua* could be read by the *converso* as a Christian Humanist manual for *dissimulatio*, which enriched and supported the tradition of *converso* double language. In this book readers could have learnt how to sustain ideas that are difficult to reconcile with the truth, that is to say, how to dissimulate, which is not saying what one thinks, without lying, which is saying what one does not think. Here is an example by the master of the art of *dissimulatio*:

No quiero aquí decir de los sabios que llamamos sofisticos, los cuales con aparentes agudezas engañan a los simples. Ni quiero aquí despertar aquella

¹⁵ Fernando T. Pérez González, ‘El elemento hebraico y la Biblioteca de Barcarota’, *Gacetilla de la Unión de Bibliófilos Extremeños*, 14 (1996) <<http://www.unex.es/ubex/n14/pag5.htm>> [accessed 8 October 2003] (para. 5 of 6).

¹⁶ See Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, pp. 485-86, and Fernando Serrano Mangas, *El secreto de los Peñaranda: Casas, médicos y estirpes judeoconversas en la Baja Extremadura rayana (Siglos XVI y XVII)* (Madrid: Hebraica, 2003), p. 14.

¹⁷ *La lengua*, trans. by Bernardo Pérez de Chinchón, in *Escritos de crítica religiosa y política*, ed. by Miguel Ángel Granada (Barcelona: Círculo de lectores, 1996), p. 314. When appropriate, I have modernized the spelling.

cuestión si puede lícitamente el cristiano mentir en algún propósito, porque sería nunca acabar. Solamente diré aquesto y lo osaré afirmar, que como muchas veces es prudente callar o disimular lo que es verdad, así conviene que los que una vez propusieron en sus espíritus de nunca mentir, se refrenen de todo linaje de mentira. Cualquiera que a sabiendas miente, poco le falta para perjurio, que es lo peor a que el cristiano puede llegar. (p. 318)

Erasmus's opinion of Jews and Judaism was also characterized by prevarication.

He passes, almost imperceptibly, from condemning Jews to condemning Christians for the same sin, namely, divorcing themselves from God:

Hoy los judíos [...] no conocen su esposo, porque al que con mentira negaron, mataron con homicidio. Ni cesan hoy en día de hurtarle sus ovejas, las cuales con su sangre compró. Ni cesan de blasfemar hoy en día en sus sinagogas a Aquél en cuyo nombre se inclina todo lo que está en cielo y en la tierra, y aun en los infiernos. ¡Oh, cómo abomina San Pablo este divorcio y apartamiento en aquellos que, después de haberlos sacado de la servitud del diablo, los había desposado con Jesucristo! (p. 315)

However, it must be noted that Erasmus used *dissimulatio* to criticize Judaism, but not contemporary Jews; he condemns the Jews as deicides but does not justify their persecution. Erasmus used the term 'Jewish' with ambiguity, mostly to mean an excessive reliance on formalism as opposed to spiritual faith:

One of his common phrases is *plusquam Judaicis rerum corpoream*, which is translated literally as 'more than Jewish things of the body', although it is often more usefully translated as 'more than Jewish formalism'. Towards the end of his life he stated it explicitly: 'Judaism I call not Jewish impiety, but prescriptions about external things, such as food, fasting, clothes, which to a certain degree resemble the rituals of the Jews.' It is true that Erasmus often used this formulation in a disparaging context, but we must recognize that his target here was not Jewish people – it was religious formalism within Christianity.¹⁸

Erasmus's ambiguity respecting Jews and Judaism could have been especially interesting to his *converso* followers as indications how to save their self-respect amidst a society that hated their old religion.

It needs also to be mentioned that, apart from Erasmian prevarication and in the context of this 'Age of Dissimulation', there was another Christian doctrine (paralleled,

¹⁸ Chris Crawford, 'Erasmus was not anti-Semitic', in *Erasmus the Hero* <http://www.erasmatazz.com/library/Erasmus_the_Hero/Anti_Semitic.html> [accessed 3 October 2003] (para. 14 of 25)

as was seen, by the Talmudic teaching) of being economical with the truth, called since the thirteenth century *restrictio mentalis*:

In the strict mental reservation the speaker mentally adds some qualification to the words which he utters, and the words together with the mental qualification make a true assertion in accordance with fact. On the other hand, in a wide mental reservation, the qualification comes from the ambiguity of the words themselves, or from the circumstances of time, place, or person in which they are uttered.¹⁹

There are two especially interesting points about *restrictio mentalis*: one, that, despite the condemnation of its strict version by Innocent XI in the work of Tomás Sánchez, it was widely practised and justified by the Jesuits, to the point where *jesuítico* became, according to DRAE, a synonym for ‘hipócrita, disimulado’.²⁰ The other, that the Jesuits were the principal educators in Spain after Erasmism has been suppressed. In this respect, Bataillon observes: ‘Este humanismo [erasmista] cada vez más sospechoso [...] estaba siendo suplantado cada vez más por otro humanismo cuyos maestros por excelencia eran los jesuitas.’²¹ Due to the importance given to the visual element in their spirituality, the theatre became an integral part of Jesuit pedagogy:

It was inevitable that many talented actors and writers would graduate from the Jesuit schools because there were many Jesuit schools and because drama was a serious part of the curriculum. Since there were not many plays available, the drama teachers wrote them and also had their students write them and then put them on in their own schools. So Lope de Vega, Molière, Racine, the Corneille brothers and many others started writing at a young age while still in the Jesuit schools.²²

In fact, it was in the Jesuit Colegio Imperial of Madrid that young Lope studied between 1574 and 1576, and thus perhaps it is not surprising that the Jesuit use of *restrictio mentalis* and their linguistic artistry may have reinforced the influence that the *converso*

¹⁹ T. Slater, ‘Mental Reservation’, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Kevin Knight <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10195b.htm>> [accessed 3 October 2003] (para. 10 of 11).

²⁰ August Lehmuhi, ‘Thomas Sanchez’, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Kevin Knight <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13427c.htm>> [accessed 3 October 2003] (para. 3 of 4).

²¹ See Bataillon, *Erasmus y España*, p. 771.

²² Joseph F. MacDonnell, ‘The Play’s the Thing...’, in *Companions of Jesuits: A Tradition of Collaboration* <<http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/jmac/sj/cj/cj4drama.html>> [accessed 8 November 2003] (para. 36 of 51).

double language and Erasmian *dissimulatio* could have had on Lope's practice of ambiguity in his *comedias*. These influences could have been passed on from Lope to his followers, Calderón, who attended the same Colegio between 1608 and 1613, and Tirso, who was also educated in a Jesuit college.²³ In parallel with the possible Jesuit influence in respect of the use of ambiguous language by these dramatists, one could also note the Jesuit influence on them in respect of their positive attitude towards *conversos*. As mentioned before, St Ignacio of Loyola forbade the Jesuits to practise the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* and it is probable that Lope, Calderón, Tirso and others, students at Jesuit colleges, have assimilated, if not Jesuit pro-Judaism, at least Jesuit tolerance. According to Paterson, the Jesuits 'formaban parte de la consabida alianza filosemita en la Corte' (p. 56).

2.3 'ENGAÑAR CON LA VERDAD'

Could Rojas's *converso* double language and Erasmus's Humanist *dissimulatio* be seen as influences on Lope's *engañar con la verdad* in his *Arte Nuevo*? Neither Rojas's nor Erasmus's name appear in the *Arte Nuevo*, but the similarities between Rojas's 'píldora amarga' and Erasmus's *dissimulatio*, on one hand, and Lope's *engañar con la verdad*, on the other, are noteworthy. There are signs that Lope was familiar with *La Celestina* and these signs have been noted by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, José F. Montesinos, José Manuel Blecuá and Francisco Rico in respect of *El caballero de Olmedo*, and by Edwin S. Morby and Félix Monge in respect of *La Dorotea*.²⁴ Edward Nagy, in respect

²³ See Julio Alonso Asenjo, 'Introducción al teatro de colegio de los jesuitas hispanos (siglo XVI)', in *Ars Theatrica*, ed. by José L. Canet, Evangelina Rodríguez and Josep Lluís Sirera <http://parnaseo.uv.es/Ars/teatresco/estudios/introduccion_al_teatro.htm> [accessed 10 November 2003] (para. 104 of 137)

²⁴ See Juan Manuel Rozas, *Estudios sobre Lope de Vega* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1990), pp. 28 and 54, and José

of *comedias* in general, studies the physical, behavioural and linguistic similarities between Rojas's *Celestina* and *las celestinas lopescas*. He notes also the similarities between Rojas's and Lope's evident sympathy for the marginalized, citing Ricardo del Arco y Garay: 'Lope se encara con manifiesta indulgencia con heteiras y mozas ligeras, con meretrices y alcahuetas, con ladrones, vagabundos, mendigos y rufianes.'²⁵

Lope's familiarity with Erasmus's teaching is more difficult to establish; by his time Erasmus's works have been on the *Index* for half a century and, as was seen in the first chapter, their influence on Golden-Age theatre may have been restricted to religious drama in the sixteenth century and to the Humanist ethic that informed much of the criticism directed at the code of honour in the seventeenth century. Bataillon states that the last important Spanish Erasmists were Fray Luis de León and Cervantes, but he also acknowledges that Lope knew of Erasmus's teachings; although in public he criticized the *Adagia*, in private he sympathized with the irony in *Praise of Folly*. Bataillon also demonstrates the influence of the Erasmists Luis de Granada y Diego de Estella in Lope's sonnet *Pastor que con tus silbos amorosos*.²⁶ Finally, in his *La Filomena*, Lope himself may have referred to Erasmus's *The Sileni of Alcibiades*: 'Y acuérdase de los silenos de Alcibiades: *Erant enim simulacra*, por lo exterior fiera y hórrida; pero con deidad intrínseca, y donde Heráclito dijo que estaba escondida la verdad.'²⁷

Lope could have learned the importance of double language in the works of Rojas and Erasmus. The 'píldora amarga' and *dissimulatio* could have been a model for him to create a theatrical technique to ridicule and subvert the ruling ideology; this

Manuel Blecua, 'Estudio' of Lope de Vega, *El caballero de Olmedo* (Zaragoza: Clásicos Ebro, 1979), p. 18.

²⁵ 'Lope de Vega y *La Celestina*', *Cuadernos de la Facultad de Filosofía, Letras y Ciencias* (Xalapa, México: Universidad Veracruzana), 39 (1968), 161-83, and *La sociedad española en las obras dramáticas de Lope de Vega* (Madrid: Escelicer, 1941), p. 822.

²⁶ See *Erasmus y España*, Chapter 14, p. 773 and pp. 755-56.

²⁷ Lope de Vega, *La Filomena*, in *Obras poéticas*, ed. by José Manuel Blecua (Barcelona: Planeta, 1983), pp. 872-891 (p. 873).

would have been difficult for Lope if he had followed the *Poetics* of Aristotle, which prescribes telling the truth. Both Rojas and Erasmus, in order to be able to live and write in peace, had to dissimulate in their life as well as in their work. Lope, a possible descendant of *conversos*, had to do the same, as will be seen in Chapter 6; hence his art had more in common with that of Rojas and Erasmus than with Aristotle's.

The non-Aristotelian character of the *Arte Nuevo* is maintained by Blanco in his theory of Aristotelian mimesis and Lopean mimetism.²⁸ He defines 'mimesis' as mere imitation, whereas mimetism is imitation as a mask to hide behind, a means of self-defence and also of attack.²⁹ According to Lope, the *comedia* had to be inoffensive; his advice was: 'Pique sin odio' (l. 345). This desire not to antagonize anyone is perhaps one of the most significant elements in the *Arte Nuevo* that it has in common with the *converso* perspective. As was seen in Chapter 1, the *converso* occupied precisely such an intermediate position between Christianity and Judaism. He wanted to be a critic of society and, at the same time, avoid antagonizing anyone. Instead of confronting and attacking, for which old Greek 'sátira' had been suppressed (ll. 99-101), Lope softly mocks conventions hoping not to be seen doing so. McKendrick also notes this tendency: 'Lope was unashamedly and literarily duplicitous in his approach, raising double dealing to a fine art.'³⁰

²⁸ I use the following edition: Lope de Vega, *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, in *Rimas de Lope de Vega*, ed. by Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, 2 vols (Madrid: Universidad de Castilla La Mancha, 1994), II, 355-93.

²⁹ See 'El *Arte Nuevo*: Catálisis de Lope', in 'Mechontologia' <<http://www.mechontologia.net/ct/lop.zip>> [accessed 24 January 2003] (para. 23 of 51).

³⁰ *Playing the King: Lope de Vega and the Limits of Conformity* (London: Tamesis, 2000), p. 121.

2.3.1 THE AIM OF DRAMA ACCORDING TO THE *POETICS* AND THE *ARTE NUEVO*

The aim of drama in Lope's *Arte Nuevo* is summed up in the following lines:

Sustento en fin lo que escribí, y conozco
que aunque fueran mejor de otra manera,
no tuvieran el gusto que han tenido
porque a veces lo que es contra lo justo
por la misma razón deleita el gusto. (ll. 372-76)

From classical Greek to Medieval religious drama, European theatre was, up to Lope's time, didactic with a moral purpose. In Aristotelian theory, at least as interpreted by the majority of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century neo-Aristotelian commentators, drama, both tragedy and comedy, has a moral aim: Justice, 'lo justo', achieved by imitating reality. To be more specific, the moral aim of tragedy is the purification (*katharsis*) of emotions by means of pity and fear, and of comedy the reprehension of the behaviour of men by means of laughter, in both cases the technique is imitating, in tragedy, the actions of a higher type of man, and, in comedy, the actions of a lower type.³¹ In contrast with the above, Lope's principal aim in his *comedias* appears to be 'darle gusto' (l. 48) to his public by apparently imitating an idealized reality, but covertly mocking it. This is why Blanco considers the *Arte Nuevo* as the first purely aesthetic theory of drama.³² In it Lope had made 'gusto' (the aesthetic) his principal aim, and not the Good (the moral) and the Truth (the didactic). Lope's entertainment had a political or perhaps moral content, but the political or moral was not the objective of Lope's *comedias*; the objective was always 'dar gusto' and the political-moral was important but only as a consequence of 'dar gusto'. Lope seems to have taken the famous Horatian axiom that the aim of art was *enseñar deleitando* and to have stood it on its head, making the aim of his art *deleitar enseñando*; *deleitar* is 'dar gusto' and what he is *enseñando* is the political-moral consequence of the *deleite*. The word 'gusto', which

³¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. by Samuel H. Butcher (New York and London: Dover, 1976), p. 12 (II, 1448a).

³² See 'El *Arte Nuevo*' (para. 21 of 51).

appears six times in the work (ll. 48, 209, 297, 302, 374 and 376), underlines the importance that Lope attaches to the Aesthetic. Here he states that ‘los casos de honra son mejores’, as well as ‘acciones virtuosas’, and that ‘la virtud es dondequiera amada’ (ll. 327-30), propositions that appear to belong to the realm of the conventionally moral. However, the justification he offers for his propositions is, paradoxically, not moral, but aesthetic: ‘Los casos de honra son mejores porque mueven con fuerza a toda gente.’ Therefore, he had to abandon Aristotle’s concept of simple imitation, on which the separation of Tragedy from Comedy is based: ‘Por argumento, la tragedia tiene / la historia y la comedia el fingimiento’ (ll. 111-12). Instead, he advised mixing Tragedy and Comedy, ‘historia’ (True) and ‘fingimiento’ (Fiction):

Lo trágico y lo cómico mezclado,
y Terencio con Séneca, aunque sea
como otro Minotauro de Pasife
harán grave una parte, otra ridícula,
que aquesta variedad deleita mucho. (ll. 174-78)

A possible reason for this may have been a wish to reproduce socially accepted Truth (Aristotle’s History) only to mock it by means of a disparate fiction. Thus, while Aristotle warns in his *Poetics* that one ‘may not indeed destroy the framework of the received legends’ (p. 22), these being expressions of the Truth, Lope often changes radically the plot he found in his sources, be they historical or literary, and in the process sometimes destroys the framework of his History. After all, as Juan María Marín says:

Lope era un dramatugo y, además, del seiscientos. Su obra es una comedia y como tal hay que estudiarla; no podemos caer en el error de contrastar [...] la versión que Lope da de los hechos históricos con la que la historia social nos ofrece.³³

³³ ‘Introducción’ to Lope de Vega, *Fuente Ovejuna*, ed. by Juan María Marín, 6th edn (Madrid: Cátedra, 1985), pp. 21-22. The same idea of Lope changing History to suit his dramatic purposes is also proposed by Alan K.G. Paterson (‘Stages of History and History on Stage: On Lope de Vega and Historical drama’, in *Spanish Theatre: Studies in Honour of Victor F. Dixon*, ed. by Kenneth Adams, Ciaran Cosgrove and James Whiston (London: Tamesis, 2001), pp. 147-56 (p. 151)).

For example, in *Fuente Ovejuna* 'el Fénix modifica las figuras de los instigadores, sustituyendo al Conde y al Marqués por el Comendador, de modo que fuera éste el "malo" de la obra [...], mientras diluye la responsabilidad del Maestre'.³⁴

The changes he introduces distort the History, but they make the action more dramatic; they not only increase the enjoyment the play affords the audience, but permit indirect mockery of both the aristocracy and the monarchy. The above innovations had precedents in Spanish drama, as Lope himself recognized in the *Arte Nuevo* (Lope de Rueda: l. 64, Cristóbal de Virués: l. 215, and Miguel Sánchez: l. 321). Curiously, he fails to mention Fernando de Rojas, whose *La Celestina* was undoubtedly a popular work in the Spain of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was Rojas who first mixed the tragic with the comic and who coined the word *tragicomedia*. Could this omission have been due to Lope's desire to avoid being associated with another *converso*? Significantly, neither does Lope refer, when citing other Spanish writers, to those *conversos* whose writings had formed part of the birth of early modern Spanish theatre, all long dead by Lope's time. According to Castro, 'el teatro español no hubiera nacido de no haber sido conversos, judíos de casta, Juan del Encina, Lucas Fernández, Torres Naharro y Diego Sánchez de Badajoz'.³⁵ The following discussion will show how Lope combines action and language in a way different from Aristotle's prescriptions, in order to achieve the contradictory aims of approving the socially conventional while mocking it, a typically *converso* enterprise.

³⁴ Marín, 'Introducción' to *Fuente Ovejuna*, p. 27. There are more examples of such changes in Stephen Gilman, 'Lope, dramaturgo de la historia', in *Lope de Vega: El teatro*, ed. by Antonio Sánchez Romeralo, 2 vols (Madrid: Taurus, 1989), I, 181-91.

³⁵ *De la edad conflictiva*, p. 272.

2.3.2 THE ACTION AND LANGUAGE OF DRAMA IN THE *POETICS* AND THE *ARTE NUEVO*

According to Lope, Aristotle requires a play to imitate actions that could be true: ‘Sólo ha de *imitar lo verosímil*’ (l. 285); ‘imitar las *acciones* de los hombres’ (l. 52). The *Arte Nuevo*, however, describes the *comedia* as a hyperbolization or exaggeration of reality. While specific actions within Lope’s plots may be *verosímil*, the total character of all the actions is not *verosímil*, but hyperbolized with a special purpose, as will be seen. The *comedia* is a monster: ‘La vil quimera deste monstruo cómico’ (l. 150). ‘Quimera’ and ‘monstruo’ are usually understood to refer to Lope’s mixing of tragedy and comedy.³⁶ However, while Aristotle permitted hyperbolization only in comedy, Lope, by mixing comedy and tragedy, saturated the *comedia* with hyperbolization. This mixture of comic and tragic did not consist of a simple juxtaposition of comic and tragic scenes, but of the transfer of the hyperbolical character of comedy to the totality of the *comedia*, so that there is a play whose character is totally hyperbolical. It is this hyperbolization that the priest attacked in *Don Quixote*: ‘Los extranjeros, que con mucha puntualidad guardan las leyes de la comedia, nos tienen por bárbaros e ignorantes, viendo los absurdos y disparates de las que hacemos.’³⁷ However, what the priest failed to perceive was that these exaggerated actions may have had, as will be seen, a special effect: to subvert what was said.

Apart from their hyperbolical character, Lope’s plots are also notable for the absence of true resolution. Miguel de Unamuno thought that this absence of resolution might be due to the unnatural speed demanded by the impatience and ‘la cólera de un español sentado’ (l. 205): ‘De todos los teatros, el más rápido y teatral es el castellano, en que no pocas veces se corta, más bien que se desata, el nudo gordiano dramático.

³⁶ See Rozas, ‘El significado del *Arte Nuevo*’, in *Estudios sobre Lope de Vega*, p. 270 and Pedraza Jiménez, ‘Introducción’ to *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, p. 57.

³⁷ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quixote de La Mancha*, ed. by Justo García Soriano and Justo García Morales, 2 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1990), I, 798 (Chapter 48).

Lope sobre todo.³⁸ In Aristotle's analysis of tragedy, anagnorisis is the most important of the structural elements; resolving the complications, it leads, by way of the 'justo' (justice), to *catharsis*, the moral aim of drama. In Lope's *comedias*, the ending is often ironic, lacking poetic justice, and not resolving but perpetuating the complications; for example, in *La quinta de Florencia* and *La villana de Getafe*, a forced marriage augurs worse problems than before. As will be seen, this non-resolution has the effect of subverting what had been said before and conversely, a true anagnorisis would make the subversion ineffective. As disciples of Lope, Calderón and Tirso sometimes use the same technique.³⁹

At this point it needs to be noted that, despite the extraordinary character of the action in the new *comedia*, its language must be ordinary ('uso de la gente': l. 260) and *verosímil*:

Si ha de imitar a los que hablan,
no ha de ser por pancayas, por metauros,
hipogrifos, semones y centauros' (ll. 266-68).

However, *ordinary* does not mean 'simple'; in fact, Lope uses irony or double language in his plays, that is to say, his language is ambiguous, contrary to the Aristotelian rule according to which 'the clearest style is that which uses only current or proper words' (p. 31 (XXII, 1458b)). Lopean language may be seen as ambiguous as it has two opposing functions: one, to say explicitly the conventional, the other, to imply the unconventional, underlined by what the hyperbolized action shows. For example, Lope praises King Rodrigo in *El último godo*, King Juan in *El Duque de Viseo* and King Fernando in *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, possibly to protect himself from the censors. The intention of condemning these kings is communicated to the audience by

³⁸ *En torno al casticismo* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1972), pp. 67-68.

³⁹ See Ángel M. García Gómez's analysis of Calderón's *La dama duende*: 'Incomunicación en la dramaturgia calderoniana', in *Hacia Calderón. Octavo Coloquio Anglogermano. Bochum, 1987*, ed. Manfred Tietz (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1988), pp. 14-22. As regards the absence of anagnorisis in Tirso's work, see the discussion of *El árbol del mejor fruto* in Chapter 5.

means of the exaggerated praise, the *engaño*. On this point McKendricks remarks: '[In Lope's writings] a central form of subversion [...] is the protective double speak which counterbalances criticism with ritual flattery. [...] Lope's procedures for dealing with political issues, involving a whole range of sensitivities [...], achieve communication with his audience precisely by anticipating censure and disarming it.'⁴⁰ 'Engañar' appears twice in the *Arte Nuevo* and is polysemic in both cases:

Engañe siempre el gusto, y donde vea
que se deja entender alguna cosa
dé muy lejos de aquello que promete. (ll. 298-304)

El engañar con la verdad es cosa
que ha parecido bien. (ll. 319-20)

The meaning of *engañar* in ll. 298-304 is 'to excite' the pleasure, by putting off the conclusion till the last possible moment, but more importantly 'to deceive', as quoted in COV: 'Díjose de la palabra *ganeum*, que vale el bodegón o taberna secreta, donde se vende el gato por liebre.' Lope's *engañar* means above all 'to deceive', 'dar gato por liebre'. Coincidentally, both Rojas and Lope used the same expression, 'engañase el gusto', to describe their objectives. However, once again there is no reference to the *converso* Rojas, who, as was seen, delivers a heterodox message under the pretext of offering an orthodox message. Possibly inspired by the inherent ambiguities and double language of the Talmudic books, Rojas has introduced into Spanish drama the technique of *engañar el gusto* which Lope later refined in his *comedias as engañar con la verdad*:

El engañar con la verdad es cosa
que ha parecido bien, como lo usaba
en todas sus comedias Miguel Sánchez,
digno por la invención de esta memoria.
Siempre el hablar equívoco ha tenido
y aquella incertidumbre anfibológica
gran lugar en el vulgo, porque piensa
que él sólo entiende lo que el otro dice. (ll. 319-26)

⁴⁰ *Playing the King*, pp. 109 and 122.

The ambiguity in the last two lines is typical of Lope's double language. According to Spanish grammar, the word 'sólo' could refer equally well to 'el vulgo' or to 'lo que el otro dice'. Strictly speaking, if the word were to refer to the *vulgo*, it would have to be without accent, because it would be an adjective; however, Golden-Age writing had no clear rules about accents and Pedraza Jiménez's critical edition, which uses 'sólo', does not mention the possibility of using the word without accent. One reading may be that only the *vulgo* understands what 'el otro' (the actor) says. The other possible reading is that the *vulgo* understands only what the actor says; the word 'sólo' in the second reading suggests that stage-action may imply something other than what the actor says. The first interpretation is simply that the *vulgo* likes dramatic irony. For example, the protagonist of Lope's *Los locos de Valencia* thinks that he has killed the prince and is hiding from the authorities in a mental hospital, where everyone, except his friend and the girl he loves, thinks he is mad. In a conversation with the police, the hero 'confesses' to killing the prince, but the police only laugh at the 'madman'; his alibi as a madman is only strengthened by this confession.⁴¹ Another example of *engañar con la verdad* in its literal sense may be found in Cervantes's *entremés* 'El viejo celoso' when young Lorenza describes to her husband, the old Cañizares, what is going on behind the locked door, namely the young student making love to her, a truth so unlikely that Cañizares takes it as a joke. This is dramatic irony, because the public knows the truth. It is in this sense, as dramatic irony, that Lope's *engañar con la verdad* is generally understood, for example by Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez: 'El *engañar con la verdad* [...] guarda relación con la ironía trágica y con el *hablar equívoco*.'⁴² The second interpretation is that the *vulgo* only understands the conventional in what is being said, and not the subversive in what is shown by action. Rojas used double language to show the discrepancy between words and actions, that is, to expose hypocrisy. In *La Celestina*

⁴¹ Lope de Vega, *Los locos de Valencia*, BAE, XXIV, 113-36.

⁴² 'Introducción' to *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, p. 386.

the characters do not act as they say. Lope goes further in his use of double language. In some of his *comedias*, as will presently be seen in the discussion of *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, the hyperbolical actions of the characters negate what they say. This is Lope's fundamental innovation, which is sometimes overlooked when more attention is paid to the text of a play than to its action; as José Ortega y Gasset remarks, 'el Teatro [...] antes que un género literario, es un género visionario o espectacular'.⁴³ McKendrick also notes a 'disjunction between what is said and what is seen to be the case, between the characters expressed perception of events and the play as a whole'.⁴⁴ Without referring to *engañar con la verdad*, she recognizes this technique:

A concealed dialectic is set up by the play-text and the audience is left to draw its own conclusions from the way words spoken connect, or fail to connect, with what it sees unfold before it. The inscribing of ironic contradictions [...] to create space in which inference might operate was a key feature of Lope's political agenda. [...] Dramatic dialogue is directed not only at the listeners on stage, but at those watching, and the meaning conveyed need not be the same in both cases. (pp. 51 and 119)

McKendrick, once again, observes:

The drama's potential for speaking with more than one voice was in fact acknowledged in the late seventeenth century by the playwright and theorist Bances Candamo, who referred to plays written for kings as 'decir sin decir'. (p. 12).

Why did Lope have to use *engañar con la verdad*? Part of the answer lies in his awareness of the plurality of his public, from the illiterate and violent *vulgo* to powerful nobles who were also cultured gentlemen. In *engañar con la verdad* Lope found a means of communication that would be understood by all, although they would not all understand the same thing; his purpose was served as long as everyone thought that they understood. He recognized that his public was made up roughly of three classes of spectators: 'Entre los que me siguen, unos hay que entienden, otros que piensan que

⁴³ *Idea del teatro* (Madrid: Revista de Occidente, 1977), p. 36.

⁴⁴ *Playing the King*, p. 109. The next two references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

entienden y otros que dicen lo que oyen a los que entienden', which could be reduced to two: *los que entienden* and *los que no entienden*.⁴⁵

Lope's *engañar con la verdad* may therefore be seen as a new use of irony, an art that has a long history. Aristotle, ^{LIKE} ~~as~~ all Ancient Greek and Roman writers, knew the concept of irony, which at that time had the Socratic meaning of self-depreciative dissimulation. By the time of Quintilian irony was regarded as a figure of speech, defined as 'saying one thing but meaning another'; Ancient Greek and Roman writers used irony mostly didactically, rhetorically and humoristically, except in times of political repression, such as under Nero. Rojas, Erasmus and Lope used irony not only in the above ways, but, living under repressive political regimes, as a means of saying indirectly and safely what could have been unpopular and perhaps dangerous to say directly. Direct attack was only possible from the safety of abroad, such as Miguel de Barrios's *Contra la verdad no hay fuerza*, written in Amsterdam between 1665 and 1672.⁴⁶ This play was considered by John Beusterien as 'his [Barrios's] response to the... *auto de fe*'.⁴⁷ In order to criticize indirectly, Lope gave more importance in his plays to the element of deception in irony and extended the rhetorical sense of irony to situational, that is to say to unspoken irony arising from a situation, an event or an action. This situational irony was not necessarily meant to be understood by all the audience, because, as Douglas C. Muecke notes, the audience itself was often the victim of the irony.⁴⁸ Lope may well have been satisfied if a small section of his audience understood his meaning or sometimes perhaps only himself.

⁴⁵ *Prólogo a la Parte XII de las Comedias de Lope* (Madrid: Viuda de Alonso Martín, 1619), p. 22.

⁴⁶ See Kenneth R. Scholberg, *La poesía religiosa de Miguel de Barrios* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1961), p. 110.

⁴⁷ 'Miguel de Barrios' *Contra la verdad no hay fuerza*, a New "Auto" in Seventeenth-Century Spanish Drama', in *A society on stage*, ed. by Edward H. Friedman, H.J. Manzari and Donald D. Miller (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 1998), pp 13-20 (p. 15).

⁴⁸ *Irony, The Critical Idiom*, 13 (London: Methuen, 1970), p. 26. This book was used as reference for the history and the analysis of the concept of irony.

A *comedia* in which all the formative elements of *engañar con la verdad* are present is *Los comendadores de Córdoba*.⁴⁹ The older Veinticuatro, who is very much in love with his wife, discovers that she is betraying him with his nephew; he catches them in bed together and murders not only them, but his entire household. He confesses all to King Fernando who seconds his actions and gives him one of his wards for a wife. While the language is realistic, the action, especially in the murder scene, is not: the Veinticuatro murders not only his wife and her lover, but his niece, his other nephew, all his servants, a pet monkey, dogs and cats. Even a parrot is deemed guilty of treachery because, able to speak, it failed to warn its master of his impending dishonour. Lope mixes the tragic with the comic, the slaughter of the innocent people, with the comedy of two servants, rolled up in a mat, trying to hide from their maddened master. The action is hyperbolical. At first sight, the ending provides an anagnorisis, seeming to solve the moral and matrimonial problems with a conventional, explicitly happy resolution. However, when the king gives a young girl in marriage to the old Veinticuatro, the original problem of a jealous old man with a young wife is resurrected. Here one may see the technique of *engañar con la verdad* when, on the one hand, the king says that the Veinticuatro's action was honourable, and, on the other hand, the Veinticuatro's words imply and his hyperbolized actions show that he was insane. His insanity can be best seen when certain details in the play are compared with the original source, a sixteenth century *romance* by Juan Rufo. This contains the killing by the Veinticuatro of the monkey and the parrot, but leaves the sanity of the Veinticuatro in some doubt. In the relevant passage in the *romance* the killing of the animals is simply related, leaving the Veinticuatro's state of mind open to interpretation:

A una mona y papagayo
no les valieron graznidos,
ni los inquietos saltos

⁴⁹ Lope de Vega, *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, in *Obras escogidas de Lope de Vega*, ed. by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, 3 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962), III, 1225-59.

a un atribulado gimio.⁵⁰

However, the protagonist's madness, even if temporary, is left in no doubt in the play by the reasons Lope invents for the Veinticuatro's killing the monkey and the parrot, which are not in the *romance*:

Basta que maté la mona,
porque ya me parecía
que de corrido salía

As to the parrot, the Veinticuatro instructs Rodrigo:

¡Mátale, que a todo estuvo
presente, y su hablar detuvo;
y pues lo supo, y confieso
que no me dijo el suceso
señal es que culpa tuvo! (p. 1257)

If Lope's intention had been to support the code of honour as represented by the Veinticuatro and King Fernando, he would have only mentioned, as in the source, the killing of the animals, and would not have filled the scene of massacre with the farcical attempts by Galindo and Esperanza to escape being killed. By adding a mad motivation to the simple killing of the monkey and the parrot, Lope has succeeded in showing and mocking the madness of the code of honour. Overtly, Lope says *a los que no entienden* that the Veinticuatro was right and that the code of honour is valid; covertly he hints *a los que entienden* that the Veinticuatro was not in his right mind and with that he puts in doubt the sanity of the code of honour and of its defender, the king. Lope's aim, however, had to be above all *dar gusto* to his paying-public by overtly offering an approval of conventional morality to a part of his public, while covertly sending the contrary message to another. McKendrick expresses this idea forcefully in respect of this play:

His [Lope's] popular drama [...] ended up reinforcing and glamorizing attitudes he often treated with irony, ambiguity and even mockery. Like any complex

⁵⁰ Juan Rufo, *Romance de los Comendadores*, in *Las seiscientas apotegmas y otras obras en verso*, ed. by Alberto Blecuá (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1972), pp. 245-280 (p. 274).

writer Lope was capable of exploiting and undermining convention while appearing to celebrating it.⁵¹

As regards double language, McKendrick also refers to Lope's *El postrer godo de España*, in which King Rodrigo is portrayed 'as an out and out villain', but 'none of this censure is explicitly articulated in the dialogue – direct attack was not Lope's way'.⁵²

Lope's technique was used by many later dramatists. *El valiente Campuzano* is an interesting example of this, written by an undoubted *converso*, Antonio Enríquez Gómez; he found the technique useful as a means of criticizing in safety the ideology and practice of *limpieza de sangre*. Enríquez had to be careful. After being prosecuted by the Inquisition for judaizing, he left Spain for France about 1635, but, like so many other Spanish Jews of the period, he was suicidally loyal to Spain and returned secretly, around 1649. He lived and wrote in Seville under the pseudonym of Fernando de Zárate until his capture by the Inquisition in 1660. In 1664 he died in prison.⁵³

Campuzano is a poor but nobly born *cristiano viejo*, obsessed by his *honra* and *limpieza de sangre*. Don Pedro, a rich *asentista*, assumed to be of *morisco* origin, is in love with Campuzano's sister Leonor and wants to marry her. Despite knowing of Don Pedro's tainted ancestry, she is happy to comply, attracted by his wealth:

Yo soy pobre, y no me aplico
A vivir humildemente,
Despreciando claramente
Un esposo noble y rico.
El dinero, con decoro,
Es lustre de los estados,
Y a tres linajes pasados,
Lo que fue cobre ya es oro.
[...]
Aunque yo soy bien nacida,
Ninguno me ha de querer

⁵¹ 'Celebration or Subversion?: *Los comendadores de Córdoba* Reconsidered', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 69 (1984) 352-60 (p. 359).

⁵² *Playing the King*, p. 50.

⁵³ For further details and the identity of Enríquez with Zárate, see Israel-Salvatorre Révah, 'Un pamphlet contre l'Inquisition d'Antonio Enríquez Gómez: La seconde partie de *La política angélica*', *Revue des Études Juives*, 131 (1962), 81-168.

Si pobre me llega a ver.⁵⁴

Campuzano forbids the union, insulting Don Pedro for his humble *morisco* origins:

¿Quién os dijo a vos que yo
Quiero perro con cencerro
En mi linaje? Mi hermana,
Aunque pobre tiene deudos
Muy nobles y muy honrados,
Y la matara primero
Que con vuestra sangre hiciera
Tan desigual casamiento. (p. 573)

Apart from being the representative of the ideology of *limpieza de sangre*, Campuzano may also be seen as a symbol of the Inquisition. Hiding in an inn, he discovers that the owner has betrayed him to the police and that there is a judge on the premises ready to condemn him to death. He puts the inn-keeper on trial, condemns him to death and strangles him, while the terrified judge looks on with impotence. This trial scene could be seen as a parody of the functioning of the Inquisition:

Sin probanzas ni testigos,
peticiones ni traslados
del derecho laberinto,
hemos de juzgar la causa
del ventero. (p. 576)

In the meantime, Don Pedro has decided to avenge the insults he received from Campuzano and at the end of the play both men are in the Spanish army in Italy, where Campuzano kills Don Pedro, because, according to him, the latter had seduced his sister and then refused to marry her. Campuzano is condemned to death, but, due to his extraordinary bravery in battle, he is pardoned and promoted to captain by the Count of Leganés.

The ideology of *limpieza de sangre*, which denies honour to anyone of *morisco* or Jewish origin, is questioned only by the *morisco* Don Pedro and is overtly approved by the comicity and the vitality of Campuzano, his lover Catuja and his servant Pimiento. The *converso* Enríquez, however, covertly subverts it by presenting an

⁵⁴ Antonio Enríquez Gómez, *El valiente Campuzano*, BAE, XLIII, 569-86 (p. 572).

example which disproves the theory: the 'contemptible' *morisco* Don Pedro is both brave and honourable. The play could be seen as an attempt by Enríquez to ridicule by means of *engañar con la verdad*, not only the ideology of *limpieza de sangre*, but the Inquisition, the law and society itself, or, as Glen F. Dille says: 'The work ostensibly exalts the Old Christian values of the apparent hero, the *valentón* Campuzano, but in reality calls into question the notion of blood purity as the cynosure of virtue.'⁵⁵ Dille sums up the message of the play as: 'The "honourable" Old Christian Campuzano shows himself to be a vulgar bigot, while the "dishonourable" New Christian maintains a truly noble standard of conduct and character' (p. 103).

In the following chapter, I will examine a form of *engaño*, the transposition Jew/woman, to show that the defence of women by the most important Spanish Golden-Age dramatists may also be interpreted as a defence of the Jew.

⁵⁵ 'The Tragedy of Don Pedro: Old and New Christian Conflict in *El valiente campuzano*', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 35-36 (1983), 97-109 (p. 98).

3

THE WOMAN AND THE IMAGE OF THE JEW

In the previous chapter I examined Lope's new dramatic technique of *engañar con la verdad*. In this chapter I hope to show the importance of this technique for changing the image of the Jew in the *comedia*. I will look at two special forms of this *engaño* in *comedias de honra*: the transposition of *limpieza de sangre* into *honra* and the transposition of the *Jew* into the *woman*. Since the Jewish problem was in general a risky subject for the *comedia*, *engaño* was necessary if it was to be tackled without endangering a writer who wanted to oppose the ideology of *limpieza*. In the words of Castro: 'Este drama sordo y oprimente no fue llevado a la escena, no era posible

hacerlo.’¹ Márquez Villanueva puts the position starkly: ‘Combatir la *limpieza* era el máximo acto de rebeldía contra la sociedad española.’²

For the Golden-Age Spaniard, his *limpieza* was much more important than his *honra*: ‘Porque en España muy más estimamos a un hombre pechero y limpio que a un hidalgo que no es limpio.’³ This being the case, Américo Castro, Antonie A. Van Beysterveldt, Melveena McKendrick, Alix Zuckerman-Ingber and Georgina Dopico Black have suggested that in the *comedias de honra* and, more specifically in the uxoricide *comedias*, the dramatizable anxiety of husbands about their *honra* masked the more acute but undramatizable anxiety about their own *limpieza de sangre*. This masking of racial anxiety, *limpieza*, by the sexual, *honra*, will be referred to as the transposition *limpieza/honra*. However, the fact is that the woman is not capable of damaging a man’s *limpieza*, because his *limpieza* depends entirely on his *antepasados*. The only possible danger to a man’s *limpieza* is therefore from the *conversos*, the only group that habitually intermarried with *cristianos viejos*. Hence, as the Jew cannot appear on stage and the woman does, the woman could be used as a symbol for the Jew. Thus, from the transposition *limpieza/honra* one could infer the transposition Jew/woman. As the woman is often victim of unjustifiable murder by her husband and the authors’s sympathy is clearly with her, this ‘feminism’ in the *comedia* may be seen as helping to present a positive image of the Jew.

The use of ‘feminism’ to describe the attitude towards women of Lope, Tirso, Calderón, and so on, may be considered an anachronism, but their sympathy and

¹ *De la edad conflictiva*, p. 34.

² ‘El problema de los conversos’, p. 61.

³ Quoted by Antonio Domínguez Ortiz from an official document of the seventeenth century (*La clase social de los conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, p. 204). While I have not been able to examine the original document, the sentence quoted by Domínguez Ortiz also appears in identical form in Melveena McKendrick, ‘Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia: A Case of Mimetic Transference?’, *Modern Language Review*, 79 (1984), 313-35 (p. 329), and in Teresa Ferrer Vals (‘Introduction’ to Lope de Vega, *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña. El mejor alcalde, el rey* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1990), p. xx.

support for women is undeniable when one reads plays like Lope's *La moza de cántaro*, Tirso's *Marta la piadosa* and Calderón's *La dama duende*. McKendrick's view accords with the above: 'The modern observer would probably denounce the feminism of the Golden Age dramatists as very limited indeed. [...] Nevertheless, for men of their day they were feminists.'⁴ This feminism of the authors is even more admirable when one remembers that a part of the *vulgo* may have sympathized more with *el marido vengador*. To call many *comedias* feminist is not anachronistic when the writings of Erasmus have also long been considered feminist. In the Colloquium *La mujer que se queja del matrimonio* (1523)^{WHICH WAS}very popular in Spain in the sixteenth century, Erasmus presents the following dialogue, which would not unfairly be described as feminist:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| EULALIA | Mi primera preocupación fue el ser agradable en todo a mi marido y evitar todo lo que pudiera contrariarle. Observaba sus gustos, tomaba nota también de los momentos en que una cosa le complacía, o de aquello que le irritaba; en resumen, actuaba como los que doman los elefantes, los leones o en general las bestias que no se dejan domar por la fuerza. |
| XANTIPA | Precisamente es un animal de estos lo que tengo en mi casa [...] Pero es así. Cuando vuelve borracho, a casa, donde yo llevo largo rato esperándolo, pasa la noche roncando y vomitando en la cama, por no decir más. |
| EULALIA | Cállate. Te rebajas tú misma rebajando a tu marido. |
| XANTIPA | Que me condene si no preferiría dormir con una trucha que con un marido como el mío. ⁵ |

In fact, Bataillon himself speaks of the 'delicado feminismo' of Erasmus.⁶

Before I present the hypothesis of the transposition Jew/woman, I shall review the transposition *limpieza/honra* in the work of the above mentioned critics, because it is the cornerstone on which the theory of the transposition Jew/woman is based.

⁴ *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age: A Study of the 'mujer varonil'* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 332.

⁵ Quoted in Isabel Morant, *Discursos de la buena vida: Matrimonio, mujer y sexualidad en la literatura humanista* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2002), pp. 41-42.

⁶ *Erasmus y España*, p. 288.

3.1 THE TRANSPOSITION *LIMPIEZA/HONRA*

Coded writing enables an author to oppose an oppressive regime without endangering his position. The Beast in St John's *Apocalypse* symbolizes the tyranny of Imperial Rome; Rabelais in *Gargantue et Pantagruel* and Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* mock the societies of their time. Orwell and Brecht unveil the nature of Communism in *Animal Farm* and in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* respectively, as does Solzenytsin in *Cancer Ward*, while Canetti exposes Nazism in *Die Blendung*. These are all examples of transpositions, intended to disguise criticism of oppression and injustice. *Apocalypse*, like *Animal farm*, *Cancer Ward*, and so on, are clearly critical allegories as opposed to supportive allegory. Critical allegory could be seen, in general, as a branch of transposition, a form of coded writing. A telling example in Spanish Golden-Age literature may be found in one of Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*, *La española inglesa*. García Gómez shows that the plot is based on the true story of María Núñez, which is also related by the Spanish *converso* refugee Miguel Leví de Barrios of Amsterdam.⁷ In Cervantes's tale a Spanish girl, Isabela, remains faithful to Catholicism despite pressures to abandon it while she lives in Protestant England, having been captured by English privateers. Cervantes has transposed the true history of a *sefardita*, María Núñez, a story that was impossible to publish in Spain, into a different, publishable literary text: 'El criptojudasmo real de María Núñez se ha transformado en el criptocatolicismo ficcional de Isabela. [...] Los paralelos con la situación del criptojudío español saltan tan a la vista que, una vez observados, resulta difícil ignorarlos' (pp. 626-27). In his story, by means of a religious transposition, Cervantes implicitly condemns the religious intolerance of the Spanish king by contrasting it with the tolerance of the English queen. He also implicitly praises the unpraisable fidelity to Judaism of María by

⁷ Ángel M. García Gómez, 'Una historia sefardí como posible fuente de *La española inglesa* de Cervantes', pp. 621-28.

means of a transposition to the praisable fidelity to the Catholicism of Isabela. Another example of transposition could be found in the realm of poetry, in Góngora's *Soledades*, which has traditionally been read from both the aesthetic and philosophical point of view.⁸ However, this poem has more recently been interpreted also from a political angle by John Beverley: '*Soledades* [...] reflejan un desengaño de la corte y del destino político de España, y a la vez un deseo de construir algo que pueda contraponer a una realidad política que ha llegado a ser opresiva'; Beverley explains that 'la manera gongorina y el plan de las *Soledades* equivalen a una transferencia al campo estético de cuestiones de ética social y economía política'.⁹ In other words, Góngora had transposed the political into the aesthetic.

I shall now examine in more detail the transposition *limpieza/honra*, which in turn will lead to the transposition central to this thesis, Jew/woman, and a re-valuation of the image of the Jew. The close relationship between *limpieza de sangre* and *honra* was first mooted by Américo Castro and later supported by Albert A. Sicroff, Julio Caro Baroja, Noël Salomon, Marcel Bataillon, Antonie A. Van Beysterveldt, Don W. Cruickshank, Merveena McKendrick and Alix Zuckerman-Ingber.¹⁰ This close

⁸ See Royston Oscar Jones, 'Introduction' to *Poems of Góngora*, ed. by Royston Oscar Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 16 and 26.

⁹ 'Introducción' to Luis de Góngora, *Soledades*, ed. by John Beverley (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), pp. 23 and 25.

¹⁰ See Américo Castro, *De la edad conflictiva*, pp. 45 and 69-71, and 'Algunas observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII', *Revista de Filología Española*, 3 (1916), 1-15; Albert A. Sicroff, *Les controverses des statuts de pureté de sang en Espagne du XV^e au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Didier, 1960), pp. 299-300; Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, II, 324 and 378; Noël Salomon, *Recherches sur le thème paysan dans la comedia au temps de Lope de Vega* (Bordeaux: Féret et Fils, 1965), p. 821; Marcel Bataillon, *Varia lección de clásicos españoles* (Madrid: Gredos, 1964), p. 397; Van Beysterveldt, *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), p.5; Don W. Cruickshank, '“Pongo mi mano en sangre bañada a la puerta”: Adultery in *El médico de su honra*', in *Studies in Spanish Literature of the Golden Age presented to Edward M. Wilson*, ed. by Royston Oscar Jones (London: Tamesis, 1973), pp. 45-62 and 'The Metaphorical "criptojudaísmo" in Calderón's *Gutierre*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 59 (1982), 33-41; McKendrick, 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 320; Alix Zuckerman-Ingber, *'El bien más alto': A Reconsideration of Lope de Vega's Honor Plays* (Gainesville, NJ: University of Florida Book, 1984), p.153. Two dissenting opinions are that of Claude Chauchadis, who maintains that, as the difference between *honor* and *honra* is non-existent, the theory of the transposition *limpieza/honra* is vitiated ('"Honor" y "honra" o cómo se comete un error en lexicología', *Criticón*, 17 (1982), 67-87), and of C.A. Jones, who thinks that the *casos de honra* could have been nothing more than a dramatic convention of the time ('Spanish Honour as Historical

relationship between *limpieza* and *honra* is explicit in *El retablo de las maravillas*, where absence of honour in bastards and absence of *limpieza* in Jews are linked:

Que ninguno puede ver las cosas que en él se muestran, que tenga alguna raza de confeso o no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio; y el que fuere contagiado de estas dos tan usadas enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas [...] de mi retablo.¹¹

A possible support for the transposition *limpieza/honra* could be that the

principale et constituent la substance même d'innombrables comédies espagnoles. Cependant, dans la période que s'étend entre la parution du livre de Juan Ruiz et l'événement de la comedia, des transformations profondes se sont produites en Espagne, donnant lieu à un nouveau patron de vie sociale pour le *vulgo* atteignant une autorité arbitrale qui excédait de loin le terrain des rapports sexuels entre homme et femme.¹²

The *comedia de honra* disappears with the Jewish problem at the end of the seventeenth century. McKendrick points out this correspondence: 'The eighteenth century marks the decline of both the real life obsession with *limpieza de sangre* and the literary obsession with sexual honour. [...] The obsession was a construct of the theatre and declined with it.'¹³ The discrimination against Jews in Spain continues beyond 1700, but from that date the 'obsession with *limpieza de sangre*' begins to decline. Thus, when the

Phenomenon, Convention and Artistic Motive', *Hispanic Review*, 33 (1965), 32-39 (p. 34)).

¹¹ *El retablo de las maravillas*, p. 220 (for bibliographical details, see Chapter 5, note 4).

¹² *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole*, p. 19.

¹³ 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', pp. 329-30.

preoccupation with *limpieza de sangre* disappears from social life, the *comedia de honra* also disappears from the stage.

Another point in favour of the transposition is that there is no dramatic genre in other European countries similar to the Spanish *comedia de honra*, perhaps because there was no similar Jewish problem elsewhere. Van Beysterveldt notes the absence of *casos de honra* in French classical theatre and attributes it also to the absence of the Jewish problem in France. As an example, he quotes Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid*, which is almost a copy of Guillén de Castro's *Las mocedades del Cid*:

Néanmoins, l'esprit de l'oeuvre de Corneille est tout à fait différent de celui de *Las mocedades*. Cette différence, qui donne à la pièce française son originalité, est due au fait [...] que Corneille a transformé l'honneur [...] en volonté, en devoir, dans *Le Cid*.¹⁴

A further example of the absence of *casos de honra* is England. *The Merchant of Venice* deals directly with the Jew and anti-Semitism without having to resort to transposition, and in *Othello* the problem is not honour, but sexual jealousy. Had the passions animating *casos de honra* been universal for being part of human nature, *casos de honra* would have been present in the literature of other countries as well.

However, the strongest argument in favour of this transposition lies in the proposition offered by McKendrick that the *comedia de honra* is not imitative of real life. Ángel Valbuena Briones's theory that Golden-Age theatre imitated life 'sin poner ni quitar nada' has been widely questioned.¹⁵ *Comedias de honra* were not imitative, because 'there were extremely few recorded cases of wife-murder', as McKendrick notes, adding that 'the plays reflect not historical truth, but poetic truth [...]; while Ticknor bluntly pointed out that had seventeenth century Spanish life really been like a

¹⁴ *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole*, p. 227.

¹⁵ 'Prólogo' to Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Obras completas*, ed. by Ángel Valbuena Briones, 2 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1956), I, 14-15.

Calderón play, society would have collapsed'.¹⁶ Matthew D. Stroud emphasizes the non-imitative nature of the wife-murder plays, perhaps the most paradigmatic of the *comedias de honra* because they are the most dramatic:

For a number of reasons we cannot say that these [uxoricide] plays are *speculum vitae*. The number of wife-murders was so small as to make the events remarkable because of their rarity. [...] The laws were not unified in granting to the husband the power of life and death over their wives in matters of honor. [...] There is no indication of public support for wife-murder. [...] There are only four historical husbands who became characters in these *comedias*: Garci Fernández, the Veinticuatro of Córdoba, Fernán Ruiz de Castro, and Juan de Urbina. [...] Because of the general environment of sexual license and the relatively rare occurrence of wife-murder, [...] an audience would have considered the husbands of these plays rare and extreme examples, perhaps somewhat archaic or rustic, but definitely interesting as dramatic protagonists.¹⁷

The *comedia de honra* was not imitative, because there was no original social norm of wife-murder to imitate. As in these plays wife-murder was elevated into a norm (which in life it was not), the *comedia de honra* was likely to have been transpositive. The wives's adultery in *entremeses* is not only not condemned but is celebrated with laughter: 'los maridos burlados son finalmente apaleados en el género.'¹⁸ The husband in Calderón's *El médico de su honra*, who kills his wife, is perhaps less of a reflection of reality than the husbands in *entremeses* such as *Cornudo y contento* by Lope de Rueda, *El viejo celoso* by Cervantes, *Diego Moreno* by Quevedo, or *Guardadme las espaldas* by Calderón himself. Contrary to the murderous husbands in *comedias de honra*, the husbands in these *entremeses*, although they know of their adultery, do not kill their wives. This portrait of marriage could perhaps have been more of a reflection of reality, although hyperbolized, than the one presented in *comedias de honra*. However, it could be argued that the *comedia de honra* was not transpositive, but merely an exciting fiction. It is indeed true that *comedias de honra* were fiction: women

¹⁶ 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 316. This position, that the *comedia* was not imitative, is supported by Eugenio Asensio as well ('Entremeses', in *Suma Cervantina*, ed. by Juan Bautista Avallé-Arce and Edward C. Riley (London: Tamesis, 1973), pp. 171-97 (p. 174)).

¹⁷ *Fatal Union: A Pluralistic Approach to the Spanish Wife-Murder 'Comedias'* (Lewisburg, PA and London: Bucknell University Press-Associated University Presses, 1990), pp. 14-15.

¹⁸ Antonio Rey Hazas, *Teatro breve del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Alianza, 2002), p. 194.

suspected of adultery were not habitually murdered by their husbands on mere suspicion. All the same, murdering on mere suspicion was not a fiction but a fact of life at that time, because people suspected of heresy were habitually convicted on flimsy evidence and executed by the Inquisition. The *comedia de honra* is fiction, but perhaps based on real life, inventing only characters and not executions.

The *comedia de honra* could be seen as transpositive also because the transposition *limpieza/honra* in the *comedia* reflects the real-life transference of the social problem of *limpieza* into the sexual problem of *honra*. An explanation of this real-life transference is offered by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose interpretation of Freudian theory could be applied to the Golden-Age transposition *limpieza/honra*. According to them, psychoanalysis is a sexual representation of a problem that is really social and political: 'The psychoanalyst becomes a director for a private theatre, rather than the engineer [...] who grapples with collective agents of production.'¹⁹ They see Freudianism as an ideology allied to the Establishment to divert people's consciousness from political to personal problems:

Instead of participating in an undertaking that will bring about genuine liberation, psychoanalysis is taking part in the work of bourgeois repression, [...] that is to say, keeping European humanity harnessed to the yoke of daddy-mummy and making no effort to do away with this problem once and for all. (p. 50)

Dopico Black expresses the same idea in respect of Golden-Age Spain:

Social insecurity is articulated as sexual insecurity, the real-life caballero hostage to his heredity becomes the stage galán hostage to his wife's or his daughter's or his sisters' virtue. (p. 113)

Thus, as almost always happens in the theatre where larger themes are represented in terms of the particular, in the *comedia de honra* the social is sometimes reduced into the sexual. This reduction could be seen as ideological, because it may reflect the social practice of transposing the political into the personal in order to maintain the subjection

¹⁹ *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), p. 55.

of the *cristiano nuevo* class. José Ignacio Gutiérrez Nieto confirms the political objective of the *estatutos de limpieza de sangre*: '[La] nobleza tradicional se servirá de la exigencia de la limpieza como instrumento de preservación de su identidad socio-política [...]; desde antiguo había manifestado el deseo de monopolizar corporativamente la dirección de los municipios.'²⁰ As this conservative transposition was reflected in the *comedia*, can one conclude that the *comedia* was conservative? I hope to show at the conclusion of this chapter that Cervantes, Lope, Tirso and Calderón, by ridiculing the private concept of *honra* in the tradition of Cartagena, Rojas and Erasmus, may have been opposing the prejudices of *limpieza de sangre*.

Apart from the above, transposition was also necessary to avoid the ire of the *español sentado* in the *corral*, bored by a play that had no interest for him. The protagonist of a plot about *limpieza* was neither romantic nor representative of the majority of a public that could not identify with this problem. As the theme of *limpieza* was believed not to be dramatizable, it is possible that Lope and his followers have transposed it into 'casos de honra', which, according to Lope in his *Arte Nuevo*, were 'mejores' (l. 327). McKendrick also recognizes the usefulness of the theme of *honra*: 'The theatre [...] transposes the vulnerable area of concern from an arena where action is impossible, race, to one where action is feasible, sex. [...] It resolves [...] what in real life is a psychological and social impasse.'²¹ The *casos de honra* had a universal interest: 'Every Spaniard had a woman; the democratization of honour [...] demanded its transference to a sphere of experience with which all men could readily identify' (p. 331). Theatre-goers were also romantics: 'Spanish audiences wished to see not plays of political and social intrigue [...], but plays where men were *machos* and pursued *macho*

²⁰ 'Inquisición y culturas marginadas: Conversos, moriscos y gitanos', in *El siglo del Quijote: Religión, Filosofía, Ciencia*, ed. by José María Jover Zamora, 2 vols (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1996), I, 911-25 (pp. 914-15).

²¹ 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 323. The next four references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

ideals. [...] Spanish drama was essentially a romantic one' (p. 332). The majority of the public of the *corrales* could only identify with romantic characters and for them a *comedia de honra* was probably only about sexual fidelity and not *limpieza*. However, as will be seen later, a small part of such a varied public may well have been able to understand and enjoy vicariously the drama of an unresolvable social crisis only representable in terms of transposition:

They wanted a vicarious gallantry and heroism that the sordid realities of social and political life could not offer; they wanted an ideal of manhood they could identify with. Of what interest was it to the *vulgo* that some noble should fail to gain entry to a military order..? Such a plot could not possibly offer the endless attractions: [...] tragedy, horror and pathos, jealousy, mistaken identities, sexual intrigue and innocent blood shed. (p. 332)

The mentionable obsession in the *comedias* by sexual *honra* may have been perceived by a few as a mask, a transposition of the unmentionable anxiety about *limpieza de sangre*. Passions connected with sexuality are very real in life as well as in the *comedia*, but, as McKendrick remarks, the huge and 'obsessional energy' behind sexual problems in the *comedias* 'mimics not the sexual mores of the age [...], but the psychology of the age's obsession with *limpieza de sangre*' (p. 322).

3.2 THE TRANSPOSITION JEW/WOMAN

It has been suggested that the unpalatable problems of racial *honra* were sometimes transposed into the romantic and tractable concerns of sexual *honra*. As a consequence of this, since the anxiety of having Jewish ancestry was generally not an acceptable subject of the *comedia*, the anxiety about the Jew may have been transposed into anxiety about the woman, who, like Jewish blood, had the power to dishonour a man. I hope to justify the presence of this transposition in some *comedias de honra*, first by showing that the woman was capable of being a symbol for the Jew, and that Jews and

women were perceived in the Golden Age to have many characteristics in common. I will then describe how the transposition Jew/woman functions and analyse the concepts of the passive as opposed to the active woman. Lastly I will explore the question whether the authors of the *comedias* and their public could have been conscious of this transposition.

3.2.1 THE BASES OF THE TRANSPOSITION JEW/WOMAN

Transpositions appear to require two pre-conditions: first, censorship, open or tacit; second, the existence of something of which it is permitted to speak and which is also capable of symbolizing what is censored. In the proposed transposition Jew/woman the first condition evidently refers to the sympathetic representation of the Jew, and requires no further discussion. The second refers to the woman. To support the idea of the woman as a possible symbol of the Jew, I will follow Yarbrow-Bejarano's theory that 'woman' is a potentially empty signifier. Later, as further support for the transposition, I will examine the many similarities that Golden-Age society perceived between Jews and women. These similarities were perceived to be in everyday life, but not in *comedias*, because, for the transposition to work, the symbolic relationship between Jew and woman had to remain hidden; any open reference to the Jew would betray the transposition and defeat its object, the chance of speaking positively of the Jew.

Yarbrow-Bejarano begins with the idea that, in the Spanish Golden Age, 'man' is a full signifier, because men have identity and social power. 'Man' as signifier has a monosemic and coherent signified which has multiple positive connotations (Spanish, *cristiano viejo*), defined negatively as no-Jew, no-woman. Women, on the contrary, this critic asserts, have no identity or social power. This is well illustrated by Lope's *La vengadora de las mujeres*, in which the Princess Laura exclaims against misogyny thus:

Desde el principio del mundo

se han hecho tiranos grandes
 de nuestro honor y albedrío,
 quitándonos las ciudades,
 la plata, el oro, el dinero,
 el gobierno, sin que baste
 razón, justicia ni ley,
 propuesta de nuestra parte;
 ellos estudian y tienen
 en las Universidades
 lauros y grados; en fin,
 estudian todas las artes.
 ¿Pues de qué se queja el hombre
 de que la mujer le engañe?²²

In Yarbrow-Bejarano's theory women are objectified as only means of identification for men as not feminine. 'Woman' is a signifier potentially empty of ^{ANY} signified. This condition of being empty makes the sexual signifier 'woman' polysemic depending on context, that is to say, a carrier of possibly contradictory signifieds, either goddess or she-devil. That is why 'woman', in itself a sexual signifier, could also function as a political and racial signifier. Thus, according to Yarbrow-Bejarano, the signifier 'woman' is capable of receiving the signified 'Jew'. This is the theoretical basis of the possibility of the Jew/woman transposition. However, to make this transposition convincing, it is necessary to demonstrate that Jews and women were in fact perceived in the Golden Age as significantly similar in many ways.

Like the woman, the Jew has neither identity nor social power, is objectified as a means of identification for the Spaniard as no-Jew: 'The Jew represents everything the racially Spanish male is not.'²³ There are examples of the perceived or projected similarities between Jews and women, first as two similarly marginalized groups in the popular mind, and Caro Baroja cites Golden-Age proverbs, such as : 'El judío y la mujer vengativos suelen ser', 'judío, dona [sic] y hombre con corona, jamás perdona',

²² Lope de Vega, *La vengadora de las mujeres*, BAE, XIII, 614-46 (p. 616).

²³ McKendrick, 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 328.

or ‘judío o mujer que jura, malicia segura’.²⁴ The mentality behind these proverbs goes back to the Middle Ages; for example, the Arcipreste de Talavera attributes cowardice equally to women, Jews and clerics: ‘Para mujer, judío nin abad non debe hombre mostrar rostro, nin esfuerzo, nin cometer a ferir, nin sacar armas, que son cosas vençidas e de poco esfuerço.’²⁵

In Yarbro-Bejarano’s terminology, this ‘feminization’ (p. 233) of the Jew, his psychological identification with the woman as a coward, finally reached the point of his physical identification with the woman with both being regarded as carriers of *mala sangre*. This notion was already present in medieval Christianity. According to Jacques Le Goff, this is what Christians then believed:

Los varones hebreos – de la misma manera que las mujeres – estaban sujetos a los fenómenos menstruales. Aquí el judío varón se une a otra víctima de la mentalidad cristiana medieval, la mujer, impura en primer lugar a causa de su esclavitud a la contaminación de la sangre menstrual.²⁶

These beliefs were alive and well in seventeenth-century Spain, where, for example, menstruation was still attributed to Jewish men. Caro Baroja mentions this accusation, citing the Golden-Age physician Uriel da Costa:

Cometen todos los demás pecados capitales y son defectuosos tanto de cuerpo como de alma. Les caracteriza el padecer un flujo sanguíneo el día de Viernes Santo, en castigo del deicidio que cometieron y puede distinguírseles por el olor.²⁷

John Beusterien also relates that two of the most illustrious physicians of the Court of Philip IV, Juan de Quiñones and Jerónimo de Huerta, averred that ‘impure blood pulsed through the veins of Jewish body’ and that ‘every month they suffer from

²⁴ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 92-4. ‘Corona’ refers to ‘coronilla’ or ‘tonsura’ (COV, 358), therefore ‘hombre con corona’ should refer to clerics.

²⁵ *Reprobación del amor mundano o Corbacho*, ed. by José Rogerio Sánchez (Madrid: Castalia, 1982), p. 250.

²⁶ *Lo maravilloso y lo cotidiano en el Occidente medieval*, trans. by Alberto L. Bixio (Barcelona: Gedisa, 1986), p. 126.

²⁷ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, II, 444.

a blood flow as if they were women'. He goes on to note that this was not simple superstition:

The Spanish portrayal had a distinctive purpose and was uniquely combined for the first time with legal language that sought to exclude people of impure blood... Dr. Huerta also had a legal agenda... He advocated the adoption of pure blood statutes for the medical profession, that prohibited anyone of impure blood ancestry from entering the medical profession. So while the menstruation accusation was not new, its strategic alliance with [...] pure blood statutes was unique to Seventeenth century Spain. [...] Huerta was not a marginal voice from this time. He was the king's most trusted physician.²⁸

The anti-Semitism inherent in this idea is paralleled by its misogyny: 'The accusations of the menstruating Jew borrowed certain misogynist presuppositions about menstrual blood from the Judeo-Christian tradition' (p. 15). Thus, a close conceptual tie was established and maintained in seventeenth-century Spain between the woman and the Jew by means of the *mala sangre* in their bodies, a poison that had to be evacuated regularly.

The characteristics common to Jew and woman are present in the ambivalence surrounding these groups. The simultaneous divinization and demonization of the woman were universal phenomena in the European Middle Ages.²⁹ In Spain this divinization of the woman appears in the *Misas de amor* of Juan de Dueñas and Suero de Ribera or, later, in the poems of Garcilaso de la Vega:

Divina Elisa, pues agora el cielo
con inmortales pies pisas y mides.

No fuiste tú engendrada
ni producida de la dura tierra.³⁰

An example of the demonization of the woman can be found in a medieval Spanish book of medicine, but these ideas, as seen before, were still current in the Golden Age:

²⁸ 'Jewish Male Menstruation in Seventeenth Century Spain', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 3 (1999), 11-24 (p. 14).

²⁹ See Otis H. Green, 'Amor cortés y moral cristiana en la trama de *La Celestina*', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, 12 vols (Barcelona: Crítica, 1980-), I: *Edad Media*, ed. by Alan Deyermond, 504-08.

³⁰ *Poesía castellana completa*, ed. by C. Burrell (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), *Égloga* I, ll. 394-95 (p. 48) and *Canción* V, ll. 61-2 (p. 176).

¿Por qué purgan las mujeres el menstuo? Responde: porque es materia venenosa. [...] ¿Por qué siendo las mujeres tan venenosas / no infectan a sí mismas? Responde / porque el veneno no obra contra sí / mas contra otro qualquier objecto. O en otra manera y mejor / porque las mujeres acostumbran de criar en sí aquella materia venenosa / y por aquel tan continuo costumbre no les empesce. Tanto que dize Alberto Magno / que vio él en Colonia una donzella que comía las arañas / donde haver las podía: y recibía de tal manjar nutrimento.³¹

The nature of women was also the subject of a typically ambivalent controversy and in the sixteenth century a number of books were published in Spain on this subject, called *Libros en loor y vituperio de las mujeres*. Amongst those who wrote against women was Cristóbal de Castillejo in his *Diálogo de mujeres* (1544) and Pere Torrellas in his *Coplas de las calidades de las donas* (first published in 1511), and amongst those who wrote in favour of women was Juan de Espinosa in his *Diálogo en laude de las mujeres* (1580), Cristóbal de Acosta in his *Tratado en loor de las mujeres* (1592).³² The same divinization and demonization, the same ambivalence surrounds, as was seen, the image of the Jew. Biblical Jews, such as Abraham, Jacob, Esther, King David, and so on, are sanctified as prototypes of Jesus and Christian saints, while post-biblical Jews are demonized, ^{IS THE CASE WITH} as Ismael, the stereotypical Jewish physician/poisoner in Tirso's *La prudencia en la mujer*.

Another common characteristic is ascribing *honor-virtud* to women and Jews, but not *honor-opinión*. As Van Beysterveldt noted, 'l'honneur de la femme: il consistait, en effet, dans la conduite vertueuse de celle-ci'.³³ The *converso* Ricardo's impassioned defence of *honor-virtud* in Lope's *La pobreza estimada* (discussed in Chapter 6) is clearly in response to the insulting assumption of the *cristiano viejo* Leonido that he (Ricardo) had no *honra*, that is to say, *honor-opinión*. Ricardo claims that his nobility,

³¹ Johannes de Ketham, *Compendio de la humana salud* (Manuscrito de la Biblioteca Nacional, I-51 [1494]), ed. by María Teresa Herrera, Spanish Medical Texts Series, 9 (Madison, WI: The Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 1987), p. 57.

³² See *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, XXXVII, 192-93.

³³ *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole*, p. 105.

based on his own behaviour, is superior to Leonido's nobility which is based on his forebears' papers. It is true that many Golden-Age authors noted that aristocratic status had originally been achieved by virtue. One example is in Lope's *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*, where a simple soldier, Pero Díez, shows such courage and loyalty that it earns him a knighthood. However, Golden-Age authors, perhaps echoing Cartagena's, Rojas's and Erasmus's criticism of *honra*, also stressed that only individual virtue confers honour, although, ironically, inherited nobility could not be lost by vice. An example of the latter is Pedro el Cruel in *A lo que obliga el honor* by the *converso* Enríquez. The prince is pursuing the nobleman Enrique's wife and in the end causes her death, but the author presents Pedro as openly justifying his ignoble actions by his nobility:

Don Pedro el Cruel me llaman,
Soy príncipe, tengo amor,
Y si Enrique es noble,
Primero he nacido yo.³⁴

Some critics have suggested the transposition Jew/woman without explicitly pointing to it. For Van Beysterveldt the transposition *limpieza/honra* worked by means of something more concrete, the transposition *matrimonio/estatutos de limpieza de sangre*: 'Voir dans les appréhensions des protagonistes de lier par le mariage leur sort à celui de la femme, une transposition de la crainte, éprouvée par nombre d'Espagnols, de se soumettre aux enquêtes de *limpieza*.'³⁵ While he never comes to recognize the transposition Jew/woman, in certain respects he seems to move towards recognizing that woman in the *comedia*, apart from being just a woman, was used also as a symbol:

L'examen des protestations dans la *comedia* contre la 'ley bárbara' de l'honneur nous mène ainsi à la conclusion que le rôle de la femme y prend la valeur d'un symbole, [...] d'une force incertaine, vaguement hostile, dont l'influence sur le destin de l'homme est ressentie à la fois comme décisive et comme injuste par les personnages dramatiques. (p. 212)

³⁴ Antonio Enríquez Gómez, *A lo que obliga el honor*, BAE, LVII, 501-514 (p. 512).

³⁵ *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole*, p. 215. The next three references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

Further, Van Beysterveldt joins the woman and the Jew by means of the concept of the *faltas ajenas*, the notion of the sins of a guilty person blamed on an innocent. At one point he relates *faltas ajenas* to the woman: 'Dans les protestations contre l'honneur [...] la femme represent seulement l'*autre* ou plutôt les fautes qu'un autre que le chevalier lui-même a commises: *las faltas ajenas*' (p. 204). Elsewhere, he relates them to the Jew: 'Les fautes des autres, *las faltas ajenas* [...] sont sans aucun doute le sang juif des ancêtres, la tare odieuse transmise héréditairement' (p. 213).

McKendrick's theory of 'mimetic transference' recognizes the transposition *limpieza/honra*, which may be seen as pointing towards the transposition Jew/woman. Of *caballeros* she says: 'Their worst fears, their nightmares, their insecurities revolved not around wives under siege by rapacious admirers, but around their forebears; their obsession was rooted in the past, not in the present.'³⁶ And finally, although Yarbrow-Bejarano affirms the feminization of the Jew (pp. 231-36), she does not recognize the transposition Jew/woman. However, if her theory is correct, according to which a man's Spanishness 'depends on the simultaneous exclusion of the Other, not only woman but Jew' (p. 199), and to be male was to be non-Jew in the context of the Spanish Golden Age, then to be non-male could be equated with being a Jew. Thus, the characteristic that the Jew and the woman have in common, that is to say, both being 'the Other' may serve as the basis for the transposition Jew/woman. Dopico Black has recently arrived at a similar conclusion regarding this transposition, when she speaks of 'a kind of fluidity (and, at times, of substitutability) between the wife's body and the conversos's or Morisco's body' (p. 7) and explains:

In early modern Spain the wife's body served as a kind of transcoder of and for various types of cultural anxieties, a site on which concerns over the interpretation and misinterpretation of signs and specially signs of Otherness – racial, religious, cultural – were at different times projected, materialized, codified, negotiated and even contested. (p. 4)

³⁶ 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 331.

On the margins between Same and Other, the conversos's or Moriscos's body could be conceived [...] as analogous to the wife's body: always a potential source of 'disease' and 'impurity'. It is not coincidence that the honor code and limpieza statutes share a rhetoric of maculacy and immaculacy [...] or that both apply this rhetoric to a narrative of blood. (p. 42)

3.2.2 THE FUNCTIONING OF THE TRANSPOSITION JEW/WOMAN

The transposition Jew/woman in the wife-murder plays works within a love triangle. The husband's accusing his wife of infidelity with her ex-lover may be seen as a transposition of the real-life triangle in which the inquisitor accuses the *converso* of infidelity with Judaism. The husband suspects that the wife is unfaithful, not with just any lover, but with her former lover. This may be interpreted as helping to intensify the dramatic conflict by causing the wife to appear less culpable and her husband more ignorant, but it could also be seen as a transposition of the *converso* who was unfaithful to his new religion and who was having illicit relations, not with another religion, but with his former faith. This triangle forms the plot of many *comedias de honra*, for example, Calderón's three wife-murder plays: in *El pintor de su deshonra*, with Serafina, the wife, Álvaro, the former lover, and Juan Roca, the husband; in *El médico de su honra*, with Mencía, the woman, Enrique, the former lover, and Gutierre, the husband, or, in *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, with Leonor, the woman, Luis, again the former lover, and Lope, the husband. The last play will be the subject of further analysis

To explain the mechanism of the transposition Jew/woman, I will suggest how the 'passive' woman in the typical *comedia de honra* could be a transposition of the Jew in his social position of subjection and how the 'active' woman (the *bandolera/vengadora*) in the atypical *comedia de honra* could be a transposition of the ideal Jew in an attitude of rebellion against a persecuting society.

3.2.3 THE PASSIVE WOMAN AS IMAGE OF THE REAL JEW

The demonization of women and of Jews was based on their supposed nature: the first carried the guilt of initiating original sin, the second, that of deicide. Seeing that both were untrustworthy, the woman had to be secluded in the home, the Jew in the *judería*. Another reason for this seclusion and exclusion was that both were possessions, one of the male head of the family, the other of the king. The Jews in Europe had no civil rights until the introduction of the Napoleonic Code; in Spain from Visigothic times up to the time of their expulsion the Jews were owned by the kings, who generally protected their property. As Baer says, quoting the *fuero* of Teruel of 1176, ‘nam iudei servi regis sunt et semper fisco regio deputati’ [the Jews are the slaves of the crown and belong exclusively to the royal treasury] (I, 85). To control the woman’s fidelity, the man had to become her inquisitor and to control the faith of Jews, the Inquisition had to be established. The husband, like the Inquisition, worked in secret, not subject to the normal law of the land. Women and Jews were equally objects of violence, simply for being Women and Jews.

Women were indeed discriminated against in society but in the *comedias de honra* this was hyperbolized. As was noted before, the suspicion, the seclusion, the inquisition and the violence to which women were subjected were not a social norm, but rare events. In real life there were hardly any wife-murders and, as Yarbrow-Bejarano notes, ‘public sympathy was for the victims’ (p. 42). This exaggeration could be seen as one application of the technique already discussed in the previous chapter in general terms. It is this hyperbolization, this distortion of reality, which may indicate the presence of the transposition Jew/woman.

The presence of hyperbolization in the wife-murder plays may be recognized not only by the difference between real life and the *comedia*, but by the differences between certain *comedias*. For example, what this initially more tolerant Lopean husband, the

captain Valdivia in *La victoria de la honra*, doubting his wife's fidelity, says as he is about to leave his house would be impossible in the mouth of a permanently jealous Calderonian husband, such as Don Gutierre in *El médico de su honra*. Valdivia says:

Mirad que soy caballero
y soldado y que prefiero
a vuestro amor mi opinión.
No os guardo porque no son
guardas con vos menester;
la que se ha de defender
vos sois.³⁷

Thus, one may assume that not only wife-murder, but also everyday suspicion, seclusion, inquisition and the general loss of dignity by the woman were exaggerated in *comedias de honra*. In consequence, it is likely that in typical *comedias de honra* the author may not have been referring to what he was apparently dealing with: when he was writing of women, he may have had another social group in mind, one that was indeed subject every day to suspicion, seclusion, inquisition, and the general loss of dignity.

The transposition Jew/woman may be seen as present in the wife-murder *comedias* of Lope, such as *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, *El duque de Viseo* and *El castigo sin venganza*, and of Tirso, such as *La muerte de Herodes*, but, as it was Calderón who perfected this genre, I shall now consider in some detail how the transposition Jew/woman works in *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*.³⁸ In the text *honra* and *limpieza* go hand in hand. This is important because this union of *limpieza/honra* is, as mentioned before, the basis of the transposition Jew/woman. For example, Don Juan exclaims:

Que una razón,
o que una sinrazón pueda
manchar el altivo honor
tantos años adquirido (p. 427)

³⁷ Lope de Vega, *La victoria de la honra*, ed. by Alva V. Ebersole (Valencia: Estudios de Hispanófila, 1977), ll. 340-46, p. 155.

³⁸ In *Obras completas*, ed. by Ángel Valbuena Briones, 2 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1956), II, 425-53.

This shows the hyperbolization of honour: what was stained by one word ('una razón') was not conjugal honour, but *limpieza de sangre*. Significantly, Don Juan does not speak of 'destroying' honour, but of 'manchar', suggesting that what is in danger is not his *honra*, but his *sangre*. The hyperbolization and therefore the transposition *limpieza/honra* are continually present in the words and in the obsessive behaviour of Don Juan and Don Lope, even unto madness, as don Lope says:

Honor, mucho te adelantas;
que una duda sobre tantas
bastará a volverme loco. (p. 444)

¡Qué cobarde es el honor!
Nada escucho, nada veo
que ser mi pena no creo. (p. 448)

Pues ya que conforme a ley
de honrado maté primero
al galán, matar espero
a Leonor. (p. 451)

The exaggerated atmosphere of suspicion, fear and seclusion felt by women is clearly voiced by Doña Leonor, Don Lope's wife. Such an environment of terror is not likely to refer to a family situation: there are too many *comedias* (*La dama boba*, *La moza de cántaro*, *La vengadora de las mujeres*, *La dama duende*, and so on) showing a relatively fair amount of freedom allowed to women. It is more likely to refer to the social situation of the *conversos*, whose livelihood, property, liberty and life were always at risk. This is how Doña Leonor describes her position:

Temblando estoy, cada paso
que siento, pienso que es,
don Lope, y el viento mismo
se me figura que es él.
¿Si me escucha, si me oye?
¡Qué propio del miedo fue! (p. 439)

As the Jew knew himself to be the property of the king, so Doña Leonor knows herself to be the property of her husband: 'Mi vida y mi honor / ya no es mío, es de mi esposo' (p. 434). The aura of terror in these plays is based on an exaggerated and ambivalent

concept of the woman, which, once again, is not likely to reflect everyday reality: the hyperbolization suggests that the play is not about the woman, whose image was not purely negative. It was more likely to have been about the contemporary *converso*, whose image was always negative. Intercourse would have broken down if most men had really thought as badly of women as the following lines suggest:

¿Quién puso el honor en vaso
que es tan frágil? ¿Y quién hizo
experiencias en redoma,
no habiendo experiencia en vidrio? (p. 446)

Leonor,
tan bella como viciosa,
tan infeliz como hermosa,
ruina fatal de mi honor. (p. 451)

The possibility of the transposition Jew/woman is revealed also in the transposition of the Inquisitor of *conversos* into the husband as inquisitor of his wife.

Don Lope says, for example:

Que tenga el honor mil ojos
para ver lo que le pese,
mil oídos para oírlo
y una lengua solamente
para quejarse de todo. (p. 436)

Don Lope behaves toward his wife not as a husband, but as an inquisitor toward the *converso*, who could be arrested and convicted without conclusive proof:

Basta, honor; no hay que esperar;
que quien llega a sospechar,
no ha de llegar a creer
ni esperar a suceder
el mal. (p. 445)

Both Don Lope and the Inquisition based their activities on the tales of spies and informers, the latter represented in this *comedia* by Don Juan:

¿Qué debe hacer un amigo
en tal caso? Pues entiendo
que si lo callo, le ofendo,
y le ofendo si lo digo. (p. 444)

Husband and Inquisition both work in secrecy:

Pues ya no quiero buscalla
(ay, cielos) públicamente,
sino encubrilla y callala. (p. 447)

Apart from all this, the allusion to the Inquisition is almost explicit and also ironic, with don Lope, the real-life inquisitor/executioner, complaining of the injustice of the symbolic inquisitor/executioner, *la honra*:

¿En qué tribunal se ha visto
condenar al inocente?
¿Sentencias hay sin delito?
¿Informaciones sin cargo?
¿Y sin culpas hay castigo? (p. 446)

Dopico Black also recognizes the transposition inquisitor/husband:

The husband with his hermeneutics of suspicion would be cast [...] in the role of the overzealous inquisitor who reads [...] an illicit text on an innocent body. At a fundamental level what makes a reading of this sort possible is the radical illegibility with respect to transgression that the wife's body and the converso's body share (hymeneal in one case, almost genetic in the other). (pp. 113-14)

Finally, the transposition Jew/woman is hinted at in the murder of Doña Leonor by fire, as a metaphor for the killing of the *converso* in the *hoguera*:

Esta noche mi casa
pienso intrépido abrasar.
Fuego al cuarto he de pegar,
y yo en tanto que se abrasa,
osado, atrevido y ciego,
la muerte a Leonor daré
porque presuman que fue
sangriento verdugo el fuego. (p. 451)

In conclusion, it would also be useful to remember that the subject of the previous chapter, *engañar con la verdad*, and the subject of this chapter, transposition, are intimately related by means of the touchstone of hyperbolization and by their common objective of mocking society in an indirect manner, the only way practicable in the *comedia*.

3.2.4 THE ACTIVE WOMAN AS IMAGE OF THE IDEAL JEW

While many *conversos* left Spain, others remained, a few of them determined to defend or even revenge themselves on their persecutors, as in fact happened in certain uprisings mentioned in Chapter 1. The pain of exile and the equally strong longing for return, perhaps for revenge, may well have survived in the heart of some of the exiled *sefardíes*. The *converso* Enríquez expresses both these feelings in the following verses.

First, the pain of exile:

Lloro mi patria y della estoy ausente,
desgracia de nacer lo habría causado
pensión original del que no siente

and then, the wish for revenge:

Pero volver a dar venganza fiera
a mis émulos todos fuera cosa
para que muerte yo propio me diera.³⁹

If the transposition Jew/woman is accepted, the vengeful woman, the *bandolera*, apart from being a symbol of female rebellion against male domination, could also be a transposition of the ideal rebellion of the Jew against social injustices. As a *converso* rebellion was impracticable, there is no *comedia* that deals with this subject, but there are quite a few plays about female rebellion, *bandolerismo*. The fact that the presentation of a *morisco-converso* rebellion in Calderón's *Amar después de la muerte* was possible underlines the taboo of presenting a historical or hypothetical *converso* rebellion in a *comedia*. However, it is important to remember that female *bandolerismo* in the *comedia* did not reflect a genuine social problem, because female banditry as a response to domestic oppression was very rare, as McKendrick notes: 'This crisis [...] is also solved in the drama in a more devious manner, within a framework of domestic intrigue, and this solution constitutes rebellion-by-deceit [...] probably more true to

³⁹ Quoted in Timothy Oelman, ed., *Marrano Poets of the XVIIth Century* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1982), p. 63.

life.⁴⁰ The endings of these *comedias*, with the criminals happily married or settled in convents, are further indications of a lack of verisimilitude and one could therefore presume that the exaggerated *bandolera*, apart from symbolizing an ideal rebellion of women, is also likely to be a transposition of the rebellious ideal Jew. According to McKendrick, 'the *bandolera* is an aggrieved woman and her resistance is precipitated into action by active prejudices or persecution' (p. 133). The same motives could be ascribed to the Jew, who would seek to revenge himself on society. What McKendrick says about *bandoleras* in general is equally applicable to the Jew who might rebel against society: 'These women are not only trying to revenge themselves on the fathers, brothers or lovers who wronged them. Their revenge is general, not particular. They murder all and sundry' (p. 131)

Tirso's *La dama del olivar* illustrates the possible transposition ideal Jew/*bandolera*. Laurencia, daughter of a wealthy farmer, is kidnapped by Don Guillén, *comendador* of Montalbán, in the very presence of his bride Petronila, the sister of Don Gastón, governor of the province. As is his wont with the virgins in the area, Don Guillén rapes Laurencia and afterwards brutally rebuffs her. McKendrick cites Caro Baroja's remark that events such as rape 'provoked memorable collective reactions' in Spanish villages, as presented by Lope in *Fuente Ovejuna* and Calderón in *El alcalde de Zalamea* (p. 126). However, contrary to this usual reaction of society supporting and avenging the wronged woman, in *La dama del olivar* the village duly proclaims its anger but ends up only setting fire to some of Don Guillén's barns. The rapist himself is captured but then is freed in order that he may marry Petronila, who loves him despite his crimes. Their marriage and Laurencia's return to the fold are blessed by the Virgin, *la dama del olivar*, as if nothing untoward had happened. The absence of punishment for Don Guillén, that is the absence of social verisimilitude, indicates that a coherent

⁴⁰ McKendrick, *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, p. 136. The next three references to this work are given after quotations in the text.

explanation for the reluctance of the village, Don Gastón, and Petronila to do justice to Laurencia, could be that she is not simply a wronged woman for whom sympathy would be naturally forthcoming, but 'another' for whom no sympathy could be expressed. Another argument which supports the likelihood of this transposition is Laurencia's exaggerated desire for revenge. Just as the Jew blames not only the individual who wrongs him, but the whole of society that encourages the injustice, Laurencia blames not only Don Guillén, but all men, and swears to avenge herself on them with the same brutality that she has suffered: 'Volviéndome bandolera, / no he de dejar hombre a vida.'⁴¹ However, Laurencia's extreme attitude is not as convincing in a real woman, even if she has been raped, as in a Jew, who, denied justice, like the *bandolera*, has no other remedy than to take the law into his own hands. McKendrick's remark, 'Tirso, by granting her [Laurencia] repentance, is approving, if not the means of her self-assertion, then certainly the aim',⁴² could be applied equally to the Jew. Naturally, the possibility of transposition does not diminish the value of Tirso's 'feminism'. On the contrary, while Tirso's, Lope's and Calderón's 'feminism' has essential value in itself, it may also have value as a vehicle for their philo-Judaism.

3.3 THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF TRANSPOSITION

Were the dramatists of the Spanish Golden Age and their public conscious of the possible transpositions *limpieza/honra* and Jew/woman? Van Beysterveldt recognizes this enigma: 'Cette transposition peut être intentionnée ou, dans un degré plus o moins

⁴¹ *La dama del olivar*, ed. by Vern G. Williamsen and James T. Abraham, in *Comedia* <<http://www.coh.arizona.edu/spanish/comedia/tirso/damoli.html>> [accessed 20 April 2003] (Act II). I have not been able to discover critical works about *La dama del olivar* apart from McKendrick's notes in *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*.

⁴² *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, p. 126.

grand, inconsciente.⁴³ He quotes as an example Marcel Proust, who had transposed 'un certain Albert' into Albertine, and adds that, according to André Gide, Proust did this intentionally. In any case, Van Beysterveldt does not resolve the problem.

I would argue that the transposition Jew/woman ^{WAS} (~~may have been~~) consciously done by Golden-Age dramatists and could have been understood as transposition by at least a small section of the audience. Transposition may have been as intentional as was the criticism of contemporary politics in Tirso's *La mujer que manda en casa*, in which Acab could well be a transposition of King Philip III, and Jezabel of Queen Margarita.⁴⁴ Perhaps Tirso's *comedias* were not conventional and not subtle enough, because, in fact, he was censored and exiled from the Court:

El 6 de marzo de 1625 la Junta de Reformatión de Costumbres le condena por 'el escándalo que causa [...] con comedias que hace profanas y de malos incentivos y ejemplos', recomendando 'al Nuncio le eche de aquí a uno de los monasterios más remotos de su Religión y le imponga excomunió mayor *latae sententiae* para que no haga comedias ni otro ningún género de versos profanos'.⁴⁵

John E. Lyon comments on the above: 'It seems to have been Tirso's increased seriousness in his examination of the morality of those in power rather than his alleged incitement to evil conduct which led to his banishment in 1625.'⁴⁶ In a much more delicate manner Lope also practised, I presume consciously, this type of transposition, for example, in *La corona merecida*, as indicated by McKendrick. In this play, Lope wanted to criticize Philip III and the Duke of Lerma and did so under the disguise of pillorying Alfonso VIII.⁴⁷

⁴³ *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole*, p. 63.

⁴⁴ See Blanca de los Ríos, 'Preámbulo' to Tirso de Molina, *La mujer que manda en casa*, in *Obras dramáticas completas*, ed. by Blanca de los Ríos, 4 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1946-1959), I, 7-8 (p. 8).

⁴⁵ Enrique Suárez, 'Tirso de Molina', in *Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes* <http://cervantesvirtual.com/info_autor/00000098.shtml> [accessed 15 March 2003] (para. 3 of 28). See also *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, LX, 641-2.

⁴⁶ 'Introduction' to Tirso de Molina, *Tamar's Revenge - La venganza de Tamar*, ed. by John E. Lyon, p. 4 (for bibliographical details, see Chapter 4, note 18).

⁴⁷ See *Playing the King*, p. 42.

Transposition as a conscious technique is also found in *autos sacramentales*.

According to Julio Rodríguez-Puértolas:

El propio Luzbel es sometido a tal investigación; en *La privanza del hombre*, la Inocencia afirma:

‘Será imposible que entréis
en casa si no hacéis
información de limpieza;
es el estatuto tal
que el que prueba su rigor
puede ser inquisidor,
canónigo o cardenal.’

En *Los hijos de María del Rosario* se pide información nada menos que de San Juan Evangelista, San Bernardo, Santa Catalina y San Francisco, siendo Lucifer el fiscal. [...] Según Lope, el Evangelio de San Mateo no es otra cosa sino [...]

‘Aquel famoso
Libro, que visto en las supremas salas
confirma la hidalguía
de Cristo, por la parte de María’.⁴⁸

The powerful irony in the anachronism of putting such personages to proof of their *limpieza* had to have been consciously done and understood at least by part of the audience.

Is there any indication that these dramatists were conscious of the transposition Jew/woman in *comedias de honra*, as they were conscious of the political and religious transpositions mentioned before? One indication is that they may well have been conscious of the transposition inquisitor/husband due to the deliberate emphasis placed on presenting significant similarities between the inquisitor and the husband. The transposition inquisitor/husband is an essential part of the transposition Jew/woman and appears in all the wife-murder plays. In these *comedias*, the wife’s murder could be seen as reflecting the judicial methods of the Inquisition in the treatment of suspected *judaizantes*. However, it is Calderón who elaborated and perfected the transposition inquisitor/husband. Recalling the analysis of *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, the characteristics that inquisitor and husband have in common could be summed up this

⁴⁸ ‘La transposición de la realidad en los Autos Sacramentales de Lope de Vega’, *Bulletin Hispanique*, 72 (1970), 96-112 (pp. 99-102). ‘Tal investigación’ refers to an inquiry into Satan’s *limpieza de sangre*.

way: the husband bases his actions on the tales of an informer, always acts in secret, condemns the woman by mere suspicion, ends sometimes by murdering his wife; the king, representing justice, justifies this injustice. All of this echoes the way the inquisitor treats the heretic. Finally, it is well known that the executions, ordered by the Inquisition were carried out by the *brazo secular*. The Inquisition, like the husband, always acted behind closed doors. In view of the above similarities, it is unlikely that dramatists of the calibre of Lope, Tirso and Calderón, conscious of the possible transposition inquisitor/husband, would not have been conscious of the possible transposition Jew/woman. In an 'Age of dissimulation', to use Zagorin's phrase, when dissimulation was not only universally employed but was frequently theorized, it would not be strange for these dramatists to be consciously practising transposition as a form of dissimulation.

Concerning the public's consciousness, it needs to be recalled that Golden-Age theater-going audiences were socially, intellectually and politically heterogeneous. As has been already indicated, Lope himself wanted to emphasize this heterogeneity: 'Entre los que me siguen, unos hay que entienden, otros que piensan que entienden y otros que dicen lo que oyen a los que entienden.' Lope and other dramatists were aware of the different levels of understanding in their audience and, therefore, they may have been right in thinking that there was at least a small part of their audience that understood them on the level of transposition. Most of the spectators would have taken the woman on stage as wife, daughter or sister, but a few may well have noticed the similarities in her fate to that of the Jew.

To support the view that some of the public of the *corral*, perhaps those who read books, were conscious of the presence of transposition in general, García Gómez shows, as was seen before, how Cervantes in *La española inglesa* transposed a real Spanish Jewess into an imaginary Spanish Catholic and suggests that it would have

been impossible for Cervantes or his readers not to have been conscious of this transposition:

La presencia de esta dualidad en el texto es soterraña pero no por eso menos potente. Sabemos que durante la visita de la embajada de Howard a Valladolid en 1605 Cervantes pudo observar de cerca el problema cripto-católico inglés con sus marcados paralelos de comportamiento con el cripto-judaísmo español. El cripto-catolicismo ocupa en la novela cervantina un lugar prominente y, en su expresión lingüística, emerge con rasgos similares a los del cripto-judaísmo peninsular. Ello es tan obvio que esta lectura de doble fondo es posible sin recurrir a elementos extratextuales. Como apunta Dacosta Fuentes: 'The situation parallels very closely that of the Spanish converts who continued to practice Judaism in secret. [...] One wonders whether a Seventeenth Century Spaniard was aware of the irony of the situation when reading Cervantes' novela.' Lo extraordinario hubiera sido que el lector español no fuera consciente de esa ironía.⁴⁹

If the transposition Jew/woman was made consciously by these dramatists, who were in their own way 'feminists', as was convincingly argued by McKendrick,⁵⁰ the deliberate mockery of misogyny went hand in hand with a deliberate mockery of anti-Semitism. The sympathy in the *comedia* for Jews may be seen as an example of the general solidarity that Spanish Golden-Age dramatists felt for the marginalized. Sympathy is not created by transposition, it is transposition that is created by sympathy. In prejudiced people, the antipathy towards one marginalized group often goes hand-in-hand with hatred for other marginalized groups (for example the German Nazis were not only anti-Semites, but anti-Gypsies, anti-Negroes, anti-homosexuals, and so on). The relation between various forms of prejudice has been studied by Henley and Pincus, who 'found that sexism and racism scores were strongly correlated, that sexism and racism increased with increasing political conservatism'.⁵¹ In the same way, the sympathy towards a marginalized group (women) often goes hand-in-hand with

⁴⁹ 'Una historia sefardí como posible fuente de *La española inglesa* de Cervantes', p. 627.

⁵⁰ *Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age*, p. 332.

⁵¹ Jim Sidanius, 'The Interface between Racism and Sexism', *Journal of Psychology*, 3 (1993), 311-323 (p. 311). Sidanius refers to Nancy M. Henley and Fred Pincus, 'Interrelationship of Sexist, Racist, and anti-Homosexual attitudes', *Psychological Reports*, 42 (1978), 83-90, which is a classic work of reference on the psychology of prejudice. As regards Nazi prejudice, this correlation is studied by Goldhagen (see pp. 406-15 (Chapter 15, Section 'The Germans' slaughter of the Jews in comparative perspective')).

compassion for other marginalized groups (Jews, Moors, Negroes, Indians, and so on). One example of this tendency was to be found in Denmark. This country was the first in Europe to introduce full rights for women and during the Second World War managed to save the life of its entire Jewish community by secretly transferring them to Sweden.⁵² If it is accepted that these dramatists of the Golden Age were 'feminists', one might surmise that their 'feminism' could have implied also philo-Judaism and a criticism of the Spanish anti-Judaism of that time. This transpositive philo-Judaism could not be paralleled in the case of *moriscos* or Negroes, because these groups, apart from being marginalized, had nothing in common with women and could be openly represented with sympathy, as they were for example, in Lope's *El santo negro Rosambuco en la ciudad de Palermo*, Calderón's *Amar después de la muerte*, Diego Jiménez de Enciso's *Juan Latino*, Andrés de Claramonte's *El valiente negro en Flandes* and many others.⁵³

The criticism of seventeenth-century misogyny is inseparable from the criticism of the dictates of *honra* and of the ideology of *limpieza de sangre*. *Honor-opinión*, based on noble birth and pure blood, was anti-individualist, in as much as a man was valued not for his deeds but for those of others; this concept was opposed by the idea of *honor-virtud* which was individualist, valuing a man for his own works. As mentioned before, in the tradition of Cartagena and Rojas, some Golden-Age dramatists, opposed to the concept of *honor-opinión*, presented an interior honour, *honor-virtud*; Erasmism, with the importance it placed on discarding the exterior trappings of piety for an interior religion, supported and enriched the concept of *honor-virtud*. However, the philo-Judaism masked by 'feminism' and the criticism of *honor-opinión* appears in a very different way in the biblical *comedias*, where the *converso*, when transposed into the

⁵² See Leni Yahil, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry: Test of a Democracy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1969).

⁵³ See Thomas E. Case and Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1995).

Hebrew, could be treated in a sympathetic manner. In the next chapter I will examine this important group of plays.

4

THE IMAGE OF THE JEW IN BIBLICAL *COMEDIAS*

Since Medieval times the Church in Spain had encouraged the dramatization of biblical stories; well known Old Testament characters such as the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and King David were introduced into New Testament stories of the Birth, the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.¹ With the advent of the *comedia*, a few Old Testament stories and personalities also appeared on the stage of the *corrales*. Did the few biblical *comedias* help to change the negative image of the Jew? Some of the authors of Old Testament *comedias* may have hoped to present a more positive image by means of the transposition converso/Hebrew, that is to say, presenting the hated *converso* in the guise of the admirable Hebrew.

¹ See Fernando Lázaro Carreter, 'El drama litúrgico, los "juegos de escarnio" y el "auto" de los Reyes Magos', in *Historia y crítica de la literatura española*, ed. by Francisco Rico, 12 vols (Barcelona: Crítica, 1980-), I: *Edad Media*, ed. by Alan Deyermond, pp. 461-65.

It is possible to argue that the Old Testament was used simply as a source for *comedias* by virtue of its well-known and interesting personages and dramatic events, as it was before the advent of the *comedia*, with no implicit reference to *converso* problems. But if the Old Testament was used innocently, why are there so few biblical *comedias*, despite their inherent dramatic interest?² After all, the biblical Jew, as mentioned before, was representable in the *corral*, because he had honour. According to Lida de Malkiel:

El cristiano ortodoxo del siglo XVII aparta claramente al judío contemporáneo del judío antiguo; la opinión ortodoxa no ve en el judío contemporáneo al heredero del judío del Antiguo Testamento. Las comedias de tema bíblico presentan a los judíos bajo una luz favorable.³

From a Christian point of view, anyone who has been made aware of Christ's promise of redemption and who nevertheless denies his divinity must be condemned. As pre-Christian Old Testament characters were not witnesses to Christ they stand outside this category and were esteemed if the accounts of their lives or visions appeared to prefigure the coming of Christ. In the same way, pagan classical writers might be praised for anticipating the Christian message. The difference in the Golden-Age perception between the good biblical and the bad post-biblical Jew is well illustrated in *La pobreza*

² See Cayetano Alberto de la Barrera y Leirado, *Catálogo bibliográfico y biográfico del teatro antiguo español desde sus orígenes hasta mediados del siglo XVIII*, facsimile edn (London: Tamesis, 1968), as well as Bruce W. Wardropper, *Introducción al teatro religioso del Siglo de Oro* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1967). Having written more Biblical *comedias* than any other Golden-Age dramatist, Lope had failed to follow his own advice, given in his *Arte nuevo*: 'No traiga la Escritura' (l. 264). Here is a limited list of the Biblical *comedias* by the most important dramatists. Lope: (Old Testament) *La creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, *Los trabajos de Jacob*, *El robo de Dina*, *La corona derribada y vara de Moisés*, *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé*, *La hermosa Ester*, *La historia de Tobías* (New Testament) *El vaso de elección*; Tirso: (Old Testament) *La mujer que manda en casa*, *La mejor espigadera*, *La venganza de Tamar* (New Testament) *La vida de Herodes*, *Tanto es lo de más como lo de menos*; Calderón (Old Testament) *La sibila del Oriente*, *Los cabellos de Absalón*, *Judas Macabeo*; Godínez: (Old Testament) *Las lágrimas de David*, *Amán y Mardoqueo*, *La reina Ester*, *Los trabajos de Job*; Ruiz de Alarcón: (New Testament) *El Anticristo*; Castro: (Old Testament) *Las maravillas de Babilonia* (New Testament) *La degollación de San Juan Bautista*, *El mejor esposo San José*; Mira de Amescua: (Old Testament) *El arpa de David*, *El clavo de Jael* (New Testament) *El rico avariento*; Enríquez: (Old Testament) *La prudente Abigail* (New Testament) *La escala de la gracia*, *El médico pintor*, *San Lucas*, *El vaso y la piedra* and *La conversión de la Magdalena*. The many *autos sacramentales* by all the major dramatists contained a great deal of Biblical material, but, as they are not *comedias*, I have not included them in the above list.

³ 'Lope de Vega y los judíos', *Bulletin Hispanique*, 75 (1973), 73-113 (pp. 86-7).

estimada by Lope, where the *cristiano viejo* Aurelio expresses his admiration for the ancient Hebrew kings and judges, as will be seen in Chapter 6.

One possible historical explanation for the scarcity of biblical *comedias* was the prohibition of reading the Bible by the laity. Before the Lutheran Reformation, a great part of Spanish theatre consisted of biblical *autos*; after the Council of Trent (1545-65), the translation and the free interpretation of the Bible were forbidden for Spanish Catholics: ‘Nadie, apoyado en su prudencia, sea osado a interpretar la Escritura Sagrada [...] conforme al propio sentir, contra aquel sentido que sostuvo y sostiene la santa madre Iglesia.’⁴ As an example to others, the *converso* Fray Luis de León was imprisoned in 1572 for translating the *Song of Songs*; despite this experience, he was stubborn enough later to translate the *Book of Job*. In England, where Protestantism encouraged the translation and the free interpretation of the Bible, there was much more interest in Old Testament drama.⁵

There is also some evidence that biblical *comedias* met with more problems at the hands of the censor than plays on secular subjects, because they touched on matters of religion, arousing the special attention of the Inquisition. Kamen explains the censorial role of the Inquisition:

In the 1530s and 1540s the Inquisition attempted to stop the entry of heretical literature into the Peninsula [...] Scientific books written by Catholics tended to circulate freely [...] and Galileo was never put in the list of forbidden books. The most direct attacks mounted by the Inquisition were against selective works in the area of astrology and alchemy, sciences that were deemed to carry overtones of superstition. (pp. 103 and 134)

Victoriano Roncero-López adds: ‘La Inquisición se preocupaba sobre todo de la pureza religiosa de los españoles y, por tanto, prestaba mucha más atención a todo

⁴ Enrique Denzinger, *El magisterio de la Iglesia* (Barcelona: Herder, 1963), p. 224.

⁵ See Murray Roston, *Biblical Drama in England* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 52.

aquello que pudiera atentar contra las enseñanzas y los dogmas de la Iglesia católica.’⁶

The possibility in itself of such attention may well have deterred a dramatist from tackling a biblical subject.

Apart from the above, this relative paucity of *comedias* about Old Testament Jews may be related to the problematic nature of the Jewish theme and therefore to the risk of an author being accused of sympathy towards Judaism, even heresy, unless his work had been written with ambiguity. For example, Lope speaks of just such a rumour about a play by Godínez, probably *Amán y Mardoqueo*:

La comedia que llamaban *La Godina* por ser su autor el dotor Godínez [...] se representó ayer. Dícenme que es más judía que de los godos, parto indigno de un hombre de entendimiento: tales son los de los autores.⁷

Lope wrote this letter to his friend Antonio Hurtado de Mendoza in 1628 about his daily life and the latest theatrical presentations, including a play by Ruiz de Alarcón. Lope may not so much be echoing current negative opinions about the play as commenting on the rumour that Godínez’s play was considered by many to be too Jewish for the author’s good. ‘Judía’ as a description of the play may not so much mean that the play was ‘bad’ as that it showed excessive sympathy for Judaism. In fact, Godínez was condemned by the Inquisition, not for choosing an Old Testament theme but because his excessive enthusiasm for Ester in *Amán y Mardoqueo* was considered heretical. Lope took better care to avoid such accusations by using ambiguity and was the first to write a *comedia* based on the Old Testament. Blanca de los Ríos speaks of a ‘ciclo bíblico’ by Tirso:

Tirso fue el primero y el único de nuestros dramáticos que realizó plena y conscientemente la aspiración de nuestros grandes teólogos y místicos, que ansiaban oponer al avance de la Reforma y del Renacimiento gentilico un

⁶ ‘La censura en Quevedo: El caso del *Buscón*’, *HiperFeira*, 1 (2001) <<http://www.sinc.sunysb.edu/Publish/hiper/num1/art/victor.htm>> [accessed 12 August 2003] (para. 15 of 24).

⁷ Lope de Vega, *Cartas*, ed. by Nicolás Marín (Madrid: Castalia, 1985), *carta* 140, p. 277.

verdadero Renacimiento cristiano: difundir copiosamente la luz de las Sagradas Escrituras.⁸

However, Tirso was neither the first nor the only one to do what this critic says; the ‘aspiración cristiana’, the translation, interpretation and publication of the Bible in vernaculars, of which she speaks was prohibited; besides, five *comedias* are not exactly a ‘copiosa difusión’. Tirso wrote only three *comedias* based on the Old Testament and two on the New Testament. It was Lope who wrote a whole cycle of Old Testament *comedias*, from the story of the creation of the world to that of Tobias. However, unlike Godínez, who heretically transformed the Virgin into a second Ester, Lope gave a seemingly orthodox end to *La hermosa Ester* by adding a number of lines about Ester as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. These two *comedias* will be discussed in some detail further on in this chapter.

Given the risks involved in writing an Old Testament *comedia* and that the word ‘Jew’, even in a biblical context, was not neutral in the Spanish Golden Age, it is unlikely that these authors would have wanted to take a risk just for using a biblical story as a source. If a writer was going to take a risk, he might as well do it for something worthwhile. Therefore, it is more likely that an author may have hoped to be able to say something of contemporary relevance in a biblical *comedia* that he could not say in a *comedia* with a contemporary setting. By transposing the contemporary *converso* into the biblical Hebrew, the author could deal with the problems of *conversos* in some safety. It is also possible that, despite the risks involved in dealing with a biblical theme, the best Golden-Age dramatists may have hoped to present, in the prototypical Jewish figures of David and Ester, not only a positive image of the biblical Jew, but, by means of a transposition, a positive image of the *converso* as well. In the case of David, I will examine *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé* by Lope, *Las lágrimas de David* by Godínez, *La venganza de Tamar* by Tirso and *Los cabellos de Absalón* by

⁸ ‘Preámbulo’ to *La mujer que manda en casa*, p. 7.

Calderón. I will also examine *El arpa de David* by Antonio Mira de Amescua, where there is no transposition, only prefiguration and therefore no positive image of the *converso*. In the case of Ester, I will refer to *La hermosa Ester* by Lope and *La reina Ester* and *Amán y Mardoqueo* by Godínez; these plays have in common with the rest of the biblical *comedias* of these authors (for example, *Los trabajos de Jacob* by Lope and *Los trabajos de Job* by Godínez) the themes of exile, persecution, and the suffering of the innocent, which were of central relevance to the life of the *conversos*.

4.1 DAVID AND THE TRANSPOSITION OF THE *CONVERSO*

The popularity of David is demonstrated by the fact that out of the few Old Testament *comedias* extant, five are about David. In order to appreciate the changes in David's story made in the *comedias*, I include here a short history of the protagonist as narrated in the Books of *Samuel*, *Kings* and *Chronicles*. David began his career as an aide at the court of Saul, became a close friend of Saul's son and heir, Jonathan, and married Saul's daughter Michal. His popularity aroused Saul's jealousy, and a plot was hatched to kill David. With the help of Jonathan, David fled to the coastal plain, where he began to lay the foundations of his career. Biding his time, he eventually had himself 'invited' to become king, not as a rebel against Saul but as his true heir. David's great success as a warrior and empire builder was marred by his ordering the murder of Uriah, a Hittite officer in David's army, so that he might marry his wife Bathsheba, as well as by family dissensions and political revolts. His third son, Absalom, murdered the eldest son, Amnon, ostensibly for the latter's rape of Tamar, the former's sister and the latter's half sister. After a period of exile and then of reconciliation with King David, Absalom used the favour he had gained among the people and some courtiers to launch a rebellion that

sent his father fleeing and that made Absalom master of Jerusalem for a time. Eventually, his forces were defeated, and he was killed by Joab, David's general. It was Solomon, born of David's union with Bathsheba, who eventually became the king's heir.⁹

David's importance is reflected not only in the variety of his images in the *comedias*, but in the different views of these images held by Hispanists, most of whom see him as a saint and a prefiguration of Christ. For example, Gwynne Edwards states: 'David's enduring love seems somehow analogous to the love of God who sent Christ, His only Son, to a death that would atone for the evil of mankind.' Helmy F. Giacomán writes: 'David está caracterizado como un monarca cristiano [...] y padre cristiano' and 'David es el encargado de enunciar la posición cristiana de la Iglesia católica.' This view is forcefully maintained by Dixon.¹⁰ However, the *comedias* about David, in which the transposition *converso*/Hebrew is discernible, do not appear to convey clearly this flattering image. Perhaps only in Lope's *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé* can we find a David with a positive image who could be a transposition of the *converso*; all the other David characters have a more or less negative image. In Tirso's, Calderón's and Godínez's plays, Tamar and Urías, who have a positive image, are capable of being interpreted as transpositions of the *converso*. In all these plays, the *converso* appears to be transposed, significantly, into the innocent victim of violence.

To put these transpositions in the plays about David into their historic context, it has to be appreciated that the figure of King David had a contemporary political relevance in the reigns of the Spanish Habsburg Monarchs, as demonstrated by Simon

⁹ Abbreviated from 'David', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Version 98 (London: Encyclopædia Britannica, 1994-98) [on CD-ROM].

¹⁰ Gwynne Edwards, 'Introduction' to Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Los cabellos de Absalón*, ed. by Gwynne Edwards (New York: Pergamon Press, 1973), p. 14 (see also *The Prison and the Labyrinth: Studies in Calderonian Tragedy* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1978), Chapter 4); Helmy F. Giacomán, 'Estudio' of Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Los cabellos de Absalón*, ed. by Helmy F. Giacomán (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1968), pp. 46 and 50), and Victor F. Dixon, 'El santo rey David y *Los cabellos de Absalón*', in *Hacia Calderón: Tercer Coloquio Anglo-Germano*, ed. by Hans Flasche (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1976), pp. 84-98.

A. Vosters. For example, in *La tragedia del Rey Don Sebastián y bautismo del Príncipe de Marruecos* (1595-98) Lope makes the House of King David the prototype for the lineage of the Habsburg Monarchs:

Está el príncipe aunque niño
contento, y yo en él mirando
el Salomón de David
del Santo Carlos retrato.¹¹

In these lines King Solomon is a prefiguration of King Philip II and King David is the prototype of King Charles V. Vosters notes that the identification of King David with the Habsburg Monarchs was ‘general en la época de Lope’ (p. 448). This connection between David and the Habsburgs is important: if King David had been perceived as simply an Old Testament figure or a prefiguration of Christ, these *comedias* would have had only historical or religious interest, which was not the case because, as was shown before, Golden-Age dramatists were not in the habit of using biblical themes or personages innocently. David’s connection with the Habsburg Monarchs would have awakened associations between biblical and contemporary situations, and the idea of King David as a prototype of the Habsburg kings could have helped to make the *converso* more acceptable to Spanish Golden-Age audiences.

4.1.1 EL ARPA DE DAVID

This *comedia* is a paradigm of the traditional view of David; it is an Old Testament *comedia* only by virtue of the events it relates and not because of its Jewish perspective.¹² Its fidelity to the biblical events is questionable; apart from the anachronistic references to Greco-Roman mythology, Mira selects the most picturesque scenes, like David’s victory over Golías, but omits the most problematic episodes in his

¹¹ *Lope de Vega y la tradición occidental*, 2 vols (Madrid: Castalia, 1977), I: *El simbolismo bíblico de Lope de Vega*, pp. 444-49: ‘Los Austrias y el linaje de David’ (p. 445).

¹² Antonio Mira de Amescua, *El arpa de David*, ed. by Vern G. Williamsen and James T. Abraham, in *Comedia* <<http://www.coh.arizona.edu/spanish/comedia/mira/arpdav.html>> [accessed 2 August 2003].

life, such as David's part in the murder of Bersabé's husband Urías. The play is written from the Christian point of view and is full of Christian prefigurations. All the Old Testament characters in the play know the future and the New Testament. The shepherd Velanio says this to David, crowned by laurel, after killing the lion:

Pronostique en tus sienes esa rama
la corona divina,
que dan Jerusalén y Palestina. (Act I)

Typical prefigurations of the Old Testament in Christian theology are Melchisedec as Christ, Moses' brass serpent as a prefiguration of the Cross, Jonas in the whale as Christ's three days in the sepulchre and the Ark of the Covenant as the Eucharist.¹³ Mira uses the last when David addresses the Ark:

Arca santa, leyes pías,
vara y celestial sustento,
figura del monumento
del venidero Mesías. (Act III)¹⁴

This author continuously empties the Old Testament of its inherent Jewish content and fills it with Christian content. For example, David intones a part of one of his psalms in Latin: 'Miserere mei Deus secundum / misericordiam tuam.' He not only introduces Christ in the text, but presents David's psalms as if they had been written for the Catholic Church:

Pues yo,
que su cantor y poeta
tengo de ser, alabanzas
quiero escribir, porque sean
celebradas en mi arpa
y después cante su Iglesia
mis salmos. (Act III)

¹³ See Peter Lengersfeld, 'La presencia de la Revelación en la Escritura y en la Tradición', in *'Mysterium Salutis': Manual de teología como historia de la Salvación*, ed. by Johannes Feiner and Magnus Löhrer, 6 vols (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1969), I, 287-337).

¹⁴ 'Monumento' in this context means: 'Túmulo, altar o aparato que el Jueves Santo se forma en las iglesias, colocando en él, en una arquita a manera de sepulcro, la segunda hostia que se consagra en la misa de aquel día, para reservarla hasta los oficios del Viernes Santo, en que se consume' (DRAE).

He also fills the biblical story with the dominant ideology of Spain of the Golden Age. For example, it is the typical Spanish *honra* which stands in the way of the love of David the shepherd and Micol the Princess:

DAVID	Pensamientos de honor, seréis tiranos.
MICOL	Pensamientos de honor, seréis despojos.(Act I)

The play reproduces anti-Semitic prejudices, although the Jews are shown as not wholly guilty of Christ's death, as is indicated in 'con temor de los romanos':

Al mismo Dios que adoraron
 los tres reyes peregrinos,
 con temor de los romanos
 quieren prender los judíos.
 [...]
 ¡Venganza, cielos, venganza,
 que dan muerte al infinito!
 [...]
 ¡Ay mi Cristo! ¡Ay Cristo mío! (Act III)

The image of the Jew which emerges is positive only as prefiguration of the Christian; in itself it is partly negative. However, the play could be construed as an act of self-defence: the continuous hyperbolization, especially of conventional Christianity could possibly have the function of the leg of pork hanging on the front door of the house of a *converso*; the exhibition of excessive Christian observance was considered as a sign of being a *cristiano nuevo*. Mira's parentage was doubtful; he was of illegitimate birth and had to prove his *limpieza de sangre*.¹⁵ In any case, *El arpa de David* contains no trace of social criticism and it appears to justify the Church and the State by David as a prefiguration of Christ and as the perfect Christian king. Mira's negative attitude towards the *conversos* may be related to the traditional nature of this biblical drama, in which the Old Testament is instrumentalized in favour of the New Testament, because the former is considered to have value only as a precursor of the latter. This was the case already in Spanish Medieval and Renaissance theatre, as explained by Miguel

¹⁵ See *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, XXXV, 771-73.

Ángel Pérez Priego: 'Los autos inspirados en el Antiguo Testamento valen como anuncio y preparación de la redención.'¹⁶

4.1.2 LA VENGANZA DE TAMAR

In this play David may be perceived as either so old as to be almost demented or so devious as to plot the murder of one of his sons by another son, so that he may give the crown to a third, Salomón, the son of his favourite wife, Bersabé.¹⁷ In any case, the emphasis in this play is less on David than on Tamar.

Tirso follows faithfully the biblical events, never instrumentalizing them in favour of the New Testament; there is no prefiguration in the play. Judged by its story, it is a biblical *comedia*, but judged by its main theme (the vengeance of a dishonoured woman), it is a *comedia de honra*, and one in which the innocent Tamar could be the transposition of the innocent *converso*. She has been brutally raped and the king, her father, gives her no sympathy or help; David's failure to correct injustice could be a transposition of king Philip IV, who failed his *converso* subjects. As seen in Chapter 1, having invited at the instigation of Olivares the return from Portugal of a number of wealthy merchants, Philip IV failed to legislate to control the renewed anti-Judaic obsession that resulted in increased persecution of *conversos* and in the most spectacular *autos de fe* of condemned judaizers.

David failed to do justice to Tamar by punishing Amón's crime. The one person to pay attention to Tamar's complaint was Absalón, her only full blood-brother, as she emphatically reminds him:

Bello Absalón,
un padre nos ha engendrado,

¹⁶ 'Introducción' to *Códice de autos viejos* (Anon.), ed. by Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego (Madrid: Castalia, 1988), p. 35.

¹⁷ Tirso de Molina, *Tamar's Revenge - La venganza de Tamar*, ed. by John E. Lyon (Warminster: Aris & Philips, 1988).

una madre nos parió.
 A los demás no les cabe
 de mi deshonra y baldón
 sino sola la mitad;
 mis medios hermanos son. (ll. 266-71)

David himself reminds Absalón of the importance of blood, after having excluded him from the succession: 'Por ser los dos de una madre / contra Amón te has indignado' (ll. 470-71). These examples of the insistence on blood throughout the play (Tamar uses it five times in her appeal to David after her rape: ll. 176-281) support the hypothesis of the presence of transposition. Tamar and Absalón feel themselves different and unjustly treated; like Spanish *conversos*, they felt discriminated against, because they were not part of the favoured blood-line. At least a part of Tirso's audience may have connected the unremedied injustices done to the innocent Tamar with those done to the *conversos*.

Tamar, as a transposition of the *converso*, can be seen first as the innocent victim of injustice, then, as the ideal *converso vengador*, described in the previous chapter. This is what Tamar says over Amón's corpse:

Gracias a los cielos doy,
 que no lloraré desde hoy
 mi agravio, hermano valiente.
 Ya podré mirar la gente,
 resucitando mi honor,
 que la sangre del traidor
 es blasón del inocente. (ll. 966-72)¹⁸

Revening her wrongs, Tamar was doing what perhaps the *converso* felt he ought to be doing. In the bloody scene of Amón's murder by Absalón, Tirso seems to show understanding of revenge when the victim of a great wrong has no recourse to justice. The play presents a positive image of the Jew in all the characters being drawn as human beings and not as monsters.

¹⁸ Although García Gómez has suggested to me that 'resucitado' sounds better than 'resucitando', this word in Lyon's edition is the same as in Calderón's *La venganza de Tamar* (BAE, II, 425-53 (p. 419)).

4.1.3 *LOS CABELLOS DE ABSALÓN*

Calderón does not present in this play the traditional and venerable image of David, but an old man full of doubts, weaknesses and contradictions.¹⁹ David's panacea for all problems is forgiving; his pardons, however, are not born of compassion and understanding, but of a habit that has a great deal to do with an image of kindly piety that he is anxious to maintain in public. His pardon is extended to everyone in the play: to Amón after his rape of Tamar; to Absalón after the scene where he is shown to want to kill his father for the crown; again to Absalón after his murder of Amón; to Joab and to Teuca after their deception; to Absalón after his rebellion; to Joab after his slaying of Absalón and even to Semei after his stoning of David. One has to agree with Aquitofel's words to Absalón that the people fear David's pardon more than his punishment:

Muchos hoy no se declaran
de tu parte, porque temen
que tú quedas perdonado
y ellos por traidores queden. (ll. 2778-81)

David's practice of mercy ignores the needs of justice and prudence, with catastrophic consequences not only for the pardoned but for the whole country. Pardoning Amón brings on Amón's murder; forgiving Absalón ensures Absalón's death and the suffering and death of thousands of innocents in the ensuing civil war. The last lines in the play, asking the public for pardon, in spite of being one of a number of formulae for ending *comedias*, must have sounded an ironic note to some of the spectators:

Teniendo aquí fin con esto
Los cabellos de Absalón
perdonad sus muchos yerros. (ll. 3229-31)

David explains that he pardons everyone because God had pardoned him:

¹⁹ Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Los cabellos de Absalón*, ed. by Evangelina Rodríguez Cuadros (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1989).

Adulterio y homicidio
 siento [*sic*] tal, me perdonó
 el justo Juez, porque dije
 un pequé de corazón. (ll. 1346-49)

However, this is contradicted by his fear that God had not forgiven him:

Pues el gran Dios no permite
 que yo fabrique su templo,
 porque manchadas las manos
 de sangre idólatra tengo. (ll. 743-46)

David himself recognizes this when he says to Semei: 'Ministro eres de Dios, que a castigarme / envía, y pues que son justicias tuyas' (ll. 3007-08). David's tragedy is that he never recognizes himself as the cause of all the tragedies in his life; when Semei accuses him of causing all the suffering in Israel, David replies blaming Fate:

Tienes razón; pero maldice al hado,
 no a mí, pues que la culpa yo no he sido
 sin el hado. (ll. 2992-94).

Victor F. Dixon and Albert E. Sloman maintain David's saintliness, but their view is challenged by Marcia L. Welles, who considers David a weak, feminized creature, whose dereliction of duty in his refusal to do justice leads Israel towards chaos.²⁰ If a king fails to do justice, the commonwealth achieves equilibrium only through barbarous vengeance. The David of Christian theology, as founder of the house of the Redeemer, is a symbol of messianic hope, but the Calderonian David is more a symbol of Divine punishment.

Nevertheless, *Los cabellos de Absalón* is the most biblical of all David-plays. Calderón respects the integrity of the Old Testament and never treats it as a mere precursor of the New Testament. He emphasizes David's failings, not as a Jew, but as a human being. David and the crisis in Israel recall the reign of Philip IV, remembered for letting Spain slide into decadence. In David, Calderón portrays a king who puts personal

²⁰ See Victor F. Dixon, 'Prediction and its Dramatic Function in *Los cabellos de Absalón*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 61 (1984), 301-16 (p. 309), Albert E. Sloman, *The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), p. 8, and Marcia L. Welles, 'The Anxiety of Gender: The Transformation of Tamar in Tirso's *La venganza de Tamar* and Calderón's *Los cabellos de Absalón*', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 2 (1995), 341-72 (p. 370).

feelings above justice, similar to Philip who put his personal pleasures above the needs of his people, allowing his country to be led to war and ruin. For example, according to Elliott, he allowed Olivares to construct a pleasure palace for him at the worst possible time:

The palace was criticized by contemporaries of being unworthy of so magnificent a king, but at the same time Olivares came under attack for spending money on a pleasure palace in times of war, high taxation and economic recession. Over ten years, the costs probably came about three million ducats – equivalent to one year's expenditure on Spain's army in the Netherlands. (p. 280)

This is how Philip IV is usually perceived by historians: 'A pesar de ser un rey inteligente y preparado para el gobierno, era débil e indeciso, y su entrega al trabajo era contrarrestada por su desmesurada tendencia a las diversiones cortesanas.'²¹ While Diego de Saavedra Fajardo (1584-1648) was one of the theorists of kingship who stressed the primacy of justice in his *Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano* (1640) and presented a portrait of what a king should be, Calderón's David could be seen as the portrait of what a king should not be.²²

However, even these negative aspects of David's character may conceal positive functions, such as a critique of the negligence of Royal authority and of the improper use of Catholic absolution: David pardons everyone without doing justice or correcting sin, his duty as father and as king (for Christ and the Old Testament prophets pardon was a perfection of, but never a substitution for justice). In any case, Calderón de idealizes David as perfect king and precursor of Christ, presenting him as full of faults. Nevertheless, his faults are human faults, and in this sense Calderón could be presenting a positive image of the Jew in David, as a human being like any other, neither saint nor devil. This portrait of the Jew is echoed in *El nuevo palacio del Retiro*, where

²¹ José Antonio Moreno Nieves, 'Los Austrias: Felipe IV (1621-1665)', in *La Monarquía Hispánica*, ed. by Cayetano Mas Galván <<http://cervantesvirtual.com/historia/monarquia/felipe4.shtml>> [accessed 2 August 2003] (para. 4 of 7).

²² See Abellán, III, 77-94.

'Judaísmo' is shown, not as usual,²³ an abstraction, but as a real human being and with a great deal of sympathy, as he exclaims against his rejection:

¿Qué es lo que pasa por mí?
 ¿Ninguno en desdicha igual
 por mí intercede? ¿Qué es esto?
 ¿Hay más desdicha? ¿Hay más
 desconsuelos? ¿Hay más penas,
 más tormentos, más pesar?
 ¡Que tenga la apostasía,
 que halle la gentilidad,
 el catecúmeno, el moro,
 alivio, consuelo y paz
 en las Consultas del Viernes
 y sólo a mí (¡estoy mortal!)
 me falta (¡ay de mí, ay de mí!)! (ll. 1023- 35)

Paterson comments:

[Judaísmo] representa a todos los que no caben en la comunidad, a los que no pertenecen, a los 'otros' que existen en la periferia. En el papel de Judaísmo tenemos el perfecto remedo del hombre marginado. A pesar de sus esfuerzos por entrar en el palacio, se le excluye para siempre de las festividades que hay dentro. [...] Desde su ira al ser excluido hasta su éxtasis ante la alegría que presencia desde fuera [...] corre una rica e impresionante gama de emociones. [...] El tratamiento que hace Calderón de Judaísmo sirve como contrapeso al antisemitismo doctrinal. (pp. 55-56)

4.1.4 DAVID PERSEGUIDO Y MONTES DE GELBOÉ

In this play, Lope presents a young and heroic David, who pardons Saúl all the attempts on his life, trying to conquer with his loyalty, obedience and humility the envy, hatred and injustice of his paranoid king.²³ His efforts are summed up in these two lines: 'Yo he de vencer su dureza / a puras lealtades mías' (p. 368).

However, David's insistent desire to overcome Saúl's hatred with his own love is finally defeated; Saúl dies cursing David:

Detén
 sentencia tan rigurosa,
 muerte, pues poco te cuesta,
 dilata mi vida un hora,
 hasta que mate a David.

²³ Lope de Vega, *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé*, BAE, VIII, 337-75.

No le permitas la gloria
de que viva pues yo muero. (p. 375)

The atmosphere of this *comedia* is wholly Jewish, full of respect for the Old Testament. The Virgin, Jesus and the angels are not integrated in the play, as they appear at the very end as *dei ex machina*. Roberta Zimmerman Lavine notes the presence of prefiguration in the play: 'Lope illustrates Christian ideology by making David aware that the promise of Christ's descent from his line will be fulfilled.'²⁴ Lope does not reject the practice of prefiguration in general; however, not only is the prefiguration in this play artificial, but Lope may even be mocking its indiscriminate and ignorant use by others. The Vejete asks Zaqueo the reason for the celebrations in Jerusalem and when Zaqueo answers 'es David', the Vejete, instead of asking if David is present in the celebration, asks:

VEJETE	¿No es el que mató a Golías?
ZAQUEO	Oigan, que sabe escritura. (p. 338)

'Oigan, que sabe escritura' suggests the absurdity that biblical personages speak of themselves as if they were post-biblical; David's defeat of Golías could not have been in any 'escritura' or in the Bible, because at that time neither a chronicle nor the Bible existed and the Vejete could not have read it. Zaqueo and the Vejete both step out of the play's internal time and look at the events in the Old Testament from the point of view of a later time, which is precisely what prefiguration, by definition, always does. 'Oigan, que sabe escritura' may be a deliberate anachronism, a parodic irony, mocking the ignorant use of prefiguration. The final prefiguration of David as 'tronco del árbol', as it appears in Lope's stage direction, does not accord well with the Old Testament spirit of the play as a whole:

Aparecen dos ángeles en lo alto, que van bajando, cantando estas coplas, hasta abajo, donde está un altar que, cubierto con una nube, tiene una imagen de Nuestra Señora y del Niño Jesús debajo de ella y en llegando al altar sube todo

²⁴ 'The Jew and the "Converso" in the Dramatic Works of Lope de Vega' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1997), p. 106.

arriba, quedando David por tronco del árbol, de donde van subiendo los ángeles y el altar hasta lo alto. (p. 373)

Until the very end no references have been made to this prefiguration; the Christian element is extraneous to the play. The Virgin, Jesus and two angels appear out of the blue, creating a sense of unreality. However, their appearance, apart from announcing the promise of Christ's descent from David, has also an ironic function; it stops David from risking his own life once again to save Saúl's. This is what one of the angels says to David before the battle of Gelboé:

Que te reserves del riesgo
quiere Dios, ya que te nombra
por base fundamental
de fábricas misteriosas. (p. 373)

This ironic function is similar to the previous scene, where Jonatás's ghost appears at David's wedding to say goodbye and, fearing that his friend might be killed in the battle, forbids him to go to Gelboé. Jonatás's prohibition is repeated by the angels in the following scene. As will be seen when *La hermosa Ester* is discussed, the *dei ex machina* prefiguration could have been used by Lope to prevent accusations of pro-Judaism.

Since *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé* does not contain a genuine Christian prefiguration, what interest would it have had for a contemporary audience? Its theme of the persecuted hero could have interested part of a public used to neo-stoic ideas about adversity as a test of virtue. Another hypothesis is that David, instead of being thought of as a Christian or stoic prototype, could have been considered, by a part of a contemporary audience, as a transposition of the *converso*. The innocent David was the object of envy and hatred, hounded into exile like the Jews. Saúl, his persecutor, is presented as envious and unjust, characteristics often attributed to the persecutors of the Jews in Spain.

The text abounds in descriptions of David as innocent victim: 'Preso', 'hambriento', 'foragido', 'oculto', 'receloso', 'triste' and 'presa' (pp. 352, 353, 354 and 360).²⁵ David's complaints to Saúl could have come from the mouth of any prisoner of the Inquisition:

¿Qué constitución, qué rito
manda que la caridad
sea capaz del castigo?
¿Cuándo la piedad fue rea?
¿Cuándo se vio en el suplicio
el hacer bien? ¿Ni qué imperio,
sino el tuyo, ha establecido
que fuesen las buenas obras
confirmadas por delito?
¿Por qué, Señor, me persigues? (p. 363)

All of David's rhetorical questions have ironic answers: the 'constitución' and the 'rito' could represent the Inquisition; 'cuándo', the seventeenth century and the 'imperio', Spain. For all the above reasons, David, the *perseguido*, could be a transposition of the *converso*. Saul's expulsion of David, purely for hatred and jealousy, may also allude to the expulsion of the Jews by the Catholic Monarchs also considered unjust:

Mas como tal vez el odio
en un pecho envejecido
reverdecer suele, es bien
que te apartes de mí: aplico
al tósigo de mi enojo
el antídoto preciso
de la distancia; David,
vete en paz. (p. 364)

Immediately afterwards, there is another allusion, this time to the divisions in the kingdom, which could refer to the conflicts between *crístianos viejos* and *nuevos*: 'Tristes presagios prolijos / de la división del Reino' (p. 364).

²⁵ According to DRAE, apart from its modern meaning of 'robber', *forajido* has an older, now obsolete meaning of 'el que vive desterrado o extrañado de su patria o casa', clearly applicable to David at this time of his life.

David's ideal of 'vencer la dureza a pura lealtad' could be considered, therefore, as a transposition of the attitude of Spanish Jews and *conversos*, who always considered themselves loyal subjects. Abisai's criticism of David's simplicity could be an allusion to the *conversos* naïve passivity: '¡Que tantas veces te fies / de Saúl! ¡Qué gran simpleza!' (p. 368). The image of the Jew in Lope's David is so positive and the philo-Semitism of this play is so pronounced that it was associated in Menéndez y Pelayo's mind with '*La prudente Abigail*, comedia del judaizante Antonio Enríquez Gómez'.²⁶ Lope presents David's ideals and, by transposition, those of the *conversos* as praiseworthy, a sign of their constant loyalty to the Crown; however, David, like the *conversos*, ends up overwhelmed by incurable hatred. The basic arrangement of character and plot could suggest that David's final failure to win King Saul's approval may be a transposition of the *conversos* despair of ever being accepted by society.

4.1.5 LAS LÁGRIMAS DE DAVID

McKendrick observes that the *comedias* of Lope and of other writers of his circle about kings are 'un debate [...] penetrante sobre la relación entre los hombres y la institución de la monarquía'.²⁷ This statement could apply also to *Las lágrimas de David*, for the central problem of this play is how a man could endure the injustices of absolute power without becoming an abject slave; Urías is such a man, and in this sense he could be perceived as a transposition of the *converso*, while David could represent once again the Spanish Monarch.²⁸ The prophet Natán calls David a tyrant, referring to Urías's murder:

He venido
seguro a pedir justicia
de un gran tirano. (ll. 2751-53)

²⁶ *Estudios sobre el teatro de Lope de Vega*, 3 vols (Madrid: Atlas, 1965), I, 203.

²⁷ 'La comedia y los límites del conformismo: La dignidad real en Lope de Vega', *Crítica Hispánica*, 1 (1994), 43-58 (p. 56).

²⁸ Felipe Godínez, *Las lágrimas de David*, ed. by Edward V. Coughlin and Juan O. Valencia (Valencia: Albatros, 1986).

David is also a hypocrite, both as a king and as a man. He has decided to have Urías murdered, but tries to lay the responsibility on his victim:

Pues elegid vos, Urías,
que yo entre estos dos extremos,
por vuestro honor os despacho,
por vuestra vida os detengo. (ll. 2157-60)

In his David, Godínez, like Calderón, contradicts this king's conventional saintly image. This is further emphasized by the differences between David and his counterpart, Urías. According to Edward V. Coughlin and Juan O. Valencia, Urías is 'un ejemplo del hombre despersonalizado. Urías, personaje-símbolo, actuó exclusivamente por el concepto del honor, por la historia del honor y por la perpetuación de ese honor íntimamente vinculado al elemento propagandístico del orden estamental español del siglo XVII'.²⁹ These critics base their opinion on the following lines are spoken by Urías:

Y así vuelva yo a morir,
antes que falte un momento
a mi opinión, a mi fama,
que en los que nobles nacieron,
después de todo es la vida,
y el honor es lo primero. (ll. 2105-10)

It is true that Urías's insistence on honour shows him to be more Spanish than Hebrew, as Coughlin and Valencia maintain, but the above lines may be understood ironically and have a meaning for Urías that is different from the conventional, because Urías's words are contradicted by his actions, an example of *engañar con la verdad*, which is based on saying one thing and implying another. When he discovers David's affair with Bersabé and the king's plan to have him killed, Godínez, perhaps endorsing the disapproval of the rules of *honra* in the *converso* and Erasmist tradition, does not present Urías obeying the conventional *honor-opinión* code, according to which he should avenge his dishonour. To remain a man of conventional 'opinión' and 'fama'

²⁹ 'Estudio' of *Las lágrimas de David*, p. 38.

Urías may be excused for not killing the king, but not for leaving alive the wife who dishonoured him. He chooses not to do this, even though, according to the code of honour, this omission would leave him without ‘opinión’ and ‘fama’ during his life and after his death. In that case, what can Urías mean by these words? The conventional meaning of ‘opinión’ and ‘fama’ is the positive image society has of a man; for Urías, these words appear to mean the positive image that he has of himself. The twice repeated ‘mi’, which is different from the usual ‘la opinión’ or ‘la fama’, may be seen as a textual support for this interpretation.³⁰ Urías’s image of himself is his own conscience based on virtue: the idea of revenge does not form part of his belief in virtue. It is unarguable that not exacting revenge is virtuous, but can one say the same of allowing oneself to be killed? However, Urías’s consent to go to his certain death does not mean that he is committing suicide. Joab’s order to fight in the first line of battle cannot be avoided for fear of being considered a coward not only by everyone but most importantly by himself. Therefore, as he could not escape his fate, he embraces it. Urías’s behaviour may be seen as representing an idea, originally of Stoicism, revived in the Renaissance, and later elaborated by Spinoza and Nietzsche, which turns necessity into freedom.³¹ For these philosophers, liberty is acting according to necessity and this is precisely what Urías does, he acts according to what Nietzsche called *amor fati* in his *Ecce Homo*:

My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati*: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it – all idealism is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary – but love it.³²

³⁰ ‘La opinion’ appears twice in lines 147 and 908, and ‘la fama’ three times in lines 189, 745 and 964 of only *La villana de Getafe* (for bibliographical details, see Chapter 6, note 31).

³¹ Expressed by Francisco de Quevedo in his moral and philosophical treatises, such as *Política de Dios, gobierno de Cristo y tiranía de Satanás* (1626). For further details, see Henry Ettinghausen, *Francisco de Quevedo and the Neostoic Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) and Abellán, III, Chapter 12: ‘El neostoicismo: Francisco de Quevedo’.

³² *Ecce Homo*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p. 57.

It is precisely this fatalism that leads to the interpretation of this play as more pagan than biblical in its spirit, because, while in biblical terms it is God who controls the world, for the pagan it is an impersonal Fate. The power of Destiny is indicated continuously by the use of concepts, such as ‘vaticinio’ (l. 448), ‘designio’ (l. 481), ‘agüero’ (l. 848), ‘ocasión’ (l. 1091), ‘azar’ (l. 1866), ‘oráculo’ (l. 2295), ‘hado’ (l. 2368). God appears only as Predestinator: ‘Dios lo ha ordenado así’ (l. 2907). In fact, Godínez was, as mentioned before, punished by the Inquisition in 1624, for having said, in the words of the indictment:

Que Dios había dado en persona de Jacob palabra a los judíos de no irse del pueblo judaico hasta tanto lo redimiese, dando a entender que no había llegado el cumplimiento de esta palabra y que con ella se había privado Dios de la libre potestad que tenía para no poder irse hasta que los redimiese, la cual proposición es herética, pues necesita a Dios que cumpla su palabra sin libertad, quitándole la voluntad.³³

It was this belief that God is not at liberty to forget his promise to redeem the Jews that sustained the hope of *conversos* that the Messiah was still to come, a belief that was heretical to Christianity as it seemed to cast doubt on Jesus as the Messiah. The Inquisition always prosecuted this as a dangerous heresy and it was one of the reasons for Godínez ending up in prison, as will be shown further on. Godínez’s *converso* status makes it inviting to consider that the Jewish problem could be transposed into a universal problem, how a subject could submit to absolute power without becoming a slave. Godínez’s David could be seen as the tyrannical power of the Spanish monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the innocent Urías as the persecuted *converso*. Following this, Bersabé could logically be the object of violent expropriation of which the *converso* was victim. In this sense, the play appears to explain the passivity of the *converso* facing absolute power; the only dignified way out of such a tragic situation was to embrace necessity and, with this, to protest against the abuse of

³³ *Necesitar* has the meaning here, according to AUT of ‘obligar y precisar a ejecutar una cosa’.

absolute power. Godínez also shows a positive image of the Jew in Urías's pacifism, honesty, dignity and loyalty to the Crown, despite his unjust treatment.

Taking into account the five David-plays, Mira appears to have presented a positive image of David, but only as an instrument of Christian prefiguration; Calderón, Tirso and Godínez presented an image of David as a fallible human being; however, this portrait of the Jew as human is positive in an age when Jews were considered as monsters or simply instrumentalized as prefigurations in favour of Christianity. Lope presented in David a positive image of the Jew, as did Calderón and Tirso in Tamar, and Godínez in Urías; these dramatists could be considered to have presented, by means of the transposition *converso*/Hebrew, a positive image of the *converso*. However, the most convincingly positive image of the Jew appears in the plays about Ester.

4.2 ESTER, THE SAINT OF THE *CONVERSOS*

In this section three Golden-Age *comedias* about Ester will be considered: *La hermosa Ester* by Lope (1610), *La reina Ester* (1613) and *Amán y Mardoqueo* by Godínez (perhaps 1628), subtitled *La horca para su dueño*. As will be shown, this last was the corrected version of *La reina Ester*. It may not be by chance that Godínez, a known judaizer, and Lope, probably of *converso* origin, were the only ones to write about Ester, who, as will be seen, had become a symbol of hope for Jews and *conversos* alike. Menéndez y Pelayo, who believed that Lope was an anti-Semite, was, as in the case of *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé*, surprised by the philo-Semitism of *La hermosa Ester*.³⁴ Sicroff, however, emphasized:

El hecho mismo de escoger la historia bíblica del libro de Ester hace dudosa la idea de un Lope conformista respecto al antisemitismo de sus contemporáneos.

³⁴ See I, 190-91.

Es inconcebible que un Lope antisemita [...] se propusiera dramatizar el máximo triunfo que conoció el pueblo israelita en el Antiguo Testamento contra sus perseguidores.^{35]}

Contrasting the biblical story of Esther with Lope's and Godínez's plays will help to uncover the positive image of the Jew in these *comedias*. Here is a brief résumé of the biblical narrative: Esther, the beautiful Jewish wife of the Persian King Ahasuerus, and her uncle Mordecai persuade the king to retract an order for the general annihilation of Jews throughout the empire. The massacre had been plotted by the king's chief minister, Haman, who was hanged on the gallows he built for Mordecai, and on the day planned for their annihilation, the Jews destroyed their enemies. According to the Book of Esther, the feast of Purim was established to celebrate that day.

4.2.1 LA HERMOSA ESTER

The biblical Esther is a realist, helps her people out of her sense of duty and is reluctant to marry a gentile; she is afraid to act independently (Esther 14. 14-16) and Mordechai has to threaten her to make her intercede with the king. Lope's Ester needs no encouragement, because, knowing that the king and she are in love, she trusts him.³⁶ To sum up, Lope's Ester could be perceived as the idealized heroine of a national legend, the saviour of the Jews. Lope's King Asuero is just and generous, distributing rewards to those who deserve them, while the biblical king rewards only Mardoqueo. In *La hermosa Ester*, love leads Asuero to counteract Amán's cruelty. Finally, he accepts Ester's God as well as her *abuelos*. This idealization of the king corresponds to the idealization of Ester, making him a fit consort for the heroine. Lope's Mardoqueo, like

³⁵ 'Notas equívocas en dos dramatizaciones de Lope del problema judaico: *El niño inocente de La Guardia* y *La hermosa Ester*', in *Actas del VI Congreso Internacional de Hispanistas. Toronto, 1977*, ed. By Alan M. Gordon and Evelyn Rugg (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1980), pp. 701-05 (p. 703).

³⁶ Lope de Vega, *La hermosa Ester*, BAE, VIII, 101-31.

the biblical character, has a dream in which the salvation of the Jews is obliquely suggested, discovers the conspiracy to kill the king and reveals it to him; with his proud piety, he is the main cause of Amán's determination to destroy the Jews. Apart from this, Lope presents Mardoqueo as knowing the future and as having the plan for the salvation of the Jews by means of Ester.

All these elements, especially the last, compose an idealized image of Lope's Mardoqueo as a typical Old Testament prophet. Amán in the *comedia* is also very different from the biblical villain. He is hyperbolized into a more powerful persecutor and is the originator of the rule that everyone should kneel before him, while in the Bible it is the king who orders this. The most important difference is that, whereas in the Bible and, as will be seen in Godínez's play also, this hatred is inveterate and historic (he is called 'the son of Ham-med'-a-tha the A'-gag-ite, the Jews' enemy': Esther 3. 10-11), in Lope's play Amán's hatred of the Jews springs from Mardoqueo's refusal to kneel before him. This is why Lope stages the scene in which Mardoqueo walks up and down in front of Amán in silent defiance, provoking a paranoid rage in him (pp. 115 and 121). This suggestion is supported by Valencia, who, in turn, cites Robert Newton Sherwill: 'Amán develops a definitive neurosis, a persecution complex that borders in madness.'³⁷ He falsely accuses the Jews of conspiring to kill the king, using this as one of the reasons for their proposed destruction.

Although there is idealization and hyperbolization of these characters, the play as a whole is biblical in spirit and is written from an Old Testament perspective. There is no anachronism, no *gracioso*, the word *judío*, always pejorative, is never used. The final prefiguration ('Ester dichosa, / figura sagrada / de otra Ester guardada'), as in *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé*, is not integrated in the play. This interpretation is contradicted by Glaser, in whose opinion this play's perspective is entirely Christian.

³⁷ Juan O. Valencia, *Pathos y tabú en el teatro bíblico del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Isla, 1977), p. 67.

According to this critic, Lope manipulates the biblical story selectively to show that Ester is an allegory of the Virgin Mary: 'Lope finds many ways of suggesting that his Esther is both the biblical heroine and a stand-in for a higher being.'³⁸ Sicroff agrees with Glaser that Lope, in accordance with his *Arte Nuevo*, manipulated his sources for his own ends, but denies that the play shows conformism or anti-Semitism. Sicroff considers the prefiguration at the end as 'mal pegada y poco convincente [...], introducida en el último momento sin preparación alguna.'³⁹ According to this critic, its function is to counterbalance the openly pro-Jewish sentiments expressed by the king:

Si yo en amarte acierto
lo mismo será estimar
la sangre de tus abuelos. (p. 135)

He comments on the king's speech as follows: 'Esto ya parece demasiado y el mismo Lope debiera haberse dado cuenta de sobrepasar los límites de lo aceptable porque, tocando ya a los últimos versos, procuró dar otra resonancia a la comedia' (p. 704). Jack Weiner is in general agreement with this interpretation of the play:

Durante el siglo XVI en los autos [...] se trata el tema de Ester desde el punto de vista cristiano. [...] Sin embargo, para mí, la dicha tragicomedia de Lope trata este tema desde el punto de vista judío. Si se examina la pieza con esmero se ve que aquí Ester es Ester y no una prefiguración de María.⁴⁰

As a further indication of the unreal quality of the ending, it should be remembered that Lope's Ester does not forgive Amán, as she probably would have had to, had she been a true prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. Sicroff maintains that the play is not anti-Semitic and Weiner that it was written from a Jewish point of view. I would add that *La hermosa Ester* is imbued with an unmistakable sympathy for the Jews expressed by all the characters except Amán and his associates. This pro-Judaism of the play is even

³⁸ 'Lope de Vega's *La hermosa Ester*', *Sefarad*, 20 (1960), 110-35 (p. 131).

³⁹ 'Notas equívocas en dos dramatizaciones de Lope del problema judaico', p. 704. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

⁴⁰ *En busca de la justicia social: Estudios sobre el teatro español del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Potomac, 1984), p. 5.

more significant when one considers the historical context in which the play was written and the grave problems caused by the events described by Weiner:

El número de criptojudíos en la corte de los dos últimos Felipes aumenta, principalmente por la llegada de mayor número de cristianos nuevos de Portugal; [...] los reyes españoles los invitan a volver por consejo de sus ministros para resolver los problemas económicos nacionales. (p. 5)

Having regard to the play's pro-Judaism and the time of its composition, one could consider the demonization of Amán as a transposition of the Inquisition, while the idealization of Ester, Mardoqueo and the king could be seen as the transposition of a wished-for reconciliation between the Spanish State and the Jews. This attempt at reconciliation was not unique: Lope's *La hermosa Ester* may have had a precedent in *El Abencerraje* by Ginés Pérez de Hita. According to Carrasco-Urgoiti, this Moorish novel 'may well have been to some extent motivated by the desire to counteract the growing animosity between the descendants of the Moors and the majority of the population of Spain [...], expressing a move towards unification, that relates to contemporary life'.⁴¹ The transpositions in *La hermosa Ester* will be analysed later in some detail.

4.2.2 AMÁN Y MARDOQUEO

Almost everything that has been said about *La hermosa Ester* is applicable to Godínez's *Amán y Mardoqueo*.⁴² The fundamental difference between these *comedias* is that while Lope idealizes Ester and the king, Godínez, as will be shown, divinizes them. I propose to examine this divinization together with the complex figuration that characterizes this play. In the discussion about figuration, I will also refer to *La reina Ester*. As there is an intimate connection between Godínez's life and his work, after all he was imprisoned

⁴¹ *The Moorish Novel*, pp. 71-72.

⁴² Felipe Godínez, *Amán y Mardoqueo*, in *Quinta parte de comedias escogidas de los mejores ingenios de España*, ed. by Juan de San Vicente (Madrid: Pablo de Val, 1653), pp. 53-79.

above all because of what he wrote in *La reina Ester*, a short account of his biography and his thought will be useful at this point.⁴³

Godínez was born in Moguer (Huelva) between 1584 and 1588, to a wealthy Jewish family of Portuguese origin. He studied in Seville, was awarded his degree of *bachiller* in 1610 and from 1613 he habitually signed himself as *presbítero*. Between 1613 and 1622 he wrote *La reina Ester*, *El harpa de David*, *Ludovico el piadoso*, *El soldado del cielo* and *El príncipe ignorante y discreto*. In 1624 he was arrested by the Inquisition, together with his mother, his two sisters and his uncle. This is Godínez's confession:

Que había sido hereje, judaizante, fautor y encubridor de herejes; que había dicho en el púlpito algunas proposiciones equívocas; que había hecho una proposición malsonante de la Santísima Trinidad; compuesto dos comedias del Testamento Viejo, una de *La arpa de David* y otra de *La Reina Esther*, inventando en la una que el ángel San Gabriel había revelado a la Reina Ester que el Mesías había de nacer de madre concebida sin pecado original; que él había entendido un lugar [de la Escritura] que no entendió San Jerónimo. (p. 18)

His sentence reads as follows:

Condenado al auto público de fe con auto penitencial, con confiscación de bienes y que vuelto a Castillo [de Triana] le sea quitado el hábito y que esté recluso en un convento u hospital, que le fuere señalado por tiempo de un año, después dél que esté desterrado de todo el distrito de esta Inquisición por tiempo de seis años, y que se privado perpetuamente del ejercicio de sus órdenes, y de tener oficio y beneficio, declarando haber incurrido en irregularidad. (p. 19)

The Inquisition kept meticulous records of his and his family's property, all of which was confiscated:

Confiscar aquí 126.718 maravedís, obtenidos de la venta de un pinar, un pedazo de tierra, una viñamajuelo y otro pedazo de viña y almendral, equivalente en dinero a 3.777 reales... Más 200 ducados en reales que valen sesenta y cuatro mil ochocientos maravedís por la venta de la casa que tenía en Moguer [...] Además tiene bienes en Sevilla, de los que todavía no se ha hecho el inventario, ni se han vendido. (pp. 19-20)

Piedad Bolaños Donoso and Pedro M. Piñero Ramírez comment on these events:

⁴³ The following biographical details are quoted from Piedad Bolaños Donoso and Pedro M. Piñero Ramírez, 'Introducción' to *Aún de noche alumbra el sol*, ed. by Piedad Bolaños Donoso and Pedro M. Piñero Ramírez (Sevilla: Reichenberger-Kassel - Universidad de Sevilla, 1991).

Se confiscaron sus bienes, hasta el último terruño, y los de su madre y sus hermanas e incluso los de su tío, el famoso Francisco Méndez que, como había muerto hacía ya algunos años, salió en estatua en el mismo auto de fe. (p. 20)

In 1626 he moves to Madrid and begins to reconstruct his life as an author; during his time in the capital he writes a number of *comedias* and *autos*. Many of his plays, such as *Basta intentarlo* (1637), are presented in the Buen Retiro and under Olivares's protection he becomes one of the official court poets. During this time Godínez was a friend of Juan Pérez de Montalbán and Lope, and wrote and pronounced the funeral oration of the latter. Despite his successes as a playwright and the Inquisition's tacit permission to resume his priestly duties, after his release from prison he lived and died in 1659 in penury.

Godínez appears to have had his own particular heterodox theology, in which he wanted to unite Judaism and Christianity, so as not to lose the former in which he was brought up and to which he was perhaps attached. This is commented on by Menéndez Onrubia:

Godínez se muestra, sacerdote, predicador y teólogo, pertinaz en sus primitivas creencias, admitiendo la existencia de Dios, del Espíritu Santo como vehículo, junto con la Biblia, para llegar al contacto directo con la divinidad, pero rechazando todo lo concerniente a la gran 'pascua' judía de la Resurrección de Cristo, a partir de la cual comienza a desarrollarse el Catolicismo como la nueva historia del pueblo elegido. Lo esencial de la religión israelita ha quedado incorporado en el engranaje interno del cristianismo, y Godínez encuentra un ambiente propicio en las inquietudes espirituales sevillanas [...] y tiene la protección necesaria como para no dejar nunca de practicar, al menos durante mucho tiempo, un mosaísmo enriquecido y camuflado en las aportaciones de San Pablo, San Juan y otros Santos Padres de la Iglesia que gozaron de especiales iluminaciones divinas. (p. 10)

In his examination of Godínez's *El divino Isaac*, Ted Parks observes that Godínez tried to incorporate Judaism into Christianity:

Yet shrinking the biblical version of Isaac's binding, a story of theological and liturgical importance in Judaism, so that it posits and exalts Isaac's divine nature, and inserting the narrative into a plot where the Jewish People vanish in an

increasing focus on the gentiles, perhaps bespeak the playwright's attempt to bring Jewish tradition solidly and safely to bear on the Christian Eucharist.⁴⁴

Amán y Mardoqueo also exhibits this heterodox attempt to harmonize the two religions, which might explain the presence in this play of two opposing types of figuration: prefiguration or orthodox typology, according to which the characters and events of the Old Testament are instrumentalized in favour of the New Testament, and 'post-figuration' or heterodox typology, according to which the characters and events of the New Testament are instrumentalized in favour of the Old Testament. It is this second type of figuration on which, as will be seen, Godínez's divinization of Ester is based.

He presents Ester in an orthodox prefiguration on three occasions, as if she were a proto-Mary. For example, when, at the beginning of the play, Ester meditates on prophecies:

Hasta la feliz venida
del que al mundo ha de dar vida.
[...]
Oh, Virgen, quién mereciera
ser sombra tuya siquiera. (p. 54)

But, in parallel with this orthodox prefiguration, Godínez used a curious post-figuration with the effect of divinizing Ester as the first Mary. In Catholic theology Mary is not divine, but a woman 'privileged' by God and raised above humanity. However, Mary is frequently considered divine by the ordinary faithful and has been worshipped from time to time as God himself. Mariolatry survives in Spain to the present day, for example in the Andalusian *fiesta* of *El Rocío*, which coincides with the Feast of Pentecost, where Mary is called *La Blanca Paloma*, although this symbol usually represents the Holy Ghost. Therefore, when Mary is described as divine, it is done in this popular sense and not within strict Catholic theology. Godínez's enthusiasm for Ester, a saviour of Israel, was so great that, by this post-figuration, he may have wanted

⁴⁴ 'Religion and Politics in Felipe Godínez's *El divino Isaac*', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 1 (1997), 55-66 (p. 63).

to equate her with the Virgin Mary. However, Ester's divinization is obviously heterodox as much for Catholicism as for Judaism and is an example of Godínez's peculiar *converso* theology that was, as mentioned before, condemned by the Inquisition. This divinization is evident at the end of *Amán y Mardoqueo*. Here Godínez unites God's prophecy in Genesis 3. 15 that Eve will crush the head of the serpent under her foot with the prophecy in the Book of Revelation 12. 1-17 that foretells the victory of the Virgin over the Dragon. Godínez uses the union of the two prophecies to announce Ester's victory over Amán:

Intentó la envidia de éste
que pereiésemos todos;
no será así, que al dragón,
con pies signe virtuosos,
hallará una mujer fuerte
y a Dios quitará el enojo,
que no quiso Dios sin ella
reformat daños ni odios. (p. 78)⁴⁵

It is evident that the 'éste' refers to Amán, identified with the Devil himself, who is represented in Revelation as the Dragon. Amán becomes a supernatural being, one that only God or someone divine could defeat. This person is the 'mujer fuerte', 'que no quiso Dios sin ella reformat daños ni odios', that is to say, Ester. This is post-figuration, an inversion of orthodox pre-figuration: Ester is no longer a forerunner of the Virgin Mary, but rather it is Mary who is now a second Ester, because it is Ester who now saves Israel. The summit of Godínez's worship of Ester, however, is reached when Egeo announces to her that she will be chosen by the king as wife; this dialogue reproduces literally the words of the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in the Gospel according Luke. This is a strange, ambiguous scene in which something mysterious seems to happen to Egeo and Ester. Egeo dreams that he is the 'paraninfo enviado a

⁴⁵ *Signar*, according to DRAE, means 'hacer, poner o imprimir el signo', and the syntactical order of lines 3, 4 and 5 (somewhat obscure) could be 'una mujer fuerte que signe con pies virtuosos al dragón'.

Reina más soberana', that is, the Archangel Gabriel, the messenger sent by God to the Virgin Mary:

No sé qué siento en el pecho,
que sueño, aunque en forma humana,
que soy paraninfo alado,
y paraninfo enviado
a Reina más soberana. (p. 50)

Below is set out Godínez's text on one side and the *Vulgate* that Godínez may have used on the other. The dialogue between Egeo and Ester is the same as that between Gabriel and Mary:

EGEO	Dios te salve, hermosa Ester, contigo es Dios y serás entre todas las demás la más dichosa mujer [...]. Dios te salve, Ester graciosa.	[ANGELUS] Ave, gratia plena: Dominus tecum: benedicta tu in mulieribus [...].
ESTER	¿Qué salutación es ésta?	Et [MARIA] cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio [...].
EGEO	No temas, divina Ester, que hallaste en el Rey la gracia [...].	[ANGELUS] Ne timeas, Maria; invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum [...].
ESTER	¿Eso cómo puede ser? Si el Rey no me ha conocido [...].	[MARIA] Quomodo fiet istud quoniam virum non cognosco? [...]
EGEO	Todo esto, y más ha de hacer Espíritu soberano, cuya virtud te hará sombra [...]; nada es imposible a la mayor majestad [...].	[ANGELUS] Spiritus sanctus superveniet in te et virtus Altissimi obumbrabit tibi [...]; quia non erit impossibile apud Deum [...].
ESTER	Una esclava del rey soy, haga en mí su voluntad.	[MARIA] Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum Verbum Tuum.
	(p.58)	(Luke 1. 26-38)

Indeed something mysterious seems to have happened to Egeo and Ester. While Egeo dreams that he is Gabriel, Ester thinks that she had been speaking to an angel:

A Egeo hablé, y hasta ahora
pensé que era Ángel. (p. 58)

In this scene Egeo gives Ester the Anunciation before Mary receives it herself, thus presenting Ester as divine as Mary, a heresy. Egeo's words when speaking to Ester, 'No temas, divina Ester', confirm that he thinks of her as divine.

Nevertheless, this interpretation of Ester could be met by the suggestion that Old Testament biblical *comedias* were not theological treatises nor documentary historical accounts, but poetic representations: audiences expected Old Testament stories to correspond to New Testament ones (prefiguration) and were commonly helped to do this by inverisimilar and anachronistic scenes, in which a character needs not be divine to know the future. However, the scene with Ester and Egeo is neither inverisimilar or anachronistic, it is coherent with the particular theology of Godínez: he divinizes Ester not by letting Ester know the future Anunciation of the angel to the Virgin, but by presenting Ester as the beneficiary of the Anunciation, which was the sole privilege of the Virgin; thus, in *Amán y Mardoqueo* Godínez makes the New Testament subservient to the Old Testament (post-figuration). It is surprising that this supposedly corrected version (*Amán y Mardoqueo*), which appears to be perhaps even more heretical than the original (*La reina Ester*), was accepted by the Inquisition.

As regards King Asuero, while Lope idealizes him, Godínez divinizes the king to equalize him with Ester, making the love relationship between them also divine. In this play the king is not only ‘de Dios [...] retrato’ (p. 60, pp. 68-69) or an instrument of God, ‘Gran poder tiene este Dios, / que con tal fuerza obra en mí’ (p. 75), but knows that there is ‘alguna deidad’ (p. 69) in him. Like the Bible, Godínez presents Mardoqueo as a court-official, but, above all, as a prophet of God who has knowledge of the Incarnation. This is what he says after the meeting between Egeo and Ester:

Ahora hablo yo y no yo;
 aquesto representó
 una sombra, una figura,
 de cuando vengán a dar
 aquella embajada
 a la doncella sagrada
 de quien Dios ha de encarnar. (p. 58)

Similar to Asuero and Mardoqueo, Amán is also endowed with supernatural characteristics. Amán is seen as the Dragon, the incarnation of Evil, not only by Ester, but by himself:

Cielos, si es la mujer ésta,
que como a dragón soberbio
me ha de quebrar la cabeza. (p. 55)

In *Amán y Mardoqueo* (1628) one can see the positive image of the Jew elevated in the person of Ester to the heterodox point of divinization. This image was even more explicit in *La reina Ester* (1613), which was condemned by the Inquisition for presenting Ester as knowing the Incarnation before the Virgin, and which *Amán y Mardoqueo* was designed to correct. To understand better the heretical character of *La reina Ester*, it may be useful to underline the strong and proud pro-Judaism of the whole play, presented especially powerfully in Mardoqueo's relationship with Amán. This confrontation is entirely original, having no precedent in the Bible or in Lope's *La hermosa Ester*. This is how Mardoqueo defends the Jewish rule on kneeling only to God:

AMÁN	Necio estás, viejo; ¿por qué no te humillas y me sirves de rodillas como todos los demás? [...]
MARDOQUEO	Sólo a Dios se debe dar esa adoración. Y así pienso que dártela a ti es quitarla del altar. [...]
	A solos dos da este honor la propia ley: a Dios, por sí mismo, al Rey porque representa a Dios. ⁴⁷

In one of their several battles, Amán knocks down the old Mardoqueo, who defies his persecutor even from the ground:

⁴⁷ *La reina Ester*, in Germán Vega García-Luengos, *Problemas de un dramaturgo del Siglo de Oro: Estudios sobre Felipe Godínez con dos comedias inéditas: 'La reina Ester' y 'Ludovico el Piadoso'* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1986), pp. 199-311 (pp. 226-27). I have modernized the spelling of this and the following texts.

En tierra me has derribado
 donde mirándome estás;
 mas esto me ha consolado:
 que no podré bajar más.
 [...]
 Haciéndote el Rey mercedes,
 te ves tú sin pesadumbre
 donde subir más no puedes.
 [...]
 De suerte que a tu pesar,
 [Fortuna] te comenzará a abatir,
 pues te acabó de encumbrar
 comenzando yo a subir
 porque acabes de bajar. (pp. 282-83)

Later, Mardoqueo makes clear the reason for his refusal to kneel before Amán: 'El cielo sabe / que no es soberbia; religión ha sido' (p. 299). It is significant that this bitter struggle was corrected out in *Amán y Mardoqueo*. One may conjecture that Godínez had realized that he was doing no favours to the image of the Jew by presenting an Old Testament character as proud and belligerent as his Mardoqueo.

It is in the context of the open and strong pro-Judaism of this play that Godínez's heresies have to be seen. In *La reina Ester* the messenger to Ester is the Archangel Gabriel, as condemned by the Inquisition:

Sabrás que a una doncella,
 que ha de llamarse María,
 hará Dios su madre bella
 y yo, en allegándose el día,
 he de anunciárselo a ella. (p. 292)

In *Amán y Mardoqueo* Godínez ~~(more)~~ prudently changes ^{GABRIEL} ~~Gabriel~~ into Egeo. It was essential to Godínez to make this change, as Alice Goldberg explains: 'Perhaps having the character Egeo clearly indicate that he is play-acting at St Gabriel in the later play mitigated the Inquisition's concern with *blasphemy*.'⁴⁸ However, in this corrected version, Godínez makes Ester, as was seen, the beneficiary of the Anunciation, an even worse heresy that the one committed in *La reina Ester*, but, curiously, overlooked by the Inquisition.

⁴⁸ 'Felipe Godínez's Queen Esther Play', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 35 (1983), 47-49 (p. 48).

In *La reina Ester*, Godínez not only does not practise orthodox prefiguration, he commits heresy in three separate ways. First, Ester is informed of a divine mystery of the New Testament before its very protagonist, depriving Mary of her privilege, thereby possibly suggesting the subordination of Christianity to Judaism; it was for this, as was seen, that *La reina Ester* was condemned by the Inquisition. Second, Godínez presents Ester's dream in a way which suggests that Ester would be the mother of the Messiah:

Me parece que sentada
 en un trono y coronada
 con gran majestad me vi;
 soñé, en fin, que yo era el medio
 sin haberlo merecido
 con que a su pueblo afligido
 daba Dios vida y remedio;
 cesaba, pues, la aflicción
 y era Rey un hijo mío,
 mas a la fe, señor tío,
 que los sueños sueños son. (p. 216)

The text seems initially to speak simply of a son of Ester and Asuero, but the son's connection with the end of the affliction of the Jews suggests the interpretation that this son was to be the Messiah, known always as the King of the Jews; strangely, the Inquisition appears to have overlooked this heresy. Third, Godínez expresses the Jewish hope of the coming of the Messiah, founded, as was seen before, on two heretical ideas, both condemned by the Inquisition: that the Messiah has not yet come and that God is not free to modify his promises to the Jewish people, as Ester prays before going to see Asuero:

Jamás os habéis mudado;
 a ver en mis libros vengo
 cada palabra que habéis dado;
 en ella esperanza tengo
 que es vuestra y nunca ha faltado.
 [...]
 Tu palabra divina
 es imposible faltar. (p. 289)

As a result of his prosecution by the Inquisition, Godínez corrected the heterodox ideas in *La reina Ester*. However, he still managed in *Amán y Mardoqueo* to

hold on to Ester's divinization as the coming Saviour of the Jews, changing the lesser sin in *La reina Ester* of Ester knowing the Anunciation for the graver heresy in *Amán y Mardoqueo* of making Ester the beneficiary of the Anunciation. The effect of these divinizations and post-figurations becomes clearer when *Amán y Mardoqueo* is compared with Lope's *La hermosa Ester*. Menéndez y Pelayo has already noticed this difference: 'Él [Lope] no podía tratar de asuntos del Antiguo Testamento con el ardiente y velado fanatismo judaico con que lo hacían Enríquez Gómez, el Dr. Godínez y otros judaizantes y conversos' (I, 190-91). Lope's work appears to want to reconcile the Jew with the Christian, while Godínez's play, by suggesting the superiority of Judaism over Christianity, could be interpreted as an attempt to bolster the confidence of the *converso* in their future deliverance from persecution. Germán Vega García-Luengos sums up the significance of Godínez's play for *cristianos nuevos* as well as for *cristianos viejos*:

El judío Godínez [...] ha tenido que utilizar la fábula para recordar [...] a sus contemporáneos cristianos viejos la injusticia de una persecución en una historia de reyes y validos, y a sus hermanos judeo-conversos la reconfortante esperanza en la providencia divina, reafirmando ante unos y otros la condición de pueblo elegido de los judíos. (p. 182)

4.2.3 TRANSPOSITIONS IN *LA HERMOSA ESTER* AND *AMÁN Y MARDIQUEO*

Despite their differences, the two *comedias* share the same possible transpositions. First, the transposition *converso*/Ester must have been of great importance to *conversos*, lending them encouragement, pride and hope: they could see their persecution reflected in that of the biblical Jews exiled to Babylon, and a hoped-for salvation for themselves in Esther's saving of the biblical Jews. The *conversos* identified with Ester, who also hid her Jewishness even from the king, her husband, practising her religion in secret, as some *conversos* must have done. Ester was close to the heart of many *conversos*, as Weiner says: 'Ella es el prototipo y santa de los judaizantes. Es así porque ella sigue practicando secretamente su religión en la corte de Asuero' (p. 37). Second, Mardoqueo

could have been a transposition of the well-known pride, even the arrogance, of the Spanish Jews and of their loyalty to the king. He could also have been a transposition of Godínez and Lope themselves. Mardoqueo's repeated challenges to Amán recall how Godínez, a Christian theologian, repeatedly defied the Inquisition. He writes a heterodox play about Ester; for this he is imprisoned and when released he re-writes the play with such minor alterations that some apparently considered it to be 'más judía que de los godos', as Lope writes of this play in one of his letters already quoted. As regards the transposition in Lope's case, while the biblical Mardoqueo is a royal functionary, Lope's has no occupation and presents himself at the gates of the royal palace as a candidate for the post of royal historian. This presentation of Mardoqueo recalls that Lope himself was a candidate for the post of *cronista de Indias* and that he was rejected. In fact, the play is dedicated to Andrea María del Castrillo, Señora de Benasusa, and to her family, los Duarte, who, according to Weiner, were of Jewish origin and by whose favour Lope hoped to gain the post of Historian of the Indies (pp. 35-37). The transpositions reach their summit in Amán. His words and actions seem to be a reflection of the reality of contemporary Spain and her history. Amán's reason for wanting to annihilate the Persian Jews recall⁶ the reason of the Catholic Monarchs for expelling the Spanish Jews: the refusal to abandon their religion. However, Lope's Amán adds 'latrocinio' (p. 120) and Godínez's adds 'usura' (p. 56), by means of which the transposition is made not only historic, but actual, identifying the causes of the enmity between *cristianos viejos* and *nuevos* as economic and social competition. The *cristianos viejos* obsession with *limpieza de sangre* is transposed into Amán's anti-Jewish paranoia. At the end of both plays, Amán appears as a transposition of the Inquisitor, that expropriates and kills. Significantly, Godínez, who was one of the victims of inquisitorial confiscation, presents Asuero giving the possessions of the Jews

to Aman (pp. 61-63), just as the Catholic Monarchs have given the property of accused *conversos* to the Inquisition.

Thus Lope's idealization of Ester on one hand, and on the other hand Godínez's divinization of Ester and demonization of Amán, could be understood as a vindication of the *converso* transposed into Ester and a condemnation of his persecutors transposed into Amán. Both plays also imply criticism of the assumed inferiority of the *converso* to the *cristiano viejo*. Referring to Lope, this is what Sicroff says:

Recordando que en España era el rústico el primero en reclamar la superioridad de ser cristiano viejo y de sangre limpia y, por eso, el primero en despreciar no sólo al judío sino al converso cristiano que tuviese una gota de sangre judía, resulta un poco hiriente su manera de tratar las pretensiones de Sirena a ser escogida como esposa de Asuero [...] Aquí, en *La hermosa Ester*, dentro del contexto de la vindicación rotunda del judío, quedó castigada la ambición rústica. Y, al llegar al desenlace de la obra, aun se permite Lope jugar con el valor de la sangre de que tanto se preciaba el rústico. Así, Asuero llega a declarar que el amor por Ester le alumbró el entendimiento para honrar a su noble tío [...] que 'si yo en amarte acierto / lo mismo será estimar / la sangre de tu abuelos'.⁴⁹

The following words of Sirena, the peasant girl who wants to be queen, show up the pretensions of the typical *cristiano viejo* rustics:

Bien merezco este desdén
pues que con vana locura,
si lo violento no dura,
quise hacer violencia al bien;
yo tengo castigo igual:
mi soberbia lo merece,
porque nada permanece
fuera de su natural. (p. 118)

It is true that Sirena's pretensions are based on her beauty, not on her clean blood, but her rejection as a representative of the rustic *cristiano viejo* population in favour of a Jewess could have been perceived by a Golden-Age audience as a mockery of the claim to superiority of the rustic *cristiano viejo* class. Asuero's preference for the Jewess Ester to the peasant girl Sirena in Lope and to the noble woman Zares in Godínez, could also

⁴⁹ 'Notas equívocas en dos dramatizaciones de Lope del problema judaico', p. 704.

be significant as a satire on the pride in their *limpieza de sangre* of peasants in Lope's and of nobles in Godínez's plays.

Given the identification of the *converso* as Jew, the positive image of the biblical Jew that was seen in the *comedias* about David and Ester may suggest a positive image of the *converso* by means of the transposition *converso*/Hebrew. This transposition could be related to the already mentioned Judeo-Christian tradition of multiple interpretations of the Bible, in which Lope, Tirso, Godínez and Calderón, all theologians, were well versed. These dramatists in their application of biblical stories to the problems of Spanish Golden-Age society may well have consciously followed the example of the Medieval Jewish and Christian interpreters in applying Scripture to their own spiritual problems. In the next Chapter I shall deal with the negative image of the Jew and its subversion, by ridicule, in plays usually judged anti-Semitic: *El retablo de las maravillas* by Cervantes, *El árbol del mejor fruto* by Tirso, *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo* and *El niño inocente de La Guardia* by Lope.

5

THE SUBVERSION OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW

Except for the *autos viejos* with Old Testament themes, such as the *Auto del destierro de Agar* and the *Farsa del sacramento de Adán*, which present a positive image of the biblical Hebrew, Spanish Medieval and Renaissance drama offered in general an image of the Jew either as an impersonal Judaism in religious terms or as a negative stereotype in secular terms.¹ Spanish theatre had to wait till the seventeenth century before these negative images could be questioned. One example, however, of ambiguity may be found in an *auto viejo* with a subject connected to the Bible, the *Aucto de la destrucción de Jerusalén* (c. 1560).² The plot follows the legend concerning the Emperor Vespasian's leprosy miraculously cured by Veronica's veil. As punishment for Jewish deicide and rebellion against Rome, Vespasian destroys Jerusalem. In this play the

¹ See Lázaro Carreter, pp. 461-65.

² In *Códice de autos viejos*, ed. by Miguel Ángel Pérez Priego (Madrid: Castalia, 1988).

Hebrew nation as a whole are called 'sinagoga maligna' (p. 114) and 'pérfidos judíos' (p. 115), and the accusation of deicide appears five times. This negative impression is reinforced by the decision of the Jewish mother to save lives during the famine occasioned by the siege of Jerusalem by eating her dead child. She is opposed by another Jewess who, nevertheless, partakes of the meal. However, this event need not necessarily be taken as a condemnation of the Jews as it follows Josephus Flavius's history of the siege of Jerusalem.³ In any case, the generally negative image of the Jew is contradicted by the behaviour of the other two Jews in the play. When the war is lost, Archelao, king of Jerusalem, offers surrender to the emperor in exchange for sparing the life and property of the inhabitants of the city:

Emperador excelente,
no perezca esta ciudad,
suplicamos humillmente. (p. 132)

When Vespasian refuses to pardon the rebels, contrary to Pilate, who grovels for his life and prefers prison, Archelao commits suicide:

Pues fortuna quiere así.
yo torceré su esperanza
y matarme quiero aquí
porque no tomen de mí
mis enemigos venganza. (p. 133)

The other Jew who is presented in a positive light is Jacob. He has due reverence for Christ's divinity (p. 118) and helps the emperor's *senescal* to locate Verónica's veil, thereby contributing to the cure and conversion of Vespasian. Jacob is called 'buen judío' (p. 116) and 'honrado hombre' (p. 199), and in the end is rewarded by the emperor not with money, but by placing him and his family under royal protection, as Jews in Spain used to be before the expulsion:

Y por Jacob, pará mientes,
su huesped del senescal,

³ See *Bellum Judaicum: The Wars of the Jews; or, The History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, trans. by William Whiston, in *Early Christian Writings*, ed. by Peter Kirby <<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/josephus/war-6.htm>> [accessed 16 September 2003] (para. 22 of 52) (Book 6, Chapter 3, Section 4).

sean libre sus parientes
con sus hijos y sirvientes
sobre seguro real. (p. 137)

It is extraordinary that in an *auto* which is generally interpreted as anti-Semitic one of the principal protagonists is nevertheless a good Jew, contradicting the contemporary belief that all Jews are bad. Apart from this, the treatment of the Jews by the Roman soldier is so hyperbolized that it could be seen as a mockery of the Romans, and, therefore, of anti-Semitism:

¿Quién quiere comprar judíos?
¡Ea! que venderlos quiero.
¡Ea!, señores, servíos
de aquestos esclavos míos:
treinta doy por un dinero.
Harto estoy de vocear;
pues no me dan lo que pido,
yo los quiero destripar
por ver si podré sacar
los tesoros que han comido.
¡Oh, qué han comido de cosas
los enemigos de Dios:
aljófar, piedras preciosas!
¡Oh, qué doblas tan hermosas!
¡Mirad qué piezas de a dos! (pp. 137-38)

Despite some fairness shown by some Golden-Age dramatists towards the Jews, the accusations made against them, for example, that of deicide, were not challenged in the *comedias*. However, in the works to be discussed in this chapter it is precisely such anti-Semitic accusations that are subverted. I will analyse *El retablo de las maravillas* (1615) by Cervantes, *El árbol del mejor fruto* (1627) by Tirso, *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo* (c. 1610) and *El niño inocente de La Guardia* (1598-1608) by Lope. I have selected these plays because the Jewish problem appears explicitly in all four although in different contexts: in *El retablo de las maravillas* the Jew is a phantasm of society; in *El árbol del mejor fruto* and in *Las paces de los reyes* the Jews are real Jews, and in *El niño inocente de La Guardia* they are *cripto-judíos*. Despite the differences in genre (*entremés*, *comedia legendaria*, *comedia histórica* and *comedia de santos*,

respectively), all four have in common the subversive elements of irony, ridicule and metatheatricity, the last of which requires a brief introduction.

According to Judd D. Hubert, there are three types of metatheatre, the last of them with a subversive function:

We can define and interpret it [metadrama] from three quite different perspectives insofar as the term [...] may simply refer to [1] discourse concerning stage production embodied in the play, or, in a somewhat more complex manner, it may indicate that [2] the play in question overtly or covertly shows awareness of itself as theater, or finally that [3] the play as a medium tends to substitute its own characteristic operations for, and sometimes at the expense of, whatever 'reality' it claims to represent.⁴

As regards the the thirds type, he adds:

Theater constantly produces double images by combining overt mimetic representation of the story with covert performative and metadramatic clues pointing to its own operations at the risk of undermining or at the very least problematizing the fable. (p. 2)

Hubert's definition recalls Brecht's *Entfremdungseffekt*, according to which metatheatre, like irony, has the function of dispelling the illusion which the theatre exercises over its audience. Metatheatre makes the audience conscious that what it sees is an illusion, awakens its critical faculties and tends to subvert its false beliefs. I hope to show in the following analysis of the four plays how the techniques of irony, ridicule and metatheatre are used to subvert the negative image of the Jew.

⁴ *Metatheatre: The Example of Shakespeare* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), p. 139.

51 *EL RETABLO DE LAS MARAVILLAS*

It is important to note the differences between *El retablo de las maravillas* and the story in *El Conde Lucanor*, on which it is based.⁵ The relevant part of the text of the Infante Don Juan Manuel is as follows:

Tres hombres vinieron a un rey y dijéronle que eran muy buenos maestros de hacer paños, y señaladamente que hacían un paño que todo hombre que fuese hijo de aquel padre que todos decían, que vería el paño, mas el que no fuese hijo de aquel padre que él tenía y que las gentes decían, que no podría ver el paño.⁶

Here is a summary of the plot of *El retablo de las maravillas*:

Two swindlers, the man Chanfalla and the woman Chirinos, persuade the authorities of a village to let them put on a paid performance of their marvelous puppet show as part of a wedding celebration. The marvel of their show is that it cannot be seen either by bastards or by New Christians. [...] The performance consists of the verbal evocation by the tricksters of a succession of wondrous appearances, since they have no puppets. The villagers, ashamed at seeing nothing and fearful of betraying themselves to be New Christians, [...] pretend that they see the various acts. [...] A billeting officer arrives and frankly admits that he does not see the show. The spell of the swindlers' fiction is not broken, however, for the villagers turn on the officer and mock him for being a New Christian. The *entremés* ends with a brawl, as the tricksters congratulate themselves on the success of their deception: the next day they will make more money with a show played to the general populace.⁷

In *El Conde Lucanor* and in the *entremés* the people follow the lie because they are afraid of the consequences of telling the truth; however, the motivation to follow the lie in *El Conde Lucanor* is the fear of being suspected of illegitimate birth, while in *El retablo de las maravillas* it is the terror of being suspected of having Jewish blood. Cervantes has retained bastardy perhaps only to mask the true target of the play, that of *limpieza de sangre*. By this change, a simple moral lesson about legitimate blood may have been transformed into a complex and challenging drama about clean blood. It is

⁵ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El retablo de las maravillas*, in *Entremeses*, ed. by Nicholas Spadaccini (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982).

⁶ *El Conde Lucanor*, ed. by Alfonso I. Sotelo, 13rd edn (Madrid: Cátedra, 1989), p. 215. I have modernized the spelling of this text.

⁷ Bruce W. Wardropper, 'The Butt of the Satire in *El retablo de las maravillas*', *Cervantes: Bulletin of the Cervantes Society of America*, 4 (1984), 25-33 (p. 26).

true that the Gobernador mentions bastardy, but the whole play is centred on showing up the fundamental stupidity of anti-Jewish prejudice. When the *furrier* refuses to see what is not there, no one accuses him of being a bastard; he is automatically accused of 'de *ex illis*' (p. 235). It is clear that 'de *ex illis*' only refers to Jews. Spadaccini explains 'ex *illis es*' as follows:

Las palabras [fueron] aplicadas a San Pedro por la sirvienta de Caifás, cuando el discípulo negaba a Cristo. [...] Tanto Capacho aquí, como después el Gobernador, Juan Castrado y Benito Repollo, le acusan al furrier de judío. Irónicamente los aldeanos hablan como los judíos que acusaron a San Pedro.⁸

Additionally, the expression 'de *ex illis es*' itself is ridiculous, because the 'de' is superfluous. This interpretation of *El retablo de las maravillas* as a subversive work agrees with the last of the three critical views listed by Asensio:

[1] Una sátira del villano contemplado, no como fuerza ascensional, que aspira a plena dignidad, sino como objeto cómico [...] tras el aparentemente gratuito juego de la imaginación está agazapado un antagonismo social.

[2] Una parábola de la infinita credulidad de los hombres que creen lo que desean creer.

[3] Una estratagema para proyectar la crítica de la morbosa manía de la limpieza, mentira creadora de falsos valores que envenenaba la sociedad española.⁹

As regards the first two interpretations, I will argue that the villagers were conscious of the communal lie; in any case, they were prepared to condemn anyone who said he or she saw nothing and to pretend to see the non-existent apparitions to avoid being taken for a Jew. The satire, therefore, could be seen as directed not at the stupidity of the villagers, who were not stupid, but at the stupidity of their racial prejudices which made them behave stupidly. I will also maintain that the villagers could represent *cristiano viejo* society and that, therefore, Cervantes's satire could be seen as directed at society as a whole.

⁸ 'Introducción' to *Entremeses*, p. 235, n. 93.

⁹ 'Entremeses', p. 191.

5.1.1 THE STUPIDITY OF RACIAL PREJUDICES

Do the villagers act consciously or not? On this will depend whether the *entremés* is ridiculing stupid credulity or the racial prejudice of *limpieza de sangre*. If the villagers act in the power of the illusion of the *retablo*, then Cervantes's objective would have been to satirize only the stupidity of the villagers, as several critics have maintained.¹⁰ However, if they lied consciously, maintaining that they really saw the *maravillas*, then Cervantes's objective would have been to ridicule the prejudices connected with *limpieza de sangre*.

The brief analysis of the text that follows is intended to suggest that the villagers were conscious of the lies of the *retablo*. First of all, they fall into flagrant performative contradictions, like Castrada when she speaks to her father about her fear of the non-existent bull raised by Chanfalla: '¡Y cómo padre! No pienso volver en mí en tres días; ya me vi en sus cuernos, que los tiene agudos como una lesna' (p. 228). By saying 'no pienso volver en mí' she means that she is not in her right mind and she will not recover for three days; obviously, to make the above statement she had to be in her right mind and thus, fully conscious of the lie. Apart from this, the villagers, hungry for excitement, ask Chanfalla to raise more dangerous apparitions, indicating that they may not believe in their reality, for example when Teresa Castrada says: 'Señor Benito Repollo, deje salir ese oso y leones, siquiera por nosotras, y recibiremos mucho contento' (p. 231). The capacity of the villagers to reflect upon what they experience in respect of the apparitions reveals that they are not in the power of an illusion (being in an illusion is precisely being unable to reflect on that illusion). When Capacho speaks about Herodías's dance: '¡Toma mi abuelo, si es antiguo el baile de la zarabanda y de la

¹⁰ The villagers's credulity is supported by Spadaccini ('Introducción' to *Entremeses*, p. 66), Dawn L. Smith ('Cervantes and His Audience: Aspects of Reception Theory in *El retablo de las maravillas*', in *The Golden-Age Comedia: Text, Theory and Performance*, ed. by Charles Ganelin and Howard Mancing (West Lafayette: In Purdue Up, 1994), pp. 49-61 (p. 60), and Edwin Honig ('On the *Interludes* of Cervantes', in *Cervantes: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. by Lowry Nelson Jr (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969), pp. 153-61 (p. 160).

chacona!’ (p. 232), he is commenting on what he is pretending to see and is not under an illusion. The same critical distance appears when Repollo says: ‘Ea, sobrino, ténselas tiesas a esa bellaca jodía; pero, si ésa es jodía, ¿cómo ve estas maravillas?’ (p. 232). Again, Repollo’s words indicate that he is fully able to judge critically what he is supposed to see and that he could not possibly be within an illusion. In other words, the villagers are creating their own illusions and their comments are a means by which they encourage and perhaps force each other to enter deeper and deeper into the pretence of seeing the *maravillas*. While the public in a theatre willingly suspends its disbelief in what it sees, the public of the *retablo* unwillingly pretends to see what does not exist. When reality fails to fit in with the lie, they distort reality, turning the flesh-and-blood *furrier* into yet another phantom of the *retablo*; however, when he refuses to be a spectre, they turn him into a Jew. This distortion is deliberate, as Zimic suggests:

Al fin de la obra aparece un furrier exigiendo ‘alojamiento para treinta hombres de armas’, y los aldeanos lo proclaman de inmediato figura del retablo, porque, según la opinión aparentemente unánime de la crítica, esta vez de veras creen que lo es.¹¹

Finally, the villagers reject Rabelín, who is the only visible element of the *retablo* and whose presence, according to Zimic, betrays the lie: the miracles ‘y la presencia del músico en la escena se excluyen mutuamente en las expectativas de los espectadores. [...] Rabelín es la “fea realidad” a la que han querido volverse de espaldas los compatriotas de Cervantes’ (p. 373). The presence of the little musician on stage reminds the audience of the absence of true miracles and shows that they know that they are all pretending to see what is not there for fear of being taken for a Jew.

Cervantes’s satire, therefore, is of the stupidity of the racial prejudices and hypocrisy of the villagers, and not of their stupidity as individuals. He depicts individual stupidity in another of his *entremeses*, *La cueva de Salamanca*. Both *entremeses* share a theme, the attempt of someone to make others see what does not exist; in *La cueva de*

¹¹ *El teatro de Cervantes* (Madrid: Castalia, 1992), p. 371.

Salamanca a student with ‘magical’ powers makes the lovers of a lady and her maid appear as devils to the lady’s husband. It is clear that Pancracio, the husband, believes in magical illusions, concretely that he has in his house two devils; it is this belief in magic that causes him to misinterpret the evidence of his own eyes that the two men are the Sacristán and the local barber and not supernatural beings. Thus, it is an individual’s credulity that is being ridiculed in *La cueva de Salamanca*. While the villagers of *El retablo de las maravillas* are aware of the deception by Chanfalla, Pancracio in *La cueva de Salamanca* is totally unaware of being deceived by the student. The behaviour of the villagers is governed by the fear of being taken for Jews, while Pancracio’s behaviour is governed by the pleasure of playing with magic: ‘Quiero ver lo que nunca he visto’ (p. 252). In *La cueva de Salamanca* the power of illusion is total. Even at the end of the *entremés* Pancracio is not aware of what had happened to his wife and is still obsessed with finding out more about the magic of the Cave: ‘Y, por Dios, que no han de salir de mi casa hasta que me dejen enseñado en la ciencia y ciencias que se enseñan en la Cueva de Salamanca’ (p. 254). The absence of illusion in *El retablo de las maravillas*, however, suggests that it is not stupidity that is being ridiculed, but the stupidity of racial prejudices, not only of the villagers, but of the whole of society.

5.1.2 THE VILLAGERS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY

Nicholas Spadaccini asserts that what Cervantes satirizes here are the idealized villagers of Lope: ‘La imagen [...] grotesca del labrador impotente es la respuesta cervantina al mito del villano integrado que se crea en los dramas rurales.’¹² This opinion is difficult to sustain when the social status of the inhabitants of the *pueblo* is taken into account: the Gobernador is a dramatist; Benito Repollo, although not well educated, is

¹² ‘Introducción’ to *Entremeses*, p. 67. Michael E. Gerli shares Spadaccini’s opinion (see ‘*El retablo de las maravillas*’: Cervantes’ “Arte nuevo de deshacer comedias”’, *Hispanic Review*, 57 (1989), 477-92 (p. 478)).

nevertheless an *alcalde*, a magistrate, and probably a judge as well; Castrado is a *regidor*, an alderman; Capacho is an *escribano*, a clerk, and therefore literate, and Benito's nephew is described as *gentil hombre* in a stage direction (p. 226).¹³ These men, although they live in a village, are not of equal social standing, but by their functions they could represent the hierarchical civil structure of society as a whole. This is supported by the fact that Chanfalla expects the *retablo* to be highly successful in Madrid as well, confirming that people in the village and in Madrid share the same ideas: 'Hanme enviado a llamar de la corte los señores cofrades de los hospitales porque no hay autor de comedias en ella [...] y con mi ida se remediará todo' (p. 219). The effect of Cervantes's satire in this *entremés* may have been to challenge his readers to behave differently from the villagers satirized in the *entremés*, but this presupposes the possibility of his readers also having prejudices similar to those of the villagers, as in fact many *cristianos viejos* of the time would have had. The second indication that what are seen and heard are not only the ideas and reactions of just a few villagers is that the *furrier*, who is not of the village, thinks and reacts as if he were one of the villagers, in other words, that the village may represent society at large. Accused of being a Jew, the *furrier* furiously attacks the villagers with his sword (pp. 235-36). The last indication that the villagers are not only peasants, but represent Golden-Age society, is that they could be seen by their actions to be a transposition of the Inquisition, as they persecute the *furrier*. Alberto Castilla, speaking of this scene, says: 'Nos hallamos en el punto básico de la sátira que se ejerce contra la Inquisición y sus cómplices. Cervantes la escribió en uno de los períodos de más intensa persecución de judaizantes o de sospechosos de judaizar, de falsos conversos.'¹⁴

¹³ *Gentiles hombres*, according to COV, were 'principales y de noble casta'. The fact that this performance was a *privada*, a privilege granted to and afforded only by the upper classes, reinforces the opinion that the inhabitants of the village were not peasants.

¹⁴ 'Introducción' to Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Entremeses*, ed. by Alberto Castilla (Madrid: Akal, 1997), p. 16.

This *entremés* does not appear to be a village farce or a satire of the social pretensions of peasants, but rather a representation of a national tragedy, as Zimic has suggested: ‘Con la riña de los aldeanos con el furrier se simbolizan los mutuos odios y recriminaciones durante esa absurda y trágica crisis *nacional* por la obsesión con la “cristiandad vieja” oportunamente manipulada por muchos’ (p. 373). For Zimic, ‘esta causa [la hipocresía] de la deprimente situación *nacional* era para él [Cervantes] mucho más grave y lamentable que una mera alucinación de tipo psiquiátrico’ (p. 376). According to Castilla, in *La elección de los alcaldes de Daganzo*, another *entremés*, Cervantes again uses villagers to symbolize the whole of society:

La plaza de Daganzo [...] es presentada como ‘pequeña Corte’ en la que observamos el tipo de justicia, la corrupción, el sistema de selección para los cargos públicos, la ignorancia y la petulancia de gobernantes y gobernados, parodia de la Corte verdadera y real, parodia de la vida española. (p. 28)

However, Cervantes may be not only criticizing society’s obsession with *limpieza*, but he may be also trying to subvert the negative image of the Jew.

5.1.3 THE MOCKERY OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW

El retablo de las maravillas is noteworthy for the absence of Jewish characters, and for offering only one explicitly anti-Jewish prejudice, expressed by Benito: ‘Nunca los confesos ni bastardos fueron valientes’ (p. 236). The villagers took anti-Jewish prejudices for granted. The most radical of these was the blindness attributed to the Jews, which made them incapable of seeing Christ as the Messiah. The idea of the blindness of Judaism is perfectly expressed in Tirso’s *El árbol del mejor fruto*:

Yo tendré por ceguedad
la ley que el hebreo profesa
y la sinagoga adora.¹⁵

¹⁵ Tirso de Molina, *El árbol del mejor fruto*, in *Obras dramáticas completas*, ed. by Blanca de los Ríos, 4 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1946-1959), IV (1959), 311-57 (p. 355).

All anti-Jewish prejudices appear to be concentrated in this blindness, turning it into a metaphor for all the negative characteristics attributed to the Jews. Then this mythical blindness which is attached to Jews is contrasted with the real but self-imposed blindness of the villagers to Chanfalla's trickery and the falsehoods in anti-Jewish prejudices. Cervantes seems to say that, while the Jew is said to be blind, the reality is that racist society is blind. *El retablo de las maravillas* presents a pessimistic conclusion, as Castilla says: 'De los ocho entremeses, es éste el único en el que no existe ningún tipo de alegría en el desenlace, sino tristeza, dureza y amargura' (p. 16). Society is unwilling to recognize its self-imposed blindness which forces it to make theatre of life. Michael E. Gerli also notes:

Teresa and Juana, as well as Juan and the governor, compelled by *honra* have forged a covenant which, ironically, forces them to live their lives as theatre - they each must knowingly play out a role alien to their true identities. (p. 486)

The villagers are unwilling to tell life from theatre, although they are conscious of making theatre. This metadrama could be seen as a satire the theatricality of life in Spain. As the cause of this theatricality could have been the fear of being taken for a Jew, Cervantes's satire of Spanish life as theatre could also be seen as a satire of the negative image of the Jew. Cervantes mocks this supposed blindness of the Jew by making all the human *maravillas*, from Sansón to Herodías, Jewish and not blind. Herodías, a Jewess, who is not supposed to be able to see the *maravillas*, sees everything; Repollo himself notes, as already quoted: 'Ea, sobrino, ténselas tiesas a esa bellaca jodía; pero, si ésa es jodía, ¿cómo ve estas maravillas?' (p. 232). The scene becomes even more comical when Chirinos confounds Herodías with Salomé. In this farcical situation Cervantes subverts the universal myth of Jewish spiritual blindness.

El retablo de las maravillas could also be read as a criticism of *maldicencia*, which was one the gravest sins attacked by Rojas in 'nocibles lenguas', by Erasmus in his *Lingua*, and by Cervantes in this *entremés*. Cervantes may have been of *converso*

origin and was known as an *erasmista*. Although, as was mentioned before, Erasmus does not concretely refer to *conversos*, the detailed descriptions of the danger of *maldicencia* could easily be applied to them. The *entremés* presents an instance of a *cristiano viejo*, the *furrier*, falsely accused of being a *converso*. After all, it is the fear of being taken for a Jew that motivates the villagers to pretend to believe the miracles of the *retablo*. However, since being taken for a Jew could only be risky within an anti-Semitic social context, I believe that this *entremés* criticizes anti-Semitism and society's deliberate blindness to it. However, Cervantes could only do this indirectly: the technique he uses consists in presenting directly a negative image of the Jew (here, the supposed Jewish blindness), and, indirectly ridiculing it. As will be shown, a similar effect and similar techniques may be seen in the next play, *El árbol del mejor fruto* by Tirso.

5.2 EL ÁRBOL DEL MEJOR FRUTO

In this *comedia* Tirso incorporates the legend of the *Invención de la Cruz* into an original plot. The legend is simple. The Jews had hidden the Cross on which Christ had been crucified and one of them, named Judas, inspired by God, revealed its hiding place to St Helen, Constantine's mother. During the excavations three crosses were found and there was no means ^{OF} ~~to~~ identifying the true cross. St Macarius, the bishop of Jerusalem, had the three crosses carried to the bedside of a dying woman and on the touch of the

true cross the woman recovered her health.¹⁶ According to another version, St Macarius met a funeral procession and the touch of the true Cross resuscitated the corpse.¹⁷

The plot of this play is more complex, because in accordance with Lope's theory set out in the *Arte Nuevo*, the original legends have been transformed to create a *comedia* critical of some aspects of Spanish Catholicism, as will be argued later. Elena, seduced by the Emperor Constancio, flees her father's vengeance with her son Cloro. She brings him up to be a shepherd, but he has high ambitions, as well as a growing sympathy for the Christians. The Emperor Constancio has another son, Constantino, who is killed by bandits on his way to Greece to marry Irene, daughter of the Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, Maximino. Seeing the shepherd Cloro's extraordinary resemblance to the dead prince, the bandits take him to the Greek court, to impersonate Constantino. Mingo, Cloro's servant, gives away the deception to the Emperor Constancio, but when Elena reveals her son's true identity, Constancio accepts Cloro as his son and heir. Presently Irene falls in love with Cloro, who assumes the imperial name of Constantino. In the meantime, the general Magencio has usurped the imperial power in Rome and, after a miraculous vision of the Cross, Cloro defeats him, making himself ruler of the whole Roman Empire. In gratitude for this victory, Cloro and Elena decide to go to Jerusalem to find the true Cross which the Jews had hidden. Elena and Mingo torture the Jew Judas to make him tell where the Cross is hidden. The play ends with the discovery of the Cross, the miraculous resurrection of the corpse of Lisinio, Cloro's friend, and the conversion of Judas to Christianity.

According to Blanca de los Ríos, this *comedia* has always been considered of so little dramatic interest and so anti-Semitic that it has not been the object of the least theatrical or critical attention, apart from her short preface:

¹⁶ See Orazio Marucchi, 'Archæology of the Cross and Crucifix', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Kevin Knight <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04517a.htm>> [accessed 12 February 2003] (para. 27 of 53).

¹⁷ See *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, XVI, 616.

El primer acto [...] es prometedor, pero los dos siguientes pierden interés. [...] El tormento dado a un judío [...] es de mal gusto y en nada se suaviza con las intervenciones del gracioso. Elena [...] produce la impresión de una crueldad muy poco cristiana. El trato [...] dado a los judíos por el gracioso Mingo [...] resulta un recurso poco digno de un dramaturgo de la talla de Tirso.¹⁸

Two comments may be made regarding the above remarks: one is that the last act of this play is perhaps one of the most daring in the whole of Tirso's production as regards the image of the Jew, and, two, to condemn Tirso for bad taste and lack of dignity for the actions of his characters is to confuse the creator with his creations. Accepting this judgment would stand in the way of a much more profound truth, as will be seen. It is true, for example, as Ríos says, that 'resulta poco grata la figura de Elena [...] como incitadora implacable y testigo de este tormento' (p. 310), but Tirso's objective could have been to criticize anti-Semitism in Elena. Why, if not for this reason, had Tirso deliberately changed a St Helen into a Torquemada?

This *comedia* may have been commissioned to form part of the celebration of the *fiesta* of the *Invenición de la Cruz*, which the Catholic Church observes on the 3rd of May. This possibility is supported by the insistent homage paid to the Cross, especially at the end of the play. However, the presence of Jewish characters and the torture of one of them suggest that there could have been other objectives, perhaps of a critical nature, in the play. Comparing some events and characters in the *comedia* with those of history and of the legend will help to clarify two possible objectives: one, to criticize political power that manoeuvres religion, and the other, to ridicule the negative image of the Jew.

As regards the first possible objective, the criticism of political power, Tirso presents Cloro (the Emperor Constantine) as somewhat paranoid. For example, when looking at the pagan Irene's portrait in his hands, he says:

Un sueño me inquieta en vano.
Dormir quiero, Amor tirano,
mi peligro conjeturo,

¹⁸ Blanca de los Ríos, 'Preámbulo' to Tirso de Molina, *El árbol del mejor fruto*, in *Obras dramáticas completas*, ed. by Blanca de los Ríos, 4 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1946-1959), IV (1959), 311-57 (p. 310).

que no dormiré seguro
con mi enemiga en la mano. (p. 351)

Cloro is also presented as an opportunist who uses Christianity as the shortest path to power. Speaking of Christians, he observes:

Cosas en ellas en visto
De más que humano poder.
A Magencio he de vencer
con la ayuda de su Cristo. (p. 332)

Finally, he is depicted as having tyrannical characteristics, determined to convert by force the entire world:

Ley divina, aunque lo estorbe
el infierno, a su pesar,
os he de hacer adorar
desde aquí por todo el orbe. (p. 339)

However, such an enterprise had never been endorsed by the Catholic Church: 'Es contrario a la religión cristiana que nadie, contra su voluntad persistente y a pesar de su absoluta oposición, sea obligado a recibir y guardar el cristianismo.'¹⁹ With respect to St Helen, according to history and legend she was of humble birth and a pious and generous Christian. Tirso, however, transforms her into the instigator of the overweening ambition of her son:

Magencio, en Roma seguro
se ampara, y triunfa ya dél.
[...]
A su vista estás, ¿qué aguardas?;
Roma es aquesta, ¿qué esperas?
Conquistela tu valor,
que en Roma tu Imperio fundo:
no serás señor del mundo,
si en Roma no eres señor.
Mientras con triunfo solene [*sic*]
en Roma tu nombre afames,
ni de Elena hijo te llames,
ni ilustre esposo de Irene. (p. 332)

Tirso's Elena is also a ruthless and cruel woman:

Tormento tengo de dar

¹⁹ Denzinger, p. 147.

a cuantos hebreos hallare
mientras la tierra ocultare
de Dios el divino altar. (p. 348)

She cross-examines Judas and repeatedly orders Mingo to torture him (pp. 349-51). In her role as cross-examiner and director of torture, she could represent that part of religion which collaborates enthusiastically with the ruling political system as ideologue. The un-Christian spirit of Elena could, therefore, represent the un-Christian behaviour of a part of contemporary Catholic hierarchy. Finally, the *gracioso* Mingo, of course, has no historical or legendary counterpart; he is entirely Tirso's invention and, as will be shown, could be designed to ridicule the Inquisition.

As regards the second objective, the ridiculing of the negative image of the Jew, the Judas of the legend (who, inspired by God, voluntarily reveals to Elena where the Cross is hidden) has been transformed into a completely different character. From Elena's and Cloro's point of view, Judas is stubborn in not revealing the hiding place of the Cross. But according to the Jewish point of view, which Tirso also presents, Judas sincerely believes that by withholding this information he will prevent the spread of idolatry. The Jewish point of view will be discussed more fully later. The criticism of royal power and its management of religion may be seen as represented in the triumvirate of Cloro as the absolutist Monarchy, Elena as Religion, and Mingo as the Inquisition. As will be discussed presently, it is the scenes of antagonism between Mingo and Judas that could contain the criticism of the negative image of the Jew.

5.2.1 MINGO AS THE COMICAL IMAGE OF THE INQUISITION

To show how Tirso ridicules the Inquisition in the person of Mingo, it will be useful to consider separately Mingo's character and his function in the play. The greed, cowardice and cruelty of his character are grim, but his function is 'satirizar', as he himself says:

La comadre dijo
que un sátiro me engendró
y por eso satirizo. (p. 317)

His behaviour itself is a satire on the greed, the cowardice and the cruelty of the other Christian characters and on his own role as *comisario*, as will be seen presently. Mingo betrays Cloro and justifies his treachery by egoism and envy, as if these were praiseworthy characteristics:

Descubrirélos.
¿Para mí han de ser los duelos
y para otros la ventura? (p. 328)

He dresses up as a soldier to steal, but he is too much of a coward to fight, as he himself admits:

¡Ea!, aquí. Mingo es soldado
sin haber tenido potra;
ni estar quebrado quillotra
el miedo con que voy armado.
[...]
¿Dónde me podré esconder? (p. 335)

Having converted to Christianity, he shows his motive as cowardice, to avoid 'la guerra y golpes':

Yo y todo tus pasos sigo.
Cristiano, aunque aporreado,
soy desde hoy, y no soldado.
La guerra y golpes maldigo.

Later he progresses from irreverence to sacrilege: 'Mejor / me bautizara con vino' (p. 340). It is not surprising that these characteristics (treason, cowardice and sacrilege, hyperbolized in Mingo) lead him to appoint himself *comisario*, as may be seen in the stage-direction: 'Mingo vestido de comisario' (p. 343). This stage-direction confirms that a *comisario* of the Inquisition had special clothing and that Mingo wore something similar in this scene. How can one be sure that Mingo really represents a *comisario* of

the Inquisition and not a *comisario* of Customs and Excise?²⁰ The answer is in Mingo's own words: 'Comisario soy, señor, / de toda la judiada' (p. 349). The following references also support the suggestion that Mingo's office of *comisario* refers specifically to the Inquisition, and that he deals only with Jews: 'Comisario de narices' (p. 344); 'voy a recoger bolsillos / por todos los judaizantes' (p. 345); 'judíos, mas no confesos, nones dicen' (p. 348); 'con tocino los pringo' (p. 349), and 'de mala casta' (p. 349). Apart from this, there are references to instruments of torture and execution, specific to the Inquisition: 'Garrucha', 'guindaleta', 'colgar' (p. 349) and 'si la cruz no ponemos sobre las puertas de casa, nos ha de mandar quemar' (p. 347). Lastly there are specific references to the functioning of the Inquisition; Mingo is a spy and an informer, functions on which the Inquisition was based:

Si no estuviera escondido
el lobo tras las ovejas
(mejor dijera cabritos),
cruz sin duda, ¡ah, narigones!
A Elena voy a decirlo. (p. 346)²¹

Mingo's income, like that of the Inquisition, was derived directly from his victims, the Jews, as he explains to Cloro:

Dellos en oro he cobrado
salarios que no me has dado,
que no soy piedra, soy hombre
y he de comer. (p. 349)

Tirso here may be ridiculing the practice of the Inquisition described in a letter written to Charles V by an anonymous *converso* of Toledo in 1537, as quoted by Kamen: 'Your Majesty should above all provide that the expenses of the Holy Office do not come from the property of the condemned, because it is a repugnant thing if inquisitors cannot eat

²⁰ According to the *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, the only other *Comisario* at that time was the *comisario de guerra* or *comisario de muestras* (XIV, 693), which Mingo obviously was not, as will be seen presently.

²¹ The first four lines quoted appear to be corrupt; Ríos suggests the following alternative for line number 4: 'Pagaránla, vive Cristo. / ¡Cruz fingida!, ¡narigones!', which does not appear to make better sense.

unless they burn *recia cosa es que si no queman no comen*' (p. 153). Kamen also quotes numerous cases of inquisitorial corruption:

In 1499 the Inquisitor of Córdoba was replaced after being found guilty of fraud and extortion. His successor [...] was Diego Rodríguez Lucero. Within a short time Lucero began his own bizarre career of extortion, arresting leading citizens on trifling or false pretexts in order to seize their property in confiscations. [...] There were opportunities for lining one's pockets even at the bottom of the ladder. In 1578 the Inquisitor from Madrid who carried out an inspection of the Tribunal at Córdoba reported that both the doorkeeper and the messenger of the Tribunal were criminals and profiteers (pp. 74-75).

In this context, Mingo the *comisario* drily observes: 'He de comer'. Tirso could also have been referring to the practice by Inquisitorial *comisarios* of accepting bribes. He shows Mingo collecting his wages from his victims 'officially', and at the same time accepting a substantial bribe, while denying it:

JUDAS	Señor, humildes pedimos que interceda por nosotros el oro de este bolsillo. Cien escudos hay cabales.
MINGO	Soy ministro; no recibo. [...] <i>Apárale en la manga.</i> (p. 345) ²²

Mingo's character is a burlesque antithesis of the ideal holder of this office, as required by the Inquisition: 'Los comisarios debían ser personas de probada honradez y con rentas propias, siendo elegidos en votación secreta por los inquisidores del tribunal.'²³ However, Mingo's actions support Kamen's statement that corruption among the officers of the Inquisition was common. Mingo, like the Inquisition, is prosecutor, judge and executioner, all in one:

JUDAS	¿Vos sois verdugo?
MINGO	Y alcalde. Confiesa, perro. (p. 349)

²² 'Apárale en la manga' means that Mingo is to approach Judas in order to receive the Jew's money in his sieve. According to DRAE, *aparar* means 'acudir con las manos o con la capa, falda, etc., a tomar o coger alguna cosa'.

²³ *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, LXIV, 362.

The task of accuser and judge being carried out by the same person violates natural justice, but the Inquisition worked precisely in this way: it accepted secret and anonymous information, investigated, accused, sentenced and ordered executions (*relajar al brazo secular*), and Mingo says here that he does exactly the same. When he orders Judas: 'Confiesa', he is prosecutor; when he appoints himself 'alcalde', he is judge and, apart from this, as may be seen in the play, he has also the third function, executioner. Mingo remarks to Judas after the latter's confession: 'Pues la verdad confesaste, / ya serás de hoy más confeso' (p. 351). In this Tirso shows that not even confession frees the *converso* and his descendants from the *sambenito*; they must remain guilty and shamed for generations. As Tirso identifies Mingo with the Inquisition and as he ridicules Mingo, he may also be ridiculing the Inquisition and all it stands for.

However, Mingo provokes contradictory reactions. He is brutal, treacherous, cowardly and sacrilegious; he is also funny, although his humor is cruel. The distinction between character and function may clarify this confusion: his cruelty is part of his character and his satire of cruelty is part of his function. On one hand he is a torturer, enjoying his work and enjoying laughing at his victims, for example, when he has Judas hauled up by the wrists and then dropped to make him reveal where the Cross is buried: '¡Ah de arriba! Columpiadme / a este niño' (p. 350). Mingo's meta-theatrical shout to the *tramoyistas* 'Ah de arriba' may have been used by Tirso to alleviate the tension created by the painful reality of torture. On the other hand, Mingo is a satirist, a role in which he displays even better his sense of humour and rusticity:

JUDAS	Enterrada está en un monte entre el Tigris y el Eufrates. [...]
ELENA	¿Dónde?
MINGO	Dice que entre los tigres y frailes.
ELENA	Morirás en el tormento, traidor, mientras no declares dónde está mi amada prenda.

JUDAS ¡Ay! La maldición te alcance
 de Sodoma y de Gomorra.
 MINGO ¡Oh! Rabino, al fin cobarde;
 ¿mi gorra, qué culpa tiene,
 que la maldices? (p. 350)

One part of the public may laugh with him, uncomfortably, despite his cruelty because he is so funny; the other part laughs at him, at his ignorance, and at his function as *comisario* of the Inquisition, a laughter which leads to questioning. On one hand one may feel that Mingo is mocking Judas and, on the other hand, that he is mocking the Inquisition. In order to protect himself, Tirso, like Lope, tends to use laughter-with (the enjoyment of the *gracioso* Mingo) to camouflage laughter-at (the mockery of anti-Semitic prejudices).

Seeing that the Inquisition is one of the propagators of the negative image of the Jew, ridiculing its activities would help to ridicule this negative image. Yet, this criticism of the Inquisition may also be indicative of a desire to ensure that it pursues judaizers in a more lawful and scrupulous manner. But if it is admitted that Jews deserve fair treatment by the Inquisition, it would follow that Jews are not the monsters they are commonly believed to be. In Mingo, Tirso also underlines the ridiculous contradictions which constitute anti-Jewish prejudices: Mingo's mockery of Jews is transformed into the mockery of his own ignorance. During their interrogation with torture, Mingo calls the Jews 'narigones' (p. 343), but becomes angry when he realizes that the Jews have Gothic noses:

¿Qué narices son aquestas?
 [...]
 No son estas de la marca,
 hermanos, de los judíos.
 Esas son narices romas y hidalgas.
 [...]
 Quítense esas luego, luego,
 so pena de un romadizo
 por dos años y dos meses,
 y miren que ya me indigno:
 pónganse otras de dos gemes.
 [...]

Con narices garrafales
 tienen de andar, ¡vive Cristo! (p. 344)

However, parallel to the pleasure of laughter, the audience is also made aware of the terror and pain of the tortured Jew:

¡Ayudadme,
 Dios de Jacob, Dios de Isaac,
 Mesías Santo! (p. 350)

Similar to Lope's practice of avoiding true anagnorisis, Tirso abstains from resolving this contradiction between laughter and terror, and leaves the problem implanted in the mind of the public to make it think. He appears to transpose the problems of his own time into a fourth-century legend to make it possible for his public to experience, not what fictitiously occurred in Jerusalem, but what was really happening in the inquisitorial dungeons of Spain in the seventeenth century.

5.2.2 JUDAS: THE JEW AS INNOCENT VICTIM

In this play Tirso presents the triumvirate of Monarchy, Religion and Inquisition, and one expects to see a negative image of the Jew. Surprisingly, the Jews are characterized in a positive light; even a negative point, their hiding of the Cross, appears to have a positive motive: the fight against idolatry. To help the audience accept this motive as positive, Tirso presents the Jewish point of view as soon as Judas, Leví and Zabulón appear on stage. They are not the usual puppets reproducing anti-Jewish prejudices. They speak about their past sufferings and compare them with the present persecution by Constantino, which is worse than that of all the others, despite Constantino being a Christian and supposedly merciful:

JUDAS	No pasó nuestra nación desde Vespasiano y Tito tal persecución, Leví.
LEVÍ	No tuvieron los judíos tal desdicha, tantas plagas aunque cuente las de Egipto.

ZABULÓN Ni Nabucodonor,
 monarca de los Asirios,
 ni las de Antíoco fiero,
 como las de Constantino.
 JUDAS ¡Que se haya un Emperador
 aficionado de Cristo
 de tal suerte! (p. 343)

The Jews are aware also that this persecution is not the result of the hiding of the Cross, but that it has a more fundamental, in fact a religious reason. As Judas says:

 Constantino,
 que a Cristo manda adorar
 con generales edictos,
 con tormentos nos compele
 a dársela [la cruz]. (p. 347)

Here Tirso suggests the real causes of persecution: the resistance of the Jews to conversion to Christianity. He also presents Judas calling on the Messiah from the Jewish point of view and with high seriousness, in contrast with the usual anti-Judaic mockery of the Jews expecting the arrival of the already arrived Messiah:

¿Cuándo tienes de venir,
 Mesías santo y divino,
 y librar tu pueblo triste
 de tanto daño y peligro? (p. 346)

The Jews then lament their humiliation and persecution, not like before, by Emperors, but now by 'un hombre tan ignorante', Mingo: 'El comisario fiero [...] nombrado por ministro y ejecutor deste caso' (p. 343). As Zabulón laments: '¡Que a este punto haya venido / nuestra mísera nación!' (p. 343).

Tirso presents the Jews in a flattering light as always faithful to their Law and thus, when Mingo forces them to do something which is forbidden, like eating pork, they reply with dignity: 'No profanes nuestra ley' (p. 344) and '¿Lechón? Nuestra ley lo veda' (p. 345). Leví also presents the orthodox pharisee point of view about Christ as simply a man:

La cruz en que nuestra gente
 hizo heroico sacrificio
 de aquel hombre galileo

que adora el mundo por Cristo. (p. 346)

From the Christian point of view, this loyalty of the Jews to their religion would be seen as obstinacy since it prevents them from ceasing to be Jews and becoming sincere Christians. This obstinacy is so strong that the image of the Jew could be seen as remaining negative despite the strong criticism of the policies of the Monarchy or of the Inquisition. However, the play does not present the Jews entirely from the Christian point of view, but also, and sympathetically, from the Jewish point of view. By offering the audience the Jewish perspective, the play tries to explain the reasons for Jewish obstinacy as well as to counter the myth of Jews as deicides: according to Judas, the 'gente' of the time had sacrificed only a Galilean whom the world now adores as the Son of God and whom many Jews then welcomed as a prophet but not as Messiah. 'Heroico sacrificio' need not imply malevolence, not even indifference, but could be once again motivated by the zeal of some Jews to combat idolatry. Judas also observes Christian dissensions from the Jewish point of view:

Eso está dudoso ahora,
altercado entre ellos mismos
con diversas opiniones
y pareceres distintos. (p. 346)

And, above all, the Jews express their criticism of Christian idolatry and their intention to combat this precisely with the hiding of the Cross:

Murió en ella, y los cristianos
supersticiosos han dicho
que es digno de adoración,
haciéndole sacrificios.
Escondieronle por esto
nuestros padres. (p. 347)

To increase the sympathy towards the Jews, Tirso chooses Judas, the weakest and oldest of the Jews, to be tortured: 'Señor, estoy cano y viejo' (p. 344). Judas resists torture for a long time, confronting Mingo with dignity and courage: '¡Ah, sayón! [...] ¡Ay! La maldición te alcance / de Sodoma y de Gomorra' (pp. 349-50). Judas's dignity

and sincere piety is impressive and the scene when this old man is tortured is full of pathos and sympathy for him. When he can no longer withstand torture, he confesses the truth and asks God to forgive his weakness: 'Dios de Israel, perdonadme' (p. 350). However, the characteristics in Judas that Tirso highlights are his intelligence and quick-wittedness in critical situations; from Elena's point of view, these are regarded as evidence of the deceitfulness attributed to Jews in the Golden Age. When faced with having to reveal where the cross is hidden, Judas quickly invents a way to deceive Elena:

Labremos luego otra cruz,
pues es de noche, de pino,
y enterrándola, diremos
que es en la que murió Cristo. (p. 346)

When Mingo uncovers this deception, Judas again invents, on the spur of the moment, a brilliant excuse based on truth:

Gran Señora, del comisario tenemos
expreso mandato ahora
que si la cruz no ponemos
sobre las puertas de casa,
nos ha de mandar quemar,
que por saber lo que pasa
la queríamos labrar. (p. 347)

Broken in body but not in spirit, he still tries to outwit and even mock Elena: 'Enterrada está en un monte / entre el Tigris y el Eufrates' (p. 350). In the end, having the choice of revealing the truth or being murdered, he capitulates. It is Judas who proposes to identify the true Cross from among three, by testing their power to resuscitate a corpse and seems to promise to become a Christian if such a miracle took place. The touch of one of the crosses resuscitates the corpse and Judas declares himself a Christian. It seems odd that it should be a Jew who comes up with the idea of testing the power of the cross and all the Christians readily follow his suggestion. The Judas of the legend, inspired by God, proposes the test of his own free will; Tirso's Judas does not propose the test voluntarily. In his reply to Cloro (p. 355) one sees again his quick reaction to the

continuing threat of torture by Mingo, who is still waiting in the wings and says to Judas: '¡Ay, qué tocino he de darte!' (p. 351). In fact, Judas's suggestion is a trick, which Cloro and Elena, avid for a miracle, immediately accept as 'buen consejo'. Mingo is more cunning and suspects Judas's veracity: 'Sin fe le habéis dado, viejo; / mas ¿qué mucho, si sois Judas?' (p. 355).²⁴ Judas's suggestion for the test is suspect, as his motivation was fear of more torture. Indeed, it is unlikely that Judas expected a miracle to happen, because, as a pious Jew, he was unlikely to have believed in the miraculous power of the Cross. This is Judas's promise to convert: 'Si [Lisinio] cobra la vida en ella [...] / Yo seré cristiano agora' (p. 355). He intends to deceive and says exactly what Cloro and Elena want to hear. His second remark, however, is clearly an aside and thus sincere:

Si ella [la cruz] tal milagro hiciese,
sería ocasión que viese
el mundo cristiano a Judas. (p. 356)

Judas does not say that, if the miracle happens, he will become a Christian; what he says can be understood in two ways: in one he says that if the Cross works such a miracle, Judas may be seen by the world as a Christian. This implies that his conversion will be a 'seeming', a pretence. In the other version, as it is grammatically possible that 'cristiano' qualified 'mundo' and not 'Judas', the sentence would read as follows: if the Cross works such a miracle, then the Christian world will see Judas. In either case, the sentence is so ambiguous that Judas is promising nothing at all. Naturally, he says this in a manner not to incriminate himself, even if his words were over-heard.

As regards the genuineness of the miracle itself, one needs to recall that, in theological terms, a miracle is not defined solely as a rationally inexplicable event, but as the result of an explicit divine intervention, an *opus Dei*. In this scene neither Cloro

²⁴ 'Le' refers to 'consejo'.

nor Elena pray or invoke God's intervention; they appeal exclusively to the Cross, confusing God with an object:

ELENA	Esfera de Dios divina, si sois la verdadera, sacadnos de estas dudas. [...]
CLORO	Árbol que en el Paraíso de vida da fruto eterno. [...] Mostrad agora que en vos nuestra ventura hemos visto. (p. 356)

The Church accepts only six resurrections as authentic. According to the New Testament, apart from Christ's own resurrection, only the following resurrections have taken place: Christ resurrected Lazarus (John 11), the youth of Naim (Luke 7. 11-17) and Jairus's daughter (Matthew 9. 18-26); St Peter resurrected Tabitha (Acts 9. 36-43) and St Paul, Eutychus (Acts 20. 7-12), the last two only by explicitly invoking the power of Christ himself and not by means of any object. The resurrection in this play is only a legend. It is possible that Tirso, through Judas, is ridiculing the idolatry of identifying Christ himself with the Cross. Therefore, in theological terms (and Tirso was a theologian), Lisinio's resurrection could not be seen as a miracle. There was a resurrection in the legend and Tirso could not omit something so well known, but it is doubtful that he would have believed in this sort of 'miracle'.²⁵ What he probably did was to reduce a 'miracle' to a theatrical wonder. He created this scene as he did other theatrical *maravillas*, such as the appearance of ghosts and devils in *El burlador de Sevilla* or in *El condenado por desconfiado*. Using Lisinio's corpse instead of the unidentified cadaver of the legend increases the theatricality of the scene.

It could be argued that Judas's false conversion would have pandered to the *vulgo*'s prejudice that Jewish *conversos* were crypto-Jews. However, the play could also

²⁵ To put this question in its historical context, mention needs to be made of the Bollandists (Jean Bolland, 1596-1665) of this time, a group of Jesuits scholars who were compiling the *Acta Sanctorum*. The general approach to the life of saints was scholarly and critical (see Charles de Smedt, 'The Bollandists', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Kevin Knight <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02630a.htm>> [accessed 8 June 2003] (para. 6 of 24)).

be suggesting that if there was crypto-Judaism among *conversos* it was only because the open practice of Judaism was forbidden. The Jew in the legend is not tortured and converts sincerely. Judas is tortured and converts insincerely. What Tirso may want to demonstrate is that forcible conversions do not make sincere converts and, by this, to counter the universally accepted negative image attributed to *conversos*, who were all suspected of being Judaizers. What needs to be assessed is whether Tirso is really presenting the resuscitation of Lisinio as a miracle that should prove the falseness and obstinacy of Jews and the truth of Christianity, or whether his play is a satire directed primarily at Christians who are prone to idolatry and corruption. If it is the latter, then it would not be inconsistent to assume that it has an element of satirizing the negative image of the Jew, because, in this play, it is only the Jews who appear to be against idolatry.

5.2.3 THE RIDICULING OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW

By presenting the Jewish point of view, Tirso also questions the perspective of Cloro, Elena and Mingo, which reflects that of the majority of the *corral* audience. According to this perspective, the Jews of the Old Testament had hidden the Cross and the Jews in the *comedia* are perceived as bad because they refuse to reveal its hiding place. However, this perspective also implies a number of important negative connotations: the Jews killed Christ on this Cross; the Jews stole and hid the Holy Cross; they are liars and obstinate for not revealing the hiding place and all this fully justifies their persecution. Yet, as I have said, Tirso appears to subvert this perspective. He does this through Judas, who explains that the biblical Jews had hidden the Cross to avoid the birth of idolatry amongst the first Christians, who were Jews, a perfectly logical decision and one that was still valid in the fourth century. Tirso may well have been thinking of the violent controversies between iconoclasts and iconodules from the time

of Constantine, in which iconoclastic Jewish theology had an important part to play.²⁶

Tirso may also have had in mind the great increase in idolatry ^{IN} at his time:

The veneration felt for individuals who had the reputation of sanctity found an impressive outlet at their death. Their funeral was attended by the authorities and the populace, and bits of their clothing, hair or object of personal use were snatched with such eagerness that genuine problems of public order arose. More than once it happened that the friars had to suspend the funeral of a brother who died in the odour of sanctity and buried him hurriedly, because the populace, after stripping the corpse, threatened to mutilate it in the scramble for relics.²⁷

There was a a proliferation of *cofradías*, ceremonies and processions to *desagraviar* Christ on the Cross, whose effigy was supposed to have been secretly flogged by *conversos*.²⁸ This was also the time of the Counter-Reformation, of *alumbrados*, of *erasmistas* and others keen to reform the Spanish Catholic Church. According to Domínguez Ortiz, there was a general 'aspiration towards an inner religion which would be less tied to rites and ceremonies'.²⁹ Domínguez Ortiz adds that anyone dealing with such ideas had to be very careful: '*Alumbrados* and Erasmians were persecuted, the Jesuits came under suspicion [...], a list of prohibited books was drawn up' (p. 201). Tirso, undoubtedly, was nearer to these reforming movements than to popular religious customs, and *El árbol del mejor fruto* could be a parody of idolatrous or near idolatrous practices common at that time. However, could Tirso and his public have thought that *adoración* of the Cross was not idolatry? The position of the Catholic Church as regards relics, images, and so on, including the Cross, was clearly stated in the Second Council of Nicea (787) in the following general principle, and it has not changed: 'El honor de la imagen se dirige al original, y el que adora una

²⁶ See Joseph Lortz, *Historia de la Iglesia en la perspectiva de la historia del pensamiento*, trans. by Agustín Andreu Rodrigo, 2 vols (Madrid: Cristiandad, 1982), I, 295. Iconoclasts hated and broke images; iconodules worshipped them.

²⁷ Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, *The Golden Age of Spain: 1516-1659*, trans. by James Casey (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), p. 213.

²⁸ See Julio Caro Baroja, *Inquisición, brujería y criptojudasmo* (Barcelona: Ariel, 1970), pp. 65-70.

²⁹ Domínguez Ortiz, *The Golden Age of Spain*, p. 200. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

imagen adora a la persona en ella representada.’³⁰ Cloro and Elena do not worship *la persona representada*, that is to say Christ, but ‘la imagen’, the Cross. In technical terms they offer *latría* (worship due only to God) to the Cross, instead of *dulía* (which is due to saints and relics). This view is endorsed by AUT: the Cross ‘es venerada como *instrumento* sacrosanto en que se obró nuestra redención’; the Cross is only an instrument of Christ and is not due *latría*. However, Cloro and Elena consider the Cross as an object of worship in itself, as it is made clear when Elena repeatedly addresses it as if it were Christ and attributes all that is good in the world to the Cross and not to God:

Mi devoción, cruz, se encarga
de haceros un templo tal,
que no iguale a vuestra iglesia
la antigua fábrica efesia
ni el de Delfos le sea igual.
[...]
No os tiene que dejar, preciosa oliva,
palma, cedro y laurel, mi justo celo,
pues deposito en vos el bien que he visto. (p. 357)

It is assumed by the three Jews in the play that their forefathers had hidden the Cross to prevent the development of idolatry, and they continue to hide it for the same reason: Judas asks God’s forgiveness for revealing its hiding place (p. 347). The Jewish cause against idolatry, seemingly dear to Tirso, is presented as a noble enterprise. It is with this as well that Tirso appears to undermine the negative image of the Jew; more than that, in the play as a whole the three Jews seem to be better men than the three Christians, Cloro, Elena and Mingo: the play’s seeming anti-Semitism could be disguising a sympathy for the Jews. Nevertheless, it could be argued that the play only presents a criticism of Christians who observe their ‘true’ faith less scrupulously than the Jews observe their ‘false’ religion. However, as in general terms criticism of a torturer implies a defence of his victim, this criticism of the torturers Elena and Mingo

³⁰ Denzinger, pp. 111-12 (Numbers 302-04).

could imply a defence of Judas. This defence of the Jew is helped by the fact that, according to the Jewish point of view as presented by Tirso, Judaism is not false.

The criticism of anti-Semitism in the play is presented in two ways: irony and metatheatre. Irony, in its situational form such as *engañar con la verdad*, seen in Chapter 2, permeates the *comedia*. The Christians persecute the Jews for being Jews, ironically forgetting that only recently they were persecuted by the Romans for being Christians. Cloro warns Lisinio on pain of death not to persecute Christians for their beliefs, yet at the same moment, ironically, he himself begins the religious persecution of the Jews. It is ironic that these characters are not conscious of the inconsistency of their position, while a section of the public would probably notice it. A special case of irony is the contrast between a character's perception and that of some part of the public. For example, some people will perceive that Judas is injured by the torture and they will have sympathy for him, while Elena completely ignores his suffering. Consequently, the same people might begin to suspect that she is not a good Christian but a ruthless fanatic:

ELENA ¡Ay, palma hermosa y suave!
JUDAS ¡Ay, descoyuntados güesos! (p. 351)

FOR BELIEVING

One may be forgiven ~~(to believe)~~ that the contrast between Elena's metaphor for the Cross as 'palma hermosa y suave', and the physical reality of the 'descoyuntados güesos' of Judas was not created deliberately. A part of the audience may perceive not only what Elena ignores, that is to say, Judas's suffering, but could also become aware of an implicit condemnation of Elena's fanaticism and cruelty, as well as an implicit approval of the Jew's innocence and courage. Historically, the cross was an instrument of Roman torture and execution, hated by Christians until Constantine's conversion: it was after this that it was transformed in Christianity into a symbol of love and forgiveness. In the *comedia* this symbol of compassion once again comes to be used, in the hands of Cloro and Elena, as a motivation and means of torture. The irony consists

of the fact that neither of the two is conscious of the contradiction between their words and their actions, while a part of the public may have been conscious of it. Some of the bitterest ironies are the references to the Cross by Jewish names and Jewish metaphors in a *comedia* in which one can see on stage the torture of a Jew:

Decid dónde está el madero,
donde el eterno Abraham
sacrificó al verdadero
Isaac. (p. 348)

Báculo de Jacob, en quien me fundo
sustentar mi esperanza (p. 354).

This is reminiscent of the Spanish Golden-Age dualism of the good biblical Jew and the bad post-biblical Jew. The names are good because they are biblical and abstract, but the men are bad because they are post-biblical and physical. A further instance of irony is that while the faith of the Christian characters depends on practical help from the Cross, the Jewish characters are shown, again flatteringly, to have a faith that misfortune does not seem to shake, believing in God even in the midst of torture, as if they were obeying an injunction which appears in a Hispano-Jewish prayer of the sixteenth century: 'Alabad al Señor en las baxeças de la tierra.'³¹ The automatic transformation of what is a virtue in the Christian personalities into a vice in the Jewish protagonists is another instance of irony. The Jews in the play appear to be innocent, loyal, dignified, intelligent, courageous and without bad intentions; however, from the Christian point of view the Jews are guilty, evil, cowardly, obstinate and blind. The negative image of the Jews, thus, is found only in the opinions of the Christian characters, in which Jewish virtues are transformed into vices. Innocence is guilt, as when Mingo says to the Jews, who have done nothing wrong: 'Porque a vuestra culpa grave / iguale también la pena' (p. 347). Intelligence is treason when he discovers the plan of the Jews to make replicas of the three crosses to deceive Elena:

³¹ Quoted by Caro Baroja, as introductory dedication to *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 7.

Con aquesta quimera
 librarse de ti intentaban.
 Escondido, desde aquí
 esta traición escuché. (p. 348)

Courage is interpreted as cowardice by Mingo during Judas's torture: '¡Oh! Rabino, al fin cobarde' (p. 350), and loyalty and faith are blindness and obstinacy, as Elena says:

¡Oh infame gente, incrédula y contumaz!
 Vive el Rey omnipotente, que restauró nuestra paz
 y en la cruz murió obediente,
 que os he de quitar la vida a tormentos!
 Vayan presos. (p. 348)

The rest of the negative images of the Jews may be summed up in the anti-Jewish stereotypes: a big nose, aversion to pork, avarice, and so on. These negative images seem to be questioned, first, as was seen, by the presentation of positive images of the Jew seen from a Jewish perspective, and second, by showing them as projections of Cloro, Elena and Mingo. The idolatrous Cloro and Elena call the Jews idolatrous; Mingo, a coward and a traitor, calls Judas a coward and a traitor. The last and perhaps the subtlest case of irony is in these lines spoken by Mingo,

Luego, ¿búrlanse conmigo?
 Pues los judicame Deus
 adviertan lo que les digo. (p. 344)

He must have heard the expression *judicame Deus* in church and took it, by the sound of 'judica', to have something bad to do with Jews. In fact it is part of a psalm by King David, which begins: '*Iudica me, Deus, et discerne causam meam de gente non sancta*' ('Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation': Psalms 43. 1). The doubtless deliberate anachronism of Mingo quoting the Bible in Latin forms part of Tirso's irony: Mingo speaks at the time of Constantine's victory over Magencio, in 321, when the translation of the *Vulgate* from which he is quoting did not yet exist; it was completed in 405. Mingo uses some Latin words, which he does not understand, to insult the Jews, but at least the some of the more educated members of the audience would have known that he was in fact quoting the poetry and prayer of a Jewish king.

Another possible aspect of irony, buried in Mingo's *judicame Deus*, would consist in his unconsciously inviting, at least one part of the audience, to witness his plea to God to judge him for what he is doing, torturing an innocent man. If one accepts this possibility, the play could be seen as a coded message by Tirso, perhaps intended for a future public.

Apart from irony, Tirso also uses metatheatre to ridicule the negative image of the Jew. Metatheatre appears in those parts of the *comedia* where Tirso has changed the legend of the *Invenición de la Cruz*, that is to say, in the scenes with Mingo dealing with the Jews in Act III. Since this Act could be read as a transposition of the seventeenth into the fourth century, Mingo plays a *comedia* within a *comedia*. Within his dramatic role as satirist, Mingo also assumes the meta-dramatic role of a *comisario* of the Inquisition. He not only appears 'vestido de comisario', as was mentioned before, but 'graciosamente, con ropa de levantar y gorilla' (p. 343).³² What Mingo is probably wearing is a long, voluminous dressing-gown, in comical mimicry of the dignified robes worn by clerics, lawyers and State functionaries. This is another detail that would confirm Mingo's status as a *comisario* of the Inquisition but a comical one. He not only engages in metatheatre, but he subtly mocks the character he represents in it, the *comisario*. In Brechtian terms, Mingo's metatheatre may be perceived as tending to dispel the theatrical illusion that this is a play about events in the fourth century, and to suggest instead that the events refer to the spectators's own lives. If this play may be seen as relevant to the Golden Age in its ridiculing the Inquisition and the negative image of the Jew, it would be largely due to Mingo's metatheatrical activity. If Mingo were a simple servant following Cloro's and Elena's orders, if he had not taken on the

³² *Ropa de levantar* and *ropa* are defined in DRAE as 'vestidura holgada que se usaba para levantarse de la cama y estar dentro de casa' and 'vestidura de particular autoridad o distintiva de cargos o profesiones; como la que usan los ministros togados, etc.'.

additional role of *comisario*, this would have been a simple historical *comedia*. As it is, the play could be taken as a challenge to anti-Semitism.

I have argued that in *El retablo de las maravillas* and *El árbol del mejor fruto* two negative images of the Jew were subverted: in the first, his blindness in refusing to see Christ as the Messiah; in the second, his hatred of Christians in hiding the Cross. I will argue that the following two plays, one by Lope, the other by Mira de Amescua, subvert another negative image, that of the ambitious Jew, represented in the medieval legend of Raquel, the Jewess of Toledo.

5.3 RAQUEL, THE JEWESS OF TOLEDO

5.3.1 LAS PACES DE LOS REYES Y JUDÍA DE TOLEDO

The legend of the Jewess of Toledo first appears in the *Libro de castigos y documentos que daba [el rey don Sancho IV] a su hijo*, dated *circa* the middle of the fourteenth century. However, it is on later versions of the legend, such as Florián de Ocampo's chronicle and Lorenzo de Sepúlveda's *romance*, that Lope based his play, *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*.³³ The legend tells of the love of King Alfonso VIII for a beautiful Jewess called simply Ferosa, with whom he lives for seven years, neglecting his family and his kingdom and causing Castile's defeat by the Moors at Alarcos in 1195. Eventually, at the instigation of the queen, the nobles of Castile kill the Jewess. Alfonso swears revenge, but when an angel admonishes him, he returns to the fold to become a good husband, father and king, receiving God's reward in the form of his

³³ Lope de Vega, *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*, BAE, III, 567-87. For further details on sources, see Don Cruickshank, 'Alfonso VIII and Raquel of Toledo', in *Spanish Theatre: Studies in Honour of Victor F. Dixon*, ed. by Kenneth Adams, Ciaran Cosgrove and James Whiston (London: Tamesis, 2001), pp. 11-26 (pp. 11-15), and James A. Castañeda, 'Introduction' to Lope de Vega, *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*, ed. by James A. Castañeda (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 37-39.

victory over the Moors at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212. The story and the cause-and-effect association between a king's individual sin and national defeat, as well as between royal repentance and victory, also appears in Juan de Mariana's *Historia general de España* (1601), likely to have been read by Lope as the historian and he were friends.

Lope's play opens with Alfonso as a child of nine accompanied by some nobles who support his claim to the throne of Castile against Fernando of León, Alfonso's uncle. The child is crowned king in Toledo and a statue of Santiago girds him with a knight's sword and with that Alfonso becomes commander of his army. However, Lope de Arenas, lord of Zurita, refuses to surrender the fortress or acknowledge Alfonso as king, as the prince is not yet fifteen, the age specified by his father Sancho when he can become king. Domingullo, Lope de Arenas's servant, offers to deliver Zurita to Alfonso in return for a pension, kills his master, and the fortress surrenders. Alfonso pays the pension as promised, but has the traitor blinded.

The second Act, set fourteen years later, presents Alfonso just returned from the Crusades and just married to the English Princess, Leonor. He goes on an excursion the same day with his intimate friend Garcerán to an old royal palace on the River Tagus, where they see a beautiful young woman bathing in the nude, with whom the king falls in love. Belardo, the gardener, tells the king that the woman is a Jew and he and Garcerán warn him that he would commit a great sin if he had sexual relations with her. However, the king ignores the warnings and orders Garcerán to bring Raquel to him in the palace of Galiana. David, Raquel's father, predicts a tragic end to this unequal affair, foreseeing the deadly effect of the queen's jealousy. Alfonso also ignores supernatural warnings, ascribing them to Leonor's witchcraft. There follow seven years of happiness for Alfonso living in seclusion with Raquel. In the last Act, Leonor and the *infante* Enrique summon the chief Castilian nobles, and shame them into agreeing to kill

Raquel, who, according to the queen, has usurped the royal power. Still in the palace of Galiana and still very much in love, Alfonso and Raquel go on a fishing excursion. She hooks a human skull and he an olive branch, auguring impending disaster for one and peace for the other. As the murderers enter the garden, Belardo warns Raquel to flee: she feels that it is too late and both she and her sister are murdered, with Raquel affirming that she dies a Christian. Alfonso swears vengeance, but when an angel appears and admonishes him, he repents. He goes to the cathedral of Illescas, where, with the help of a miraculous image of the Virgin, he is reconciled with his wife and son.

The negative image of Raquel as portrayed in the legend and as defined by her enemies in the play, the queen and the prince, was probably accepted by most of Lope's public. She is charged by the queen with having used witchcraft to entrap the young king and having damaged the interest of Castile. Alfonso's absence from the Court and his refusal to exercise his leadership has left the country defenceless against Moorish attacks. The Jewess's negative image is symbolized in the names she is called by her enemies: Segunda Cava, Circe, Medea, Elena, and this interpretation of her character has been accepted by some critics, for example, William C. McCrary and Yvette Cardaillac-Hermosilla.³⁴ However, the play could be interpreted as subverting this negative image by means of *engañar con la verdad*, seeing that what is said against Raquel is subverted by what is shown in the accusers's actions and in Raquel's own actions.

None of the negative characteristics attributed to Raquel or to her family are validated in the text. In fact, her accusers are mocked as having projected all their own

³⁴ See William C. McCrary, 'Plot, Action and Imitation: The Art of Lope's *Las paces de los reyes*', *Hispanófila*, 48 (1973), 1-17 (p. 6), and Yvette Cardaillac-Hermosilla, 'Construcción de una identidad étnica por oposición al moro, al judío y al indio en el teatro del Siglo de Oro', in *VII Congreso Internacional de Sociocrítica*, ed. by Stephen W. Gilbert, Dolores Pérez and Claudia Macías, *Sincronía* (Jalisco, México: Universidad de Guadalajara; Centro Universitario de Ciencias Sociales y Humanidades), 4 (2000) <<http://fuentes.csh.udg.mx/CUCSH/Sincronia/cardalliac.htm>> [accessed 15 September 2003] (para. 15 of 60).

negative characteristics onto her. For example, Raquel is accused by Leonor of manipulating the king and of usurping the royal power of Castile, whereas it is Leonor who is shown as the manipulator of the nobles. While the queen accuses Raquel of using witchcraft to control the king, for which there is no proof, Alfonso attributes these seemingly supernatural portents, such as the Voices and the Shadow, to Leonor's witchcraft. Enrique's accusation that Raquel seeks to usurp royal power lacks textual reference, and the prince is revealed as one of the instigators of Raquel's murder, ostensibly to prevent a hypothetical future son of hers from killing him. Finally, and equally without foundation, the nobles accuse Raquel of ambition and greed, yet they themselves, after killing her, greedily hunt for the Jewish treasure invented by Belardo to escape being murdered by them.

The negative image attributed to Raquel is also undermined by presenting Leonor's view of the relationship of Alfonso and Raquel as simply sexual, that of 'bestias' (p. 581), while the text indicates that their relationship is based on the special kind of love that Alfonso needs and Raquel can give. Having lost his parents when he was a baby, Alfonso was brought up by rough soldiers and missed the love of a mother and the security of a father:

Yo niño Rey, diez años perseguido,
Sin patria, sin Palacio, sin posada,
Por una y otra parte siempre huído,
¿Qué puedo dar, pues nunca tuve nada? (p. 569)

Yo pasé, Conde, mocedad terrible,
Perseguido de propios y de extraños,
Más que parece a tal edad posible,
Vestí las armas sin tener diez años. (p. 575)

The text indicates that the frigid Leonor is unable to provide either maternal or sexual love: Raquel describes her as 'nieve del norte' (p. 575) while Garcerán, speaking of Leonor, before meeting Raquel, says to the king:

Si el amor de tu esposa no te abrasa
Y en la defensa de tu amor te hielas,

¿Qué te diviertes? (p. 575)

Raquel appears to be able to provide the kind of love that Alfonso needs. The following exchange suggests that their relationship is one of true and lasting love:

ALFONSO	Fresca entrada de Verano, Mas tal primavera tiene.
RAQUEL	Tras tantos años de amor ¿Decís lisonjas agora?
ALFONSO	Amor es niño, señora, y es con los años mayor. Pues si es amor ya crecido, ¿Por qué no será verdad?
RAQUEL	Porque el no haber novedad Causa desprecio y olvido.
ALFONSO	¿Olvido en mí? ¡Plega a Dios!
RAQUEL	No juréis, que ya lo creo.
ALFONSO	Mas nuevo es hoy mi deseo, Que cuando le puse en vos. Sois mi señora y mi reina, Sois mi diosa, y sois por quien Vivo, sois todo mi bien, Sois quien en mi alma reina. Mayor señora sois vos, Que si yo reino en Castilla, Vos en mí. (p. 582)

Leonor defines the relationship between Alfonso and Raquel as damaging to Castile, but there is no evidence of this, apart from Leonor's warnings of impending Moorish attacks. It is strange that the nobles, who are in control of the armies, are not aware of these dangers. When they meet at Leonor's request, they wonder why they have been summoned:

DON ILLÁN	Alguna cosa Del remedio de Alfonso por ventura [...]
	Imaginamos Que se quiere quejar de sus desdichas. (p. 580)

As was mentioned before, some of the sources, such as the *Libro de castigos* and Mariana's *Historia*, emphasize the cause-and-effect association between a king's individual sin and national defeat, as well as between royal repentance and national victory. Don Cruickshank observes that 'the association of great defeats with the sins

(usually sexual) of monarchs [...] is a recurring motif in Spanish literature and historiography'.³⁵ Emilio Cotarelo y Mori goes further: 'La leyenda de los amores del rey Alfonso con la judía es un cuento para explicar la derrota de Alarcos.'³⁶ Lope, however, once again changes the source material to suit his own purposes, omitting any reference to the defeat of Alarcos and the victory of Las Navas de Tolosa. This omission could indicate that Lope may have been mocking the very idea that a sexual peccadillo could have carried momentous political and military consequences. However, one could object that such an obvious case of adultery may not escape censure, but on this point what needs to be taken into account is that sexual behaviour in the Spanish Golden Age was much more relaxed than was recognized in official Church discourse. The abundance of such discourses only demonstrates the difficulty the Church had of regulating the sexual life not only of all classes of the laity but of clerics as well:

La Inquisición dirigió sus pasos hacia la eliminación de la creencia de que la fornicación no era pecado. [...] Todas estas represiones indican que el sexo estaba a la orden del día en el Siglo de Oro español y que la sociedad no era tan pía como la Iglesia y el Estado pretendían demostrar. A lo largo del siglo XVII empieza a ganar en popularidad la figura del marido consentido, cornudo complaciente que no duda en prostituir a su mujer. [...] Numerosos viajeros extranjeros se hacen eco del desenfreno sexual que se vivía en algunos ambientes de la corte. Brunel comentó que 'no hay nadie que no mantenga a una querida o que no caiga en las redes amorosas de una prostituta'. [...] El propio rey Felipe IV es un claro ejemplo de don Juan. Sus hijos naturales se elevan a la treintena, aunque sólo reconociera a uno, don Juan José de Austria, fruto de sus relaciones con la actriz conocida como la 'Calderona'. [...] El clero tampoco estuvo exento de esta fiebre sexual. El celibato eclesiástico se llevaba muy mal y era frecuente la manceba que acompañaba a los sacerdotes, incluso a los inquisidores. [...] Como bien dice García Cárcel, 'este despliegue de energías sexuales tuvo los contrapesos de una religiosidad obsesiva y la fijación por las pautas conductivas que marcaba el honor social.'³⁷

³⁵ 'Alfonso VIII and Raquel of Toledo', p. 13.

³⁶ Quoted in Dominique Reyre, 'Contribución al estudio de las imágenes identitarias judías en el teatro del Siglo de Oro: Emergencia del tema de la expulsión en *La desgraciada Raquel* de Mira de Amescua', in *Mira de Amescua en candelero: Actas del Congreso Internacional sobre Mira de Amescua y el teatro español del siglo XVII*, ed. by Agustín de la Granja and Juan Antonio Martínez Berbel, 2 vols (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1996), I, 497-510 (p. 498).

³⁷ Victoria Cabrera, 'Vida cotidiana en el Siglo de Oro: El sexo', in *Artehistoria* <<http://www.artehistoria.com/historia/contextos/1912.htm>> [accessed 22 May 2003] (para. 1 of 1).

Lope's private life is perhaps an example of this libertarian attitude towards extra-marital sexuality. His rejection of the idea that the love of Alfonso and Raquel had serious national implications is important to note because it may also support Raquel's positive image: she is not shown to be a seductress, she is not the cause of the king's 'sin', she is not just a beautiful body, the object of the king's lust, but a woman who inspired the king's abiding love.

Another example of ridiculing prejudice is to be found in the behaviour of the Belardo character, who often stands in Lope's plays for Lope himself. Belardo warns Alfonso against having anything to do with a Jewess and gives expression to several anti-Semitic prejudices. Raquel and Sibila are for Belardo:

En extremo bellas;
Pero tienen una falta,
Si no me engaña la muestra:
Que pienso que son judías. (p. 576)

The gardener also assumes that Raquel, as all Jews, is 'mal nacida' and that all Jews are rich:

¿Cuándo viste gente destas
Que fuese pobre jamás? (p. 577)

However, after knowing Raquel for seven years, Belardo's opinion about her and Jews must have changed. Pedraza Jiménez notes that Belardo is 'representante del antisemitismo de la sociedad española, pero honrado y compasivo hasta el punto de llegar a avisar a Raquel del riesgo que corre'.³⁸ Belardo's behaviour at the end appears to be a mockery of his previous prejudices as he risks his life by warning her of the arrival of the murderers. In fact, Belardo is the only person who tries to help Raquel and her sister:

Advierte, hermosa Raquel
[...]

³⁸ Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, 'En el taller de Lope: Secuencias y motivos tópicos en *Las paces de los reyes*', in *En torno al teatro del Siglo de Oro: Actas de las Jornadas XII-XIII*, ed. by Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, J. Berbel, H. Castellón, A. Orejudo and A. Serrano (Almería: Instituto de Estudios Almerienses; Diputación de Almería, 1996), pp. 203-21 (p. 219).

Que con turbado semblante,
 Capas y espadas diversas,
 Caballeros de Toledo
 Hoy han entrado en la huerta.
 No son de amistad señales,
 Sino de traición y fuerza.
 [...]

Huye, Señora (p. 583)

There are other characteristics of the Jewess of Toledo that have been added to her portrayal in the sources and by means of which the negative image of the Jew could be undermined. Lope was the first to personalize the Jewess, up to then called Fermosa, giving her the name of Raquel. The biblical matriarch was not only of exceptional physical beauty, but was a model of spiritual love, for whom Jacob was willing to serve Laban fourteen years. Also, Jacob's and Rachel's relationship was the first story of romantic love in the Bible. The choice of name could imply an admiration that Lope may have felt for his character. Raquel must also have impressed contemporary audiences by her declaration to her sister of her Spanishness:

Yo, Sibila, aunque no soy
 Cristiana, soy española,
 Que basta esta gracia sola. (p. 575)

Within the context of widespread anti-Semitism in the Golden Age, portraying a Jew as Spanish would have helped to create a more positive image of the Jew, someone to be perceived not as a stranger but as an equal in all except religion. Given the pride of Spaniards in their Spanishness in Lope's time, presenting Raquel as Spanish may have counteracted the negative image offered by Leonor of the Jew as a traitor. Finally, the play presents Raquel dying a Christian:

Muero en la ley de mi Alfonso;
 Testigos los cielos sean;
 Creo en Cristo, a Cristo adoro. (p. 584)

This may be interpreted to mean that Raquel's conversion does not imply a positive image of the Jew, because by converting to Christianity she loses her Jewishness, and that in this scene Lope puts forward the theory that the only good Jew is the sincere

Jewish convert. This argument presupposes that by converting to Christianity Raquel loses her bad Jewishness and becomes good. However, Raquel does not lose her Jewishness, because, according to popular anti-Semitism, Jewishness is rooted not in religion but in blood and race and it is blood and race that make the Jews always false. By presenting Raquel as totally sincere and good, Lope, as Cartagena did in his time, subverts the anti-Semitic notion that Jews are incapable of being sincere and good.

If Raquel is not guilty of any transgression, and if Alfonso is innocent of the charge of neglecting the kingdom and of losing the battle of Alarcos because of his association with Raquel, how can Alfonso's repentance be explained? There are two different critical explanations. William C. McCrary, David H. Darst and Lilia Dapaz Strout see the king's repentance as sincere, brought about by the Angel's warning. They see the unity of the play as Alfonso's life journey of maturation, culminating in his return to his duty as king, husband and father. These critics accept Raquel's death as a sacrifice necessary to Alfonso's maturation, but seem not to take into account that Raquel's death was murder of a most cruel kind and that it remained unpunished. The king was supposed to have learnt forgiveness from the queen, who has been the planner of Raquel's assassination. In this view Raquel's image is necessarily negative because, despite the sympathy with which Lope has drawn her, she is a hindrance to Alfonso's maturation.³⁹ James A. Castañeda, Don Cruickshank and Felipe B. Pedraza Jiménez, on the contrary, consider that the first Act is not integrated with the remainder of the play. They see the apparition as an *angelus ex machina* and as a means of side-stepping the tragic conflict. For them, Alfonso's repentance is artificial and they explain its presence

³⁹ See William C. McCrary, 'Plot, Action and Imitation', p. 10, David H. Darst, 'Repetición y rectificación en *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*', in 'Study Site for Spanish Golden Age Theatre' (Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics at Florida State University) <<http://www.modlang.fsu.edu/darst/paces.htm>> [accessed 15 September 2003] (para. 24 of 29), and Lilia Dapaz Strout, 'Psicomaquia o el conflicto de Eros y Logos en *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*', in *Studies in Honor of William C. McCrary*, ed. by Robert Fiore, Everett W. Hesse, John E. Keller and José A. Madrigal (Lincoln: University of Nebraska-Society of Spanish & Spanish-American Studies, 1986), pp. 77-90 (p. 82).

by Lope's desire to follow his sources.⁴⁰ In this interpretation Raquel's character is more positive, because Alfonso's repentance, together with the Angel's appearance, is seen as unreal. There is, however, another possible reading: it resembles the first in that Alfonso's repentance is seen as real and sincere, but, unlike the first, it preserves the unity of the play, not as a process of Alfonso's maturation, but as his regression to the immaturity of his childhood and dependance on those who only want to exploit him. As a child he was manipulated by selfish nobles and was taught by the Count Don Manrique to sacrifice love for reasons of State:

CONDE	Advertid que sois soldado; No os habéis de enternecer.
REY	Bien decís: que no he de ser Piadoso ni enamorado. (p. 572)

With Raquel, Alfonso had found love, security, happiness and maturity, all of which he was deprived of by her loss, and in his distraught behaviour in the final scene one may discern a return to his immaturity:

¡Dichoso yo si me volviese loco!
[...]
Paréceme que estoy a Raquel viendo,
Que, abierto el pecho, muere con mi nombre.
No me culpes mi bien, pues no te ofendo. (p. 585)

According to this interpretation, Raquel's image in death is even more positive than it was in life, as she is now an innocent victim not only of Leonor and the nobles, but of her lover as well. Before the appearance of the Angel, Alfonso is determined to avenge Raquel's death: 'No ha de quedar de todos vivo un hombre' (p. 585). However, as Cruickshank points out, the king, who punished wrong-doing so severely with Domingillo, does nothing to punish Raquel's assassins. Instead, he professes a sudden love for Leonor, the instigator of Raquel's murder, tells the murderers not to mention the matter again and invites them all to *fiestas*:

⁴⁰ See Castañeda, p. 61, Cruickshank, 'Alfonso VIII and Raquel of Toledo', p. 19, and Pedraza Jiménez, 'En el taller de Lope', p. 208.

Virgen, juramento os hago
 Que, en señal que viví ciego
 Y por vos la vista aguardo,
 De adorar a mi Leonor
 [...]

Amigos,

Conozco que anduve errado.
 Nadie lo pasado trate.
 [...]

Volvámonos a Toledo,
 Donde mil fiestas hagamos. (p. 587)

In this sudden change, Lope constructs once again a metatheatrical scene: as a child Alfonso had to play the adult with women and with his nobles. Only with Raquel was he able to be himself and with her loss he seems to revert to his childhood role-playing, this time playing the conventional role of the good king, the good husband and the good father. Lope's anagnorisis in this play, as was seen in *Los comendadores de Córdoba* and will be seen in *La villana de Getafe*, is ironic, only appearing to solve the tragic problem of Alfonso's maturation. In reality the events of the play have only made the problem more acute. Instead of Alfonso as an immature child, one may now perceive Alfonso as a man condemned to immaturity. He emerges seemingly as saved, but the ending leaves at least a part of the audience with the sense that the assassins have not paid for their crime and that order has not been restored. This not only increases the sympathy for Raquel, but questions her negative image as a Jew.

5.3.2 LA DESGRACIADA RAQUEL

The positive image of the Jew presented in Lope's Raquel stands out even more when compared to the Raquel of Mira de Amescua in *La desgraciada Raquel*, which, according to most critics, is the one published as *La judía de Toledo* under the name of Juan Bautista Diamante.⁴¹ Mira's plot, like that of Lope's *La hermosa Ester*, begins in the middle of a dangerous situation for the Jews. With the help of the rabbi, the Jew

⁴¹ See Don W. Cruickshank, 'Alfonso VIII and Raquel of Toledo', p. 11.

David persuades his daughter, the beautiful Raquel, to induce the king to revoke his order for the expulsion of the Jews from Toledo. The accusation of ambition to usurp the royal power to rule Spain is projected onto both Raquels. However, while in Lope's play this accusation is made only by the queen and her son (the nobles repeat the accusation only after the queen had upbraided them), in Mira's play Raquel's Machiavellian ambition appears in her own words before she and the king become acquainted:

Rey es; pues ¿qué me acobarda?
Venza su amor, y empecemos
a enredar en el discurso
la lisonja con el premio;
pueda esta vez la ambición
más que el decoro y a trueco
de un desdoro mentiroso,
Logre la ambición un reino.⁴²

Raquel's ambition to rule Spain is exemplified by her order to free a youth imprisoned for wounding the husband of his lover: her decision is defiantly unjust and despotically imposed. When asked to reconsider, she replies: 'Aunque injusta, se obedezca' (p. 14). Her negative image is so often and so explicitly repeated that Reyre has interpreted the play as an attack on Olivares's *pro-converso* stand:

La historia de amor entre Raquel y el rey Alfonso VIII se convierte en un pretexto para dramatizar la polémica en torno a la presencia de los judíos en la Corte de Felipe IV. Le permite a Mira poner en escena la traición de una judía y, por consiguiente, siendo ella la representante de su pueblo, la traición de todos los judíos. El propósito de Mira de Amescua es, pues, mostrar a su público [...] que la presencia de los judíos es peligrosa y que su expulsión resulta necesaria. Así se hace eco en las tablas de las críticas de la política filosemita del Conde-Duque de Olivares. (p. 499)

However, there are ambiguities. Although at first Mira's Raquel acts out of self-interest, once she and the king become intimate she falls in love with Alfonso as much as he with her. When her father begs her to leave Alfonso and save herself, she refuses:

¿Qué es ir? Aunque me mostrases
más muertes que vidas tengo;

⁴² Juan Bautista Diamante, *La Judía de Toledo*, BAE, XLIX, 1-18 (p. 7).

pues si vivo de adorarle,
 ¿qué más muerte que no verle?
 ¿Qué más pena que dejarle?
 Alfonso es mi bien, no puedo
 creer que mi mal se llame;
 si por quererle me culpan
 dichoso delito saben;
 merezca que lo conozcan,
 y más que luego me maten. (p. 17)

Raquel's love for Alfonso is paralleled by her love for her father; her last words as she is led off to the slaughter are to defend him from the angry soldiers:

No lo injuriez, no maltrates
 de sus inocentes canas
 la lástima venerable.
 Adiós, señor. (p. 18)

In the case of Mira's Raquel it is only her love for Alfonso and her father that mitigates the negative image of the Jew. The Jewish character who has a uniformly positive image is David. In the beginning of the play, despite his intimations of disaster and his love for his daughter, he agrees to sacrifice her for the benefit of his people:

¡Ay, Raquel! Cuánto lo lloro;
 mejor que de Isaac, allí
 el sacrificio presumo
 que yo to le labro aquí
 pues si en el fuego de amor
 materia haciendo de ti
 aplico la leña yo,
 causa de su llama fui. (p. 2)

Despite his disapproval of her continued cohabitation with Alfonso, he forgives her and in the end tries to save her life:

Ya no es tiempo de reñirte;
 que si entonces, por sacarte,
 de este engaño, mi razón
 puedo airada amenazarte,
 hoy, que tu peligro mira
 mi amor, mi piedad no sabe,
 para poder convencerte
 otro estilo más amante. (p. 17)

Finally, when Raquel is about to be killed, David offers his own life in exchange for hers:

Fieros, cobardes,
¿qué queréis de una mujer?
Matadme, ingratos, matadme
a mí y dejadle la vida. (p. 18)

The ambiguity of this play is compounded by the last lines in which the king vows to visit vengeance on those involved in the murder. What this could suggest is that it will be a just punishment for a horrible crime. In any case, Mira's play presents an ambiguous image of the Jew as opposed to a positive one in Lope's play. In *El niño inocente de La Guardia* Lope has to deal with a much more serious threat to the image of the Jew than ambition, that of blood-libel. As this anti-Semitic accusation is harsher, Lope's ridicule of this negative image of the Jew is sharper.

5.4 *EL NIÑO INOCENTE DE LA GUARDIA*

Here is a detailed summary of the story as background for the discussion that follows.⁴³ In Act 1, the Catholic Monarchs decide to expel the Jews. The five *cripto-judíos* are angry and afraid that the Inquisition, after robbing them of their possessions, will take their lives, so they decide to fight the Holy Office with the help of a rabbi/magician in France. Presently the Pasamonte family appears with Juanico, who is encouraged by his father to be a martyr. In France, Benito, the emissary of the conspirators, meets the magician/rabbi, who explains his plan to destroy the Inquisition by means of a lethal charm made with the heart of a Christian child and the Host. To obtain a heart they try to buy one of the children of an impoverished French nobleman, whose wife tricks the *cripto-judíos* out of their money by substituting a pig's heart for the child's. Act 2 finds Benito back in Spain with his friends. He tells them that although he was cheated, the

⁴³ The most accessible edition of this *comedia famosa* is *El niño inocente de La Guardia*, ed. by Anthony J. Farrell (London: Tamesis, 1985).

rabbi's magic does work because all the pigs that drank of the water contaminated by the charm had died. The group, needing a heart, decides to kidnap a child. The Pasamonte family enjoys the celebrations for the feast of the Assumption in Toledo, where Juanico is kidnapped by the conspirators and is taken to live with one of them as his nephew. They decide to re-enact the crucifixion of Christ, with Juanico willingly playing Christ. Queen Isabel chooses to remain at Court to watch the burning of *judaizantes* rather than to visit the king whose eyesight is failing. Juanico then seeks refuge from the ill-treatment of his *cripto-judío* 'uncle' in the house of a *familiar* of the Inquisition. At first the *familiar* and his wife help Juanico, but they soon deliver him to his captor. In Act 3 the *cripto-judíos* share out the roles in Christ's trial, flagellation, and crucifixion. Juanico assumes Christ's role and delivers himself willingly to death, without feeling pain. Two angels appear and hail him as *Cristo nuevo*. As there is no cross to hand, the conspirators ask a Christian miller for the timber to make one. Two allegorical figures, Razón and Entendimiento, appear to explain how Juanico may understand all that happens even though he is a child. The final act reveals the miracle of Veronica's veil and Juanico on the cross without suffering, directing the ignorant Benito's hand to his heart. Juanico dies, the *cripto-judíos* flee in terror, and Razón and Entendimiento venerate him as he ascends victoriously to heaven *en cuerpo y alma*.

The extensive critical comment that has been lavished on this *comedia* may be divided into two camps: one maintains that the play presents and condemns a dreadful crime committed by Jews and duly acknowledges Lope's anti-Semitism; the other maintains the contrary. According to the first, the traditional view, Lope's intention had been to write a work which paid homage to the *Santo Niño*, whose cult was popular in seventeenth-century Spain and which is still alive in La Guardia: 'El santo Niño de La Guardia nunca fue canonizado ni se ha abierto proceso para su canonización, aunque es un culto permitido por las instancias jerárquicas y también por las instancias reales en

su tiempo.’⁴⁴ Menéndez y Pelayo is perhaps the most representative of this view. He deals almost exclusively ‘with the historicity of the alleged ritual murder and with Lope’s sources’.⁴⁵ For this critic, the play produces only ‘inquietud y desasosiego’ (I, 86-87). He maintains that it presents the absolute truth of the inquisitorial accusation against the Jews:

‘Del crimen de La Guardia no puede humanamente dudarse; está judicialmente comprobado hasta en sus ápices; hay perfecta armonía entre las declaraciones de los culpables, y las primeras y más importantes no fueron arrancadas por la tortura. [...] Será, si se quiere, la obra de un fanático, rebosará en todas sus cláusulas odio de sangre contra los judíos’ (I, 78 and 87).

Glaser also belongs to this camp: according to him, Lope, who felt ‘enthusiasm’ towards the Catholic Monarchs, wanted to condemn in the play a horrible crime of Jewish fanaticism and to emphasize the necessity of fighting the heresy of the *converso*.⁴⁶ He concludes that Lope was a great anti-Semite. Elisa Aragone Terni agrees with this view. For her, *El niño inocente de La Guardia* is a typical *comedia de santos*.⁴⁷ She affirms that Lope was an anti-Semite and that he could have written this play in gratitude for having been accepted as a *familiar* by the Inquisition (p. 27). Finally, Farrell’s opinion is that Lope was ‘the greatest poet of conformity’ and that ‘the play’s axis is the unrelenting struggle between Truth and the Devil incarnate’ (p. 21), that is to say, between Catholicism and Judaism. He emphasizes Lope’s anti-Semitism, saying that ‘there is little doubt that he shared the religious convictions and racial prejudices which made possible the Inquisition’ (p. 23). Nevertheless he admits:

His [Lope’s] poetic rendering of the misery suffered by the departing exiles is supremely sympathetic to them [...] and he [Lope] ennoble his subject by comparing the Jewish exile to the flight of literary heroes (Eneas carrying his father on his back) (pp. 21-22).

⁴⁴ For this information I thank Señor Fernando Guzmán, historian of La Guardia (see ‘La Guardia’ <<http://usuarios.lycos.es/laguardia/laguardia.htm>> [accessed 28 January 2003] (para. 2 of 5)).

⁴⁵ Anthony J. Farrell, ‘Introductory Study’ to *El Niño inocente de La Guardia*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ See Glaser, ‘Lope de Vega’s *El Niño inocente de La Guardia*’, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, 32 (1955), 140-53 (p. 140).

⁴⁷ See Elisa Aragone Terni, *Studio sulle ‘Comedias de santos’ de Lope de Vega* (Messina-Firenze: D’Anna, 1971), pp. 16-28. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

Lida de Malkiel also points to the contradictions in Lope's presentation of the Jews (executioners and victims); she explains the contradictions in the following manner: on one hand, 'Lope es fiel a la ley de su público', while, on the other, 'se identifica genialmente con cada una de sus creaciones dramáticas. [...] Esto explica las extrañas contradicciones entre lo que escribe Lope el poeta y lo que hace Lope el hombre'.⁴⁸ However, according to her, Lope's sympathy towards the Jews is no more than an empathy for all the characters in his plays and not sympathy for the Jews *qua* Jews. In his life, according to her, Lope felt no sympathy for them, but, like the rest of Spain at that time, contempt and hatred. This interpretation is echoed by Zimmerman Lavine: 'In spite of Lope's occasional "sympathetic" portrayals for the Jew and the converso, the dramatist always affirms the fundamental values of society.'⁴⁹ I agree that the contradiction exists, but I would suggest that it is not between Lope 'el hombre' and Lope 'el poeta', but between Lope the dramatist presenting popular prejudices about the *conversos* and Lope, again the dramatist, presenting a play that ridicules these prejudices.

In the other camp, Sicroff and Blanco not only note the ambiguities and contradictions in the play, they also question its anti-Semitism. Sicroff maintains:

[Lope] presentó el martirio de Juanico con detalles sobradamente atroces para confirmar la opinión común que se tenía de los judíos. Pero dicho esto, hay que añadir enseguida que a lo largo de la obra Lope se demoró en ciertos aspectos de la historia que para algunos individuos hubiera podido resultar ambiguo si no completamente desvirtuado el sentido tradicional de este asesinato ritual. [...] Lope llama la atención no a la maldad de los judíos sino a lo que va a provocarlos a martirizar al niño. [...] Los conspiradores judíos [...] se presentan como víctimas del celo religioso de los Reyes Católicos. [...] Así es que la comedia que, según sus fuentes originales, debería haber sido una sencilla dramatización de la crueldad judía, se está convirtiendo en una comedia de santos.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ 'Lope de Vega y los judíos', pp. 85 and 81, respectively.

⁴⁹ 'The Jew and the "Converso" in the Dramatic Works of Lope de Vega' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The Catholic University of America, 1997), *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 44 (1983), 185A.

⁵⁰ 'Notas equívocas en dos dramatizaciones de Lope del problema judaico', pp. 701-03. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

This critic adds: ‘Lope ni siguió sus fuentes con toda fidelidad ni se puede decir que se limitó [...] a expresar sólo lo que estaba a tono con los valores, los gustos y las creencias de sus contemporáneos’ (p. 702). However, while Sicroff has tried to demonstrate that the play is not an attack on the Jews, I will argue that it is in fact a defence of them.

The play is, as Blanco says, ‘temática y dramáticamente, una obra extraordinaria, nueva, inquietante, dentro del teatro clásico español y europeo’.⁵¹ The three principal points of his theory are: first, the sources contain a story with a Jewish action, whereas the play has two, one Christian, the other Jewish; second, the chronology of the events in the play is an inversion of that of the sources, and the last, whereas the sources support the popular view about the Jews, the play subverts it. While I structure my analysis of *El niño inocente de La Guardia* around Blanco’s points, my contribution to the argument is that there is a criticism in the play, not only of the accusation of ritual murder and the justification of the expulsion of the Jews, but of the continued marginalization of the *conversos*; I will also argue that Lope’s critical attitude is linked not so much to his possible *converso* origin but to his *converso* and humanist perspective. As was seen in Chapter 3, Lope has written *comedias* about the injustices practised against other marginalized groups: is it not possible that he would have also been concerned with the injustices against *conversos*, especially the accusations of ritual murder? I intend to argue that Lope in this play ridiculed the prejudices of his time about Jews and that he applied his technique of *engañar con la verdad* to escape the consequences of his audacity.

⁵¹ ‘De Grünwald a Monty Python: Estudio sobre *El niño inocente de La Guardia* de Lope de Vega’, in ‘Mechontologia’ <<http://www.mechontologia.net/ct/nin.zip>> [accessed 24 January 2003] (para. 2 of 20).

5.4.1 THE TWO ACTIONS OF THE PLAY

In this play, Lope once again changes substantially its original sources to the extent that a comparison of these stories with the play may reveal that the anti-Judaic character of these accounts has been not only subverted but inverted. The story of *El niño inocente de La Guardia*, according to Farrell, is probably based on a Latin poem by Jerónimo Ramírez, as well as on the tales by Francisco Yepes and Damián de Vegas. There exists the transcript of the records of the inquisitorial process against Yucé Franco, who was accused of the murder by crucifixion of a Christian child of La Guardia (Toledo) in 1491. Franco and the other five accused were tried, convicted, and burnt alive. It is unlikely that Lope had access to these Inquisitorial records: it is more likely that his sources for the play, apart from Ramírez, Yepes and Vegas, were popular oral versions of the story, still current in Lope's time. The murder of *el niño de La Guardia* was a fact for the majority of *cristianos viejos* and it is partly for this reason that I have chosen the word 'history' to denote all the sources Lope used, despite their improbable nature. This 'history' is important because comparing its anti-Judaism with the play will highlight Lope's mockery of the negative image of the Jew.

Blanco explains the 'history':

Es esencial destacar varios datos: se trata de *una historia* de carácter *trágico*, protagonizada por unos *judíos* que cometen un *crimen ritual* dirigido a la aniquilación de los *cristianos* y que fue convertida en *causa* de la *expulsión* de los judíos.⁵²

It needs to be remembered that the trial lasted more than a year and a half and ended three months before the publication of the Edict of expulsion. Thus, as the conspirators tell the story of the expulsion as a past event, they themselves must have remained behind as *conversos judaizantes*. A good example is Francisco, about whom the

⁵² See 'De Grönewald a Monty Python' (para. 8 of 20). The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

familiar questions Juanico: '¿Es este hombre buen cristiano? [...] ¿Este va a misa y sermón?', to which Juanico answers: 'Sí, señor' (II. 1920-26).

Returning to the 'history': it consists of one single tragic action, that is to say, the murder of the child. This supposed crime was alleged to threaten all Spanish *cristianos viejos*. The authorities gave the trial extensive publicity, using the confessions of the five, obtained under torture, as justification for the expulsion of all Jews three months after the trial. Baer observes:

When the records of the trial were first published, some modern scholars suggested that the Inquisitor General had staged it so as to prepare the public for the wholesale Expulsion of the Jews from Spain, which was decreed three months after the trial ends. No clear proofs exist to bear out this assumption. There is no mention of the La Guardia trial in the Edict of Expulsion. But only the very naïf, or those who pretended to be such, can ignore the historical links between the La Guardia trial and the Expulsion. (II, 423)

Baer's opinion is borne out by Menéndez y Pelayo: 'La universal indignación que en Castilla produjo la noticia de este crimen feroz debió de entrar por mucho en acelerar el edicto de expulsión de los judíos' (I, 79). Caro Baroja notes: 'El famoso inquisidor Páramo llegó a afirmar que fue uno de los hechos que más movieron a los Reyes Católicos para decretar la expulsión, cosa que se ha repetido',⁵³ and Kamen adds: 'The *affair* received wide publicity; [...] the time was ominous, and there can be little doubt that it helped prepare many to accept the expulsion of the Jews' (p. 22).

What are the differences between this 'history' and the play? As was seen, the 'history' consists of one action, while the play consists of two: one natural, the other supernatural. Why has Lope not reproduced this history faithfully? Why did he use two actions in this play? According to Blanco, the first action in the play is 'natural, secundaria y de carácter *trágico*, protagonizada por unos *conversos* que pretenden ejecutar una *venganza* contra los *inquisidores* por el *destierro* de los judíos'.⁵⁴ This first

⁵³ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 185.

⁵⁴ 'De Grūnewald a Monty Python' (para. 9 of 20). The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

action is natural, because it is purely human: while the 'history' attributes a purely ritual motivation to the Jews, in the play Lope presents several motivations which are not at all ritual. First, the fear of the Inquisition, as Benito says:

¿Qué fuego es éste, que ya muerto encienden,
de tantos dominicos escuadrones?
¿Qué nueva Cruz es ésta, blanca y negra
que tanto los católicos alegra?
¿Qué nuevo modo de escrutinio y leyes?
¿Qué causas en secreto examinadas? (ll. 310-15)

Then, the sufferings of the expulsion, as expressed in Quintanar's account:

Es lástima de mirar
cómo los viejos abuelos
van por las sendas, las manos
en los hombros de sus nietos,
los maridos consolando
las mujeres y atendiendo
a las cargas y criados
con vergonzoso silencio,
las doncellas dando al aire
los bellísimos cabellos,
cuyo número, aunque grande,
pasan los suspiros tiernos. (ll. 491-503)

Quintanar's words are sincere and moving, written with a mastery equalled by Lope only in *La hermosa Ester*, which, as was seen in the previous chapter, is also about the exile of the Jews. The pathos in Quintanar's lament can only be compared to Ester's:

¿Cuándo volverá, Señor,
vuestro pueblo a libertad?
¿Cuándo a la santa ciudad
a vuestra gloria y honor?
¿Cuándo a vuestro sacro templo
y al alcázar de Sión,
para dar desta prisión
a la sucesión ejemplo?
Doleos, Señor, de mí,
aunque la mínima soy
del cautiverio en que estoy' (p. 108).

Finally, the defence of their lives and property, in Benito's words:

Aunque amenaza
tanto esta gente nuestra sangre y vida,
hoy será por la posta mi partida. (ll. 367-69)

Thus, the motivation of the conspirators for wanting to kill the inquisitors was the desire to revenge the injustices done to them.

In the 'history', the Jews aim to kill all the Christians in Spain. In the play Lope substitutes for this the intention of killing only their persecutors, the inquisitors, as Hernando proposes: 'Trae el hechizo y demos muerte a todos / estos *inquisidores y oficiales*' (ll. 370-71). To suggest that the Jews are not indiscriminate murderers, the play recalls that in previous conspiracies they killed only inquisitors: 'A fray Ponce, a fray Pedro Ladireta / mataron con valor a puñaladas' (ll. 354-55). It is true that Hernando, carried away by his imagination, makes the aim of this conspiracy ridiculous by proposing to kill all Spanish Christians or mainly the Dominican friars (ll. 401-04), but this is due to his desperate need to do something, but without knowing what.

In France, Benito and the rabbi act in an even more absurd manner: on one hand, thinking that they have the French child's heart, they believe that when they perform the *hechizo* in the river it will kill the people who drink of it; on the other hand, they know that the spell will not kill anyone because no human being will drink from the river. To show that they know this, Lope stages the scene of the comical swineherd pulling a squealing pig out of the river by its tail (ll. 807-11), suggesting that a herd of pigs not only drink but also bathe, urinate and defecate in the river. In this case, the local rabbi would have known that human beings were never in any danger from the *hechizo* because no one was likely to drink from the river. With all this, the play presents the conspirators in an absurd light: they are determined to test the power of the *hechizo* to see if it really killed people, while they know that they could not do the test properly. By showing the conspirators as prepared to kill, at the same time as determined not to kill, Lope makes nonsense of the preparations for depopulating the Peninsula.

It is true that on the level of the natural action the *cripto-judíos* are the instigators of the ritual murder. However, on the level of the supernatural action their

condition of instigators is put in question as they are reduced to nothing more than marionettes. This, the second action, as Blanco says, is ‘sobrenatural, principal y de carácter cómico, protagonizada por un niño *cristiano* que es felizmente agraciado por Dios con el *martirio*’ (para. 9 of 20). This action is initiated and controlled by God: the characters are able to choose their roles, such as who will play Herod or Pilate, but they are not free to reject their essential collective role as instruments in the Passion of Juanico, which had been predestined by God, as will be argued. In contrast to characters in Calderón’s *El gran teatro del mundo*, who are not free to choose their roles but have *libre albedrío*, Juanico and the *cripto-judíos* have no election as regards their essential collective roles or as regards their actions, because the script for this play has already been written by God. The characters in the *auto* are relatively free, while in the *comedia* they are prisoners of predestination. Lida de Malkiel comments on the supernatural character of the action: ‘Todo está inmóvil e irreal [...] en pleno ascenso sobrenatural.’⁵⁵ Farrell also notes that the action is dominated by the power of predestination: ‘El secuestro no es caprichoso, sino parte de un plan divino’ (p. 401). However, neither critic concludes that the Jews could be considered guiltless of any crime. As Juanico himself has the sacred aim of re-enacting Christ’s Passion, the conspirators’s profane aim of representing it with Juanico becomes a sacred event, a *felix culpa*. Like Christ’s death, it is a predestined crime, necessary for salvation. Ironically, the *cripto-judíos* don’t realize that Christ’s death is seen by Christians as a triumph rather than a defeat and that they are performing a rite that marks a point at which, from a Christian perspective, the Jewish religion becomes obsolete. Usually in the *comedia*, when predestination versus free will is an issue, there are statements made about it. However, Lope, instead of making a statement, dramatizes the issue: the public gradually becomes aware of Juanico’s predestined Passion by the frequent comparisons of the boy with

⁵⁵ ‘Lope de Vega y los judíos’, p. 110.

Christ, for example in the scene when he is lost in Toledo like the child Jesus was lost in Jerusalem. This is what Juana says to the Virgin:

Perdístele también,
si vos en Jerusalén,
yo en la Puerta del Perdón. (ll. 1216-18)

In fact it is Juanico himself who, with his seeking of suffering and his answering to the name of 'Cristóbal' (ll. 1574-76), reinforces the *cripto-judíos* idea of staging Christ's Passion. In all this, the power of predestination is such that the conspirators seem to have become marionettes, without a sense of guilt or empathy, whereas in the beginning they were sentient human beings. The miracles of Juanico's mother recovering her sight (ll. 2666-67) and Juanico's ascension to heaven 'en cuerpo y alma' (ll. 2695), the apparitions of Santo Domingo (ll. 86-174) and the three angels (ll. 2056 and 2171), and the allegorical figures of Razón and Entendimiento (l. 2386) complete the supernatural portrait of the Christian action and indicate the absence of free will of the characters. On the fringe of these supernatural events are the Catholic Monarchs, who claim to be part of a divine plan to save Spain from the Jews (ll. 193-97). In all the above, the conspirators could be seen as motivated by self-defence and a desire to revenge themselves only on their persecutors and not as stereotypical Jewish ritual murderers. Their 'crime' could therefore be seen as predestined by a supernatural plan.

5.4.2 THE DRAMATIC INVERSIONS

This positive image of the Jew seems to be reinforced by three inversions: of chronology, of roles, and of images, typical of *engañar con la verdad*, which always produces inversion: what is said is inverted by what is implied. With regard to the inversion of chronology, Blanco says: 'El más importante punto en el cual Lope cambia

la historia en la *comedia* es la inversión de causa y efecto.’⁵⁶ In the ‘history’ the Jews are expelled because of the horrible crime of murdering a Christian child: in the play they have already been expelled and they murder the child in revenge for their expulsion and other reasons. Lope was not the first to make this inversion: Vegas, the physician of Toledo, had already committed, according to Fidel Fita, this chronological error of putting the crime (Juanico’s death) after the punishment (the Jews’s expulsion).⁵⁷ However, this error was corrected in the accounts of Yepes and Ramírez. As these accounts were known to Lope because they were his principal sources, it is difficult not to suspect that he made or kept the inversion deliberately. By putting the crime after the punishment, Lope suggests that the expulsion was unjustified and explains the ‘crime’ of the *cripto-judíos* as the response to an unjustifiable punishment.

In parallel with this inversion of chronology, Lope inverts the positive image of the *cristiano viejo*. It is true that the Frenchman and his family are starving and that necessity drives them to trick the Jews, nevertheless these events could indicate that the Jews are naive and innocent, and the Christians are cunning and greedy, inverting the conventional social perspective on both groups and, with this inversion, once again casting doubt on anti-Semitic prejudices. Lida de Malkiel agrees with this interpretation when she discovers the element of farce in the sins of the ‘noble hidalgo francés convertido en villano socarrón’.⁵⁸ It is also true that the *familiar* has no prior knowledge of the plans the *cripto-judíos* have for Juanico and he only errs by being reluctant to condemn his neighbour without conclusive proof. However, his motivation towards Juanico appears to be malevolence, or at least indifference: knowing that Juanico is habitually abused, he still delivers the child to his ‘uncle’. In this he could be seen as a symbol of the Inquisition (whose representative he is) that delivers innocent Christians

⁵⁶ ‘De Grütnewald a Monty Python’ (para. 11 of 20).

⁵⁷ See Fidel Fita, ‘Memoria del Santo Niño de La Guardia escrita en 1544’, *Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia*, 11 (1887), 134-240 (p. 148).

⁵⁸ ‘Lope de Vega y los judíos’, p. 103. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

to the *brazo secular*. Lida de Malkiel also interprets the scene as a parody of the Inquisition: 'Un insinuante interrogatorio hecho al niño castigado para que deponga contra su padre' (p. 108). In any case, the personal motivations of these *cristiano viejo* characters are incidental seeing that, like the *cripto-judíos*, they are all instruments in the predestined Passion of Juanico. For example, in the role of the *familiar* who delivers Juanico to his murderers, one may recognize the figure of Judas or perhaps Pilate. The miller, who supplies the wood not knowing that it will be used for making the cross for the child, is also an unconscious collaborator in the child's Passion.

The metaphors used by Lope also reveal inversions: Farrell notes that in the play spiritual blindness is exclusively attributed to the Jews. For example, Santo Domingo speaks of their 'ciega infamia' (l. 173) and the *familiar* of their 'antigua ceguedad' (l. 1895). However, this is inverted by Lope: as in *El retablo de las maravillas*, spiritual blindness in the play is attached more to the Christians than to the Jews, because, while the Jews are called blind, some Christian characters, perhaps as a sign of their spiritual blindness, are already blind or going blind. The relationship between spiritual and physical blindness is well attested to in the Old Testament, according to which God punished with physical blindness the inhabitants of Sodom (Genesis 19. 11), the Israelites (Isaiah 29. 9), and the gentiles (Zachariah 12. 4) for their spiritual blindness. In the New Testament, the curing of the blind by Jesus is considered as a sign of the arrival of Messianic times (Matthew 11. 5 and Luke 7. 22). In the play, the blind beggar-woman offers Juanico's mother, Juana, distraught by her child's loss, a special prayer but only for money:

CIEGA	Toda desdischa Que hoy os haya sucedido Se aliviará en siendo dicha. Yo la sé y os la diré.
JUANA	¡Tome y dígala! (ll. 1385-89)

Juana who loses her child for lack of care (l. 1201), goes blind with crying and blindly assumes that Juanico is already dead:

¡Juan, pues os pierdo en la tierra,
hallaros puedo en el cielo! (ll. 1482-83)

Finally, it is noted that King Ferdinand's eyesight is failing, as Íñigo informs the queen:

Con salud su Alteza está,
pero hale dado en los ojos
cierto mal de pesadumbre. (ll. 1655-57)

Although there is no textual evidence for the assumption that this is related to his political errors in establishing the Inquisition and expelling the Jews, the overall framework of the play, which implicitly condemns them, makes such an interpretation not inconsistent. The above inversions of chronology, of the image of the *cristiano viejo*, and of metaphors all appear to question the negative image of the Jew.

5.4.3 THE SUBVERSION OF THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF THE JEW

According to Blanco: 'El resultado de la división y de la inversión es la parodia de la historia.'⁵⁹ Such parody, as I hope to show, has the effect of subverting anti-Semitism. As in *El retablo de las maravillas* and in *El árbol del mejor fruto*, I will discuss this subversion in terms of hyperbole, metadrama, and ambiguity. The hyperbolization of the supernatural action tends to subvert the originally tragic nature of the 'history'. At first, Juanico appears as a normal little boy, but presently he is revealed not only as a would be martyr, but a hyperbolized one, who wishes to die by means of imitating two Roman child-martyrs, Justo and Pastor (l. 597). Juanico later identifies himself not only with Christ, but with the hyperbolized image of the Saviour.

Christ suffers, but Juanico does not, despite receiving, in the text of the play, 5,003 whip-lashes, of which he feels only the last three. Lope opts for the number 'five

⁵⁹ 'De Grünewald a Monty Python' (para. 12 of 20).

thousand', popular in religious songs, poems and prayers celebrating Easter, and still sung in Spain today.⁶⁰ However, he must have known that the 'five thousand' was a ridiculous hyperbolization, because in his *Rimas sacras* he says that Christ received: 'Golpes veintiocho sobre el vientre y pecho y por la sacrosanta espalda ochenta.'⁶¹ In any case, the Ángel in the *comedia* allocates Juanico more blows than Christ had received: 'Diéronte tres más que a Cristo' (l. 2180). What is important is that Juanico appears to enjoy the three blows which he has felt, although he would have liked to have felt all the remaining 5,000: '¡Más venturoso de mí, / y mil veces venturoso / si los cinco mil sintiera!' (ll. 2189-91).

Juanico's hyperbolization reaches the point of subverting his martyrdom. He encourages the torturers by showing no pain, by not crying and by telling them that he is happy:

OCAÑA	Pues, ¿cómo no vas llorando? [...] ¿En qué vas imaginando?
JUANICO	En la gran ventura mía, pues voy a Cristo imitando. (ll. 2317-21)

He facilitates and directs his own death when he shows Benito, who does not seem to know, where his heart is:

JUANICO	¿Qué buscas? [...]
BENITO	Busco, niño, el corazón.
JUANICO	En esotra parte está. [...]
BENITO	Ya le hallé. (ll. 2624-31)

Could *el niño*, who wishes to suffer and to die, be considered a martyr?

Juanico's behaviour does not appear to conform to Catholic orthodoxy, expressed by St

⁶⁰ For Vegas's account, see Fita, pp. 141 and 149. As an example of the popularity of 'five thousand', see José Luis González Escanciano, 'Rosario de la buena muerte', in 'Santa Olaja de la Varga (León): Tradiciones religiosas' <http://www.santaolaja.com/tradiciones_religiosas.htm> [accessed 16 September 2003] (para. 24 of 26). This number also appears in the Third Act of Agustín Moreto's *Santa Rosa del Perú* [1671], ed. by Vern G. Williamsen and James T. Abraham, in *Comedia* <<http://www.coh.arizona.edu/spanish/comedia/moreto/strosa.html>> [accessed 3 August 2003]].

⁶¹ Quoted in Lida de Malkiel, 'Lope de Vega y los judíos', p. 97.

Thomas Aquinas's classic definition of a martyr: 'Moriens [...] propter Deum, est martyr Dei, quia causa [...] martyrii est veritatis fidei [God's martyr is he who dies for God, as the reason for the martyrdom is the truth of the faith].'⁶² A modern definition of a martyr is:

A person who [...] is so firmly convinced of the truths of the Christian religion, that he gladly suffers death rather than deny it. [...] In the course of the first age of the Church, that the term martyr came to be exclusively applied to those who had died for the faith.⁶³

According to Thomist doctrine, 'martyrium oblatum debet tolerari patienter, sed non debet quaeri [Martyrdom has to be patiently endured, but not sought].'⁶⁴ Wanting to be a martyr is a contradiction in terms. Could Juanico's motivation be considered a *causa propria* for martyrdom? At the beginning of the play, encouraged by his father, he is determined to imitate the two child martyrs killed by the Romans for refusing to deny their faith:

PASAMONTES	¿No pasárades la muerte como estos niños, por Dios?
JUANICO	¡Y cómo si la pasara! ¡Ojalá en eso me viera!
PASAMONTES	¿No veis que es la muerte fiera, y por dicha os espantara?
JUANICO	Aquí [en el libro] dice que por Dios es la muerte muy hermosa
PASAMONTES	Es verdad. (ll. 594-600)

Juanico wants to imitate them, but wanting to die, even for one's faith, is not a *causa propria* for martyrdom. His motivation could have been religious masochism in which his father appears to have influenced him. Juanico lacks the essential characteristic of a martyr, which is not wanting to die but suffering death for the truth of the faith, as described by Santo Domingo in his appearance before the queen:

Que un Pedro, de herejes muerto,

⁶² *Summa Theologiae*, V, 202 (II-II, q. 124, 5c).

⁶³ Maurice M. Hassatt, 'Martyr', in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. by Kevin Knight <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09736b.htm>> [accessed 26 January 2003] (para. 2 of 18).

⁶⁴ St Thomas Aquinas, V, 202 (II-II, q. 124, 1 ad 3).

con la sangre que bajaba
de su cabeza, firmó
lo que confesaba el alma. (ll. 122-33)⁶⁵

In the above lines San Pedro, a true martyr, who does not want to die, but suffers death for his faith, is contrasted with Juanico, who wants to die, even if it is for his faith. The essential difference here is between wanting to die and suffering death without wanting to die: the last is martyrdom, the first is not. Wanting to die, even for one's faith, is tantamount to suicide and this the Church always condemned. For example, Bartolomé de Las Casas recalls that for St Augustine wanting to die was contrary to being a true martyr and was to be a delinquent, as were the fourth-century North-African *circumcelliones*, who, 'sin causa se ofrecían a que los matasen paganos, porque fuesen tenidos por mártires.'⁶⁶ The *cripto-judíos* do not kill Juanico because of his faith, but for using his heart in witchcraft, and Juanico wants to die long before anyone could kill him for his faith.

The same test could be applied to Lope's *Lo fingido verdadero* to see how a true martyr is characterized. Ginés, a well known Roman actor, is assigned by the Emperor Diocletian the part of a Christian martyr, which he is expected to play in a manner that mocks the Christians. As he rehearses the role he becomes a sincere convert and goes on to demonstrate his new faith both in the subsequent theatrical performance and in the public place of execution where he is impaled. Yet Juanico, precisely because he wants to be a martyr, ends up not being one, despite dying for his faith. Gines, on the contrary, although at first not taking martyrdom seriously, ends up being a true martyr because he suffers death for his faith. This comparison suggests that Lope was aware of the Church's essential requirement for martyrdom: the fact that he seems not to have

⁶⁵ There have been many martyrs called *Pedro*, but the description in the play points to St Peter of Verona (1206-52), an Inquisitor General, killed by a Manichean heretic called Carino. Before he died, he wrote with his own blood on the ground *credo in Deum*. His martyrdom is celebrated on the 29th of April (see *Enciclopedia Universal Ilustrada Europeo-Americana*, XLII, 1303-04).

⁶⁶ *Obra indigenista*, ed. by José Alcina Franch (Madrid: Alianza, 1985), p. 181.

endowed Juanico with the required characteristic could be seen as the greatest irony in the play.

As part of this hyperbolization of martyrdom, it has already been noted that Juanico not only dies, but goes to heaven 'en cuerpo y alma' (l. 2695). This was a privilege only enjoyed by Christ and the Virgin, according to Catholic orthodoxy: the Virgin Mary 'consiguió, al fin, como corona suprema de sus privilegios, ser conservada inmune de la corrupción de sepulcro y, del mismo modo que antes su Hijo, vencida la muerte, ser levantada en cuerpo y alma a la suprema gloria del cielo'.⁶⁷ The heretodoxy of Juanico's physical ascension may well have been considered by at least a part of Lope's public as a subversive caricature of the mythologized story of *el niño inocente*. All the other elements of this supernatural action (miracles, apparitions, angels, allegorical figures) possess this consistently hyperbolized characteristic and a parodic effect. The parody is exemplified by the following exchange:

FRANCISCO	¡Válgame Dios de Israel!
	¡Tres figuras ha dejado!
PEDRO	¡La sangre lo habrá causado!
FRANCISCO	¡Todos tres son como él!
	[...]
RAZÓN	Tomarle aquel lienzo quiero de las atrevidas manos.
	¡Muestra!
FRANCISCO	¡Toma!
ENTENDIMIENTO	¡Bien has hecho!

(ll. 2522-29)

Here the allegorical figures interact on a mundane level with ordinary human beings, an extraordinary event in Spanish theatre.

Apart from this hyperbolization, the plot has other parodic elements in it. As examples already seen, there are the scenes with the swineherds (l. 807), the deception of the *cripto-judíos* by the French couple (l. 923), and the death of the pigs by means of the witchcraft made with a pig's heart (l. 1051). All these somewhat macabre but

⁶⁷ Denzinger, p. 612.

broadly comic scenes belong to Act I, which begins with a serious historical introduction. These changes from the serious to the comic could be thought to be due to the not uncommon movement in *comedias* from one dramatic level to another, from act to act as well as within acts. However, in this play the serious and the comic do not seem to be disconnected interludes, but integral parts of the plot used to create an atmosphere of farce. As has been pointed out, all the comic scenes set in France suggest that the *cripto-judíos* are simpletons and that their absurd plans cannot be taken seriously.

The second important element in Lope's mockery of anti-Semitism is his use of metadrama: for example, the play the French couple put on to swindle the *cripto-judíos* and the staging by the *cripto-judíos* of Christ's Passion, each of them taking the part of a historical character, such as Pilate, Caiaphas, Judas, and so on. Why has Lope chosen to metadramatize parts of the 'history' and not simply to dramatize it? In *Lo fingido verdadero*, where the play within a play provides the means of Ginés's salvation and a metaphor for the relation between earthly and eternal life, Lope's use of metatheatre seems to fit in well with Hubert's second definition, which refers only to the awareness of making theatre because nothing is being subverted. In *El niño inocente de La Guardia*, however, the play within the play seems to fit in better with Hubert's third definition, as it metadramatizes parts of the 'history' which subverts, indirectly, the negative image of the Jew. The metatheatrical scenes set in France lessen the seriousness of the threat from the *cripto-judíos*, while the scene of Juanico's death tends to undermine the veracity of the inquisitorial trial of Yucé Franco and the other five accused of the murder of a child. If Lope had wanted to attack *conversos*, he need not have used metadrama, he could have simply followed the stories of Ramírez, Yepes, or Vegas without any change. He could also have added other scenes, such as the trial or the punishment of the *cripto-judíos*: there were such episodes in the sources. It is also

possible that with a play within a play Lope was underlining the fictitious nature of the metadramatic scenes as well as of the 'history' of the play.

Lope's last instrument of subversion is ambiguity, seen by Sicroff as a defining factor of the play: 'La crueldad de los judíos y la santidad de Juanico [aparece] de una manera tan equívoca que no todos entenderán la *comedia* de la misma manera.'⁶⁸ The conspirators could be considered as criminals or as instruments of Juanico's saintliness. He adds:

Es difícil aceptar el juicio [...] de que la obra es 'una encendida apología del Santo Oficio' y que, en ella, Lope cumplió con el interés que había 'en mantener vivo el anti-semitismo'. [...] Parece que tal entendimiento de la *comedia* resulta precisamente de confundir lo que se encuentra en sus fuentes con el manejo particular del asunto por Lope. Y me atrevería a conjeturar que Lope debiera haber contado con la confusión de parte de la mayoría de su público para permitirse matizar su obra con insinuaciones que, bien entendidas, no hubieran recibido un aplauso general. (p. 703)

There is further ambiguity regarding Queen Isabel's love for her husband; she seems to prefer attending an *auto de fe* to visiting her husband whose eyesight is failing. Her Christianity is also made ambiguous by her fanaticism, her cruelty, and her hatred of the Jew, as she accuses him: 'La fe y la paz altera' (l. 249). Significantly, the text offers no proof of this accusation, because the supposed murder of Juanico has still not happened. She is rebuked by Santo Domingo himself with a constant law of the Church (*de internis neque Ecclesia*) for her want of Catholic orthodoxy in attempting to institute thought-police methods in Spain:

Pero mira, Isabel noble,
que aunque el Santo Oficio haga
lo que de su parte puede
no juzga la Iglesia santa
de lo que ocultan los pechos. (ll. 162-66)

⁶⁸ 'Notas equívocas en dos dramatizaciones de Lope del problema judaico', p. 703. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

However, she immediately does condemn the intentions of all the Jews, calling them without justification in the text 'enemigo inhumano, gente fiera, tan pertinaz y nociva, impía, basiliscos' (ll. 245-66).

The queen's unchristian behaviour is underlined by Santo Domingo's restraint, paralleled by that of the *familiar* (Santo Domingo announces the Church's rule not to judge people's intentions and the *familiar* practices this rule). It is true that when the queen speaks the words in ll. 245-66 the audience believes that a group of Jews have already murdered the blameless Christian child of La Guardia. However, in this *comedia* the *cripto-judío* conspirators have not yet made their appearance (they first appear in line l. 298). The audience, therefore, could believe either that the queen has fore-knowledge of the coming crime of the Jews or that she is condemning them *a priori*; Lope is probably trying to ridicule both alternatives. It is possible to see this unattractive portrait of the queen as questioning the royal decision to expel the Jews.

There is another ambiguity, this time concerning the identity of the conspirators. Whilst they are called 'Jews', it is clear that Francisco is a Christian, as the dialogue below shows, although not a sincere one:

FAMILIAR	¿Éste va a misa y sermón?
JUANICO	Sí, señor.
FAMILIAR	¿Llévate a ti?
JUANICO	Sí, por cierto, y cuando el padre alguna cosa predica en que a Cristo Santo aplica o su Santísima Madre, me pellizca fuertemente y dice: 'Esto hago con vos porque os acordéis de Dios.' (ll. 1926-34)

According to the chronology of events, the conspirators had to be formally Christians because by this time in the play the expulsion had taken place and there were no Jews as such left in Spain. They are, therefore, *cripto-judíos*. Their speeches in ll. 298-546 repeatedly indicate that they are not sincere Catholics, that they identify closely with Jewish history and religion, that they consider themselves racially as well as religiously

Jewish, and that they regard the Monarchs and the inquisitors as their enemy. However, in the context of the expulsion they naturally felt close to their Jewish origins and there is no reason to think that without the danger and the fear occasioned by the expulsion these men would have thought of resorting to aggression. Violence is explicitly approved in Lope's *Fuente Ovejuna*, *Peribáñez*, and *Los comendadores de Córdoba*, Calderón's wife-murder plays, and so on. In these plays, when justice is denied revenge takes its place. This could be the case, at least from the *cripto-judío* point of view also in *El niño inocente de La Guardia*, in which resort to revenge could possibly be justified. However, if the *cripto-judíos* desire for revenge is implicitly justified, why, as was seen, is the possibility ridiculed that these conspirators could carry out effectively such an act? Perhaps these men were to be seen not only as comic but as tragic as well in their impotence in the face of an oppressive society and a God who has predestined their fall. Significantly, among all these comic and unreal events, the only real and tragic element is the expulsion of the Jews and the fear of the *conversos* for the future. By means of all the above examples of double language and *dissimulatio*, the play insinuates, disguised by explicit anti-Semitism, an implicit sympathy for the *conversos*. In fact, *El niño inocente de La Guardia* is a work to which McKendrick's statement about Lope's work in general could apply with particular force: 'If a play without wilful or artificial misconstruction of the text can be read or performed as subversive, then it presumably possesses a subversive identity even if its traditionally perceived identity is not subversive.'⁶⁹

Given the general identification of the *converso* as Jew at this time, the presentation of a positive image of the biblical and legendary Jew, as was seen, may well have had the effect of defending the contemporary *converso*. On the other hand, given this identification, the presentation of a positive image of the sincere *converso*

⁶⁹ *Playing the King*, p. 213.

would have implied a defence of the Jew. Whilst in some plays Lope presented the problems of the contemporary *conversos* in biblical or legendary contexts, in a few *comedias* he dealt with them directly and in a sympathetic light, as will be seen in the next chapter.

6

THE *CONVERSO* AND THE IMAGE OF THE JEW

Was the Jewish problem really not dramatizable in the Golden Age, as Castro, Bataillon, and Márquez Villanueva maintain?¹ Pamp and Silverman question this view and quote several plays in which the *converso* was dramatized.² Wade remarks on this point:

As regards the *converso* problem, the *comedia* could not tackle this forthrightly as tragic: to make a play's *converso* protagonist a victim of (to him) evil enemies who were of ecclesiastically and governmentally orthodox behaviour was not possible. In the two plays discussed by Gitlitz [*El galán de La Membrilla* and *La pobreza estimada*], Lope went about as far as he could go showing sympathy for

¹ See Castro, '*La Celestina*' como contienda literaria, p. 34, Bataillon, *Varia lección de clásicos españoles*, p. 397, and Francisco Márquez Villanueva, 'The Converso Problem: An Assessment', in *Collected studies in honour of Américo Castro's eightieth year*, ed. by Marcel P. Hornik (Oxford: Lincome Lodge Research Library, 1965), pp. 317-33 (p. 324).

² See Pamp, p. 46 and Joseph H. Silverman, 'Del otro teatro nacional de Lope de Vega: El caso insólito de *El galán escarmentado*', *Hispania*, 67 (1984), 23-27.

the *conversos*. [...] The *converso* problem, as certain scholars have agreed, was, as the saying goes, too hot a potato to handle.³

Significantly, amongst the dramatists known to be of *converso* origin, such as Rojas, Godínez and Enríquez, or of possible *converso* origin like Cervantes and, as will be argued, Lope, only the last faced up to the taboo of dealing directly and sympathetically with the problems of *conversos*. It is worth noting that Cervantes touched on the *morisco* problem in *El coloquio de los perros* and in *Don Quixote*. In the former one dog relates his kind treatment by a *morisco*, but despite this, he and his companion call them *canalla* and *víboras*, and are in favour of their expulsion. In the latter Ricote, returning to Spain illegally after his expulsion, first takes the politically correct line: 'Con justa razón fuimos castigados con la pena del destierro', and makes it clear that he is a loyal Spanish subject who loves his country: 'Doquiera que estamos lloramos por España.'⁴ Nevertheless, he sees no alternative to taking his family to live in Germany where there is religious freedom. Cervantes's sympathy with the expelled *moriscos* is further demonstrated in Sancho's refusal to inform the authorities of Ricote's presence.

Yet, it was only Lope who fully confronted this problem in his *comedias*. According to Pamp, one reason could have been that only he had the popularity to do so: 'Por más impúdico e imprudente que fuera, al menos en un género público como la comedia. Era, en fin, el Fénix, y hacía lo que no se podía' (p. 46). However, there could have been another, more cogent reason for Lope's sympathy for *conversos*, namely that he himself had felt marginalized and discriminated against. As Pamp observes:

Lope tenía tanto afán y tanta preocupación con cuestiones de limpieza de sangre que escribió por lo menos tres obras [*La buena guarda*, *La villana de Getafe*, and *El premio del bien hablar*] contra toda la costumbre de la época, y contra todos los criterios vigentes acerca de la temática viable en la comedia. [...] La sospecha de que Lope tuvo problemas con su propia fama de limpio cobra mayor fundamento. (p. 51)

³ 'Forum', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 35 (1983), 121-28 (p. 124).

⁴ *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, II, 1412 (Chapter 54).

This critic is convincing in her contention that Lope's sympathy for *conversos* would be more understandable in the light of his own possible *converso* origin. As in Rojas's and Godínez's case, studying Lope's life in its socio-historical context could be equally helpful to understand his work. Therefore, in this chapter I propose to examine Lope's origins and life, followed by analyses of the six *comedias* in which he deals explicitly with the problems of *conversos*. These are *El galán escarmentado* (1588-98), *La pobreza estimada* (1597-1603), *El galán de La Membrilla* (1615), *El premio del bien hablar* (1624-25) and *El Brasil restituido* (1625): in all the above Lope presents *conversos* as protagonists. *La villana de Getafe* (1610-14) will be treated as a special case, as it deals with racial prejudice in general. I will argue that all the *comedias* analysed here (except *La villana de Getafe*, in which the protagonist is a *cristiano viejo*) may be seen as presenting a positive image of the Jew against Lope's autobiographical background. *La villana de Getafe*, *El galán de La Membrilla*, and *El premio del bien hablar* deal with individual situations which, due to their similarity to events in Lope's life, make these plays interesting in literary as well as in biographical terms. However, in *El galán escarmentado*, *El Brasil restituido*, and *La pobreza estimada* Lope distances himself from his personal circumstances to examine the common problems of the *converso* as well as general principles of justice, making these three plays of universal interest. This is the reason for allocating more space to them than to the first three. I will begin with the enquiry into Lope's origins and life.

6.1 LOPE, A *CONVERSO*?

Although biographical details about Lope are incomplete, many Hispanists have accepted Lope's claim to *cristiano viejo* status: Américo Castro's and Hugo A. Rennert's biography does not mention the possibility that Lope may have been of *converso* origin, despite the fact that his family's history is full of uncertainties, ambiguities, accusations, evasions, and a desperate search for a *cristiano viejo* and noble origin.⁵ I would argue that in the absence of adequate biographical information it may not be unreasonable to consider the possibility of Lope being of *converso* ancestry. However, even a conjecture of this nature may arouse resistance, as Gilman observes regarding Rojas's antecedents: 'The Jewish origin of many important Spaniards of the past are [*sic*] first of all denied (in the case of Rojas, as recently as 1967); and then, if the denial cannot stand up in the face of evidence, they are ignored.'⁶ The second difficulty is that the nature of this hypothesis militates against the prospect of arriving at a conclusive proof, because the most important thing in the life of a descendant of a *converso* was precisely to erase any proof of such origins, as well as to manufacture proofs of *cristiano viejo* descent. The life of Fernando de Rojas and of his grandson are examples of this. Thus, Gilman notes:

Most of the documents relating to him [...] were those collected and preserved in family archives by his grandson of the same name, the Licenciate Fernando de Rojas. These archives, miraculously preserved and now in the possession of Rojas' direct descendant, don Fernando del Valle Lersundi, were accumulated in response to two fundamental interests, neither of them literary or sentimental; their catalogue indicates the exclusive conservation, first, of financial and legal records and, second, of what are called therein 'papeles de nobleza'. Even though the grandson, like many others among Rojas' descendants, on occasion refers proudly to his grandfather's authorship of *La Celestina*, he discarded whatever paper might have been related to it. [...] The profession of the Licenciate Fernando [as a lawyer of the Royal Chancery in Valladolid] fully

⁵ *Vida de Lope de Vega (1562-1635)* (Salamanca: Anaya, 1969).

⁶ *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, p. 27. The next reference to this work is given after quotations in the text.

justifies the observation of Marcel Bataillon: 'The burning desire to be an old Christian has falsified many things about Spanish history.' (pp. 30-32)

The difficulty of verifying such a hypothesis is also appreciated by Dixon, when he says: 'I didn't refer to the possibility of Lope having had *morisco-converso* antecedents because I think even less has been said about that than about possible *judeo-converso* ones. I don't suppose the question will ever be settled.'⁷ Thus, Lope's *cristiano nuevo* status is not likely to be conclusively proved, but the attempt to test the hypothesis could nevertheless be of heuristic value.

Although his *cristiano viejo* status has mostly been taken for granted, the hypothesis of his *converso* origin has already been suggested by a few Hispanists. As was seen, Pamp has questioned Lope's *limpieza de sangre*, concluding that 'Lope sufría por la infamación de la limpieza de su sangre, situación angustiosa que se refleja en su obra y hasta cierto punto la configura' (p. 46). Zuckerman-Ingber also notes:

Lope himself, therefore, may very well have experienced personally the problems of those whose racial reputation was questioned. This is certainly suggested by Juan Pérez de Montalbán, who in his *Fama póstuma* writes of Lope's lifelong persecution by all kinds of testimonios. Lope's reaction to one such accusation has been well documented by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas. In addition to the literary satire against Lope in Pedro de Torres Rámila's *Spongia*, Torres Rámila also alleged that Lope was of *converso* origin. Lope, in the two satires contained in his *Expostulatio Spongiae*, responded in kind, making numerous damaging allusions to the origins of his antagonist. [...] The picture of Lope that emerges from this episode [...] is that of a man aware of the dangers in even the most frivolous kind of accusations. [...] In Golden-Age Spain, the fact that such a suggestion was even made would be enough to provoke fear, for it was more a question of rumor than of proven fact. In both his life and his art, Lope [...] had to tread cautiously.⁸

However, it was Kossoff who was the first advocate of the hypothesis that Lope was of *converso* origin:

⁷ A personal letter dated 13 June 2001.

⁸ 'El bien más alto', pp. 173-74. This author refers to the following study by Joaquín de Entrambasaguas: 'Una guerra literaria del Siglo de Oro: Lope de Vega y los preceptistas aristotélicos', in *Estudios sobre Lope de Vega*, 3 vols (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1946-1958), II, 7-411. *Expostulatio Spongiae* was written by a friend of Lope's, Alfonso Sánchez, and not by Lope himself as this author seems to suggest.

Los conversos, que eran casi enteramente urbanos y en muy gran parte burgueses constituían, por encima de un tercio de la población urbana y la gran mayoría de la burguesía sin duda alguna [...]; don Julio Caro Baroja [...] se declaró de acuerdo y calculaba que los cristianos nuevos llegaron a 80% de la burguesía 'mínimo'. Eran comerciantes, gente de banca, de industria, administradores de propiedades, oficiales del gobierno, intelectuales, clérigos, abogados, escribanos, médicos y oficiales de alta artesanía como orfebres, plateros, etc. y también músicos y escritores. [...] No debe sorprender, entonces, que la mayoría de los escritores de los siglos XVI y XVII son hijos de burgueses. Pocos no lo son. Por consiguiente, en vista del alto grado de identidad de la burguesía y los conversos, le pregunté al Señor Caro si no era más razonable considerar a cualquier autor burgués del Siglo de Oro como converso a menos que no hubiera fuertes indicaciones de lo contrario. Otra vez se declaró de acuerdo. [...] Volvamos ahora a Lope. Su padre era bordador y la familia movediza, característica bastante corriente entre los cristianos nuevos, que querían escaparse de los obstáculos que limitaban la vida a esa casta. Lope, como es notorio, decía mentiras sobre su ilustre sangre y los contemporáneos se mofaban de él por eso. [...] El gran dramaturgo [...] escribe *El perro del hortelano* cuyo desenlace depende de una estratagema típica de los conversos: se inventó una genealogía para permitir a un hombre sin historia alguna entroncarse con la de una familia noble. [...] Así se puede explicar esa ambivalencia que María Rosa Lida encontró en el Fénix cuando trataba el tema de judíos y conversos.⁹

The references to 'urban nature', to 'professions', and to Lida de Malkiel show that by 'conversos' Kossoff had in mind *judeo-conversos* and not *morisco-conversos*.

Castro, Gilman, Márquez Villanueva, and Caro Baroja, as was seen, have described the typical *converso* strategy of falsifying and inventing genealogies, but its application to Lope was first mooted by Kossoff, whose suggestions in this respect are persuasive. Following Kossoff's opinion, Wade also maintains that 'Lope may have been of *converso* ancestry' (p. 123). Finally, Blanco sums up the main points that support the hypothesis of Lope's *converso* origin:

Lope se inventó su vida, su escuela y su liturgia. Unos orígenes más que oscuros; una Montaña demasiado simbólica; un apellido curiosamente sonoro; un padre emigrante, artesano, culto, relacionado con la medicina y obligado a probar su limpieza; un barrio natal de comerciantes; una educación jesuítica, en la que no regían los estatutos de sangre; unos amplios conocimientos bíblicos, cabalísticos y astrológicos; una vida burguesa dedicada a las letras; una perfecta gestión editorial-mercantil; un feminismo sorprendente; un anticlasismo burlesco;

⁹ 'Fuentes de *El perro del hortelano* y una teoría de la España del Siglo de Oro', in *Estudios sobre literatura y arte dedicados al profesor Emilio Orozco Díaz*, ed. by Antonio Gallego Morell, 3 vols (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1979), II, 209-13 (pp. 212-13). Pedraza Jiménez cites Kossoff's and Pamp's opinion about Lope's *converso* origin without accepting or rejecting them (*Lope de Vega* (Barcelona: Teide, 1990), p. 6).

un pro-indigenismo casi lascasista; un lusitanismo declarado cuando un portugués era poco menos que un judaizante; una ausencia completa de sátira y ataques siempre oblicuos a la nobleza, al clero, a los inquisidores y a los dramaturgos que sólo parecen escribir como él; una vida amorosa enteramente transgresora sin el menor rastro de culpa; un sacerdocio típico del alumbrado; un eterno medrar y adular hasta el servilismo y la hipérbole grotesco-herética; una no menos eterna frustración ante el poder; una auténtica reunión de conversos probados acompañándolo en su muerte.¹⁰

I shall now look at some of the arguments regarding this hypothesis: first, at some details of his antecedents and his life, such as the particulars of his parents, of his friends, of his connection with the Inquisition, his letters and his possible appearance as a character in *La buena guarda*. Later, I will examine his sympathy for sincere *conversos*.

The *Fama póstuma*, written by Juan Pérez de Montalbán, an intimate friend of Lope and a well known *converso*, is a homage to the Phoenix and contains a great deal of information on Lope's life. But what stands out is the virtual absence of information about the origin of his family: the only data available is that, according to Pamp, 'su pariente Luis Rosicler, un bordador francés, fue perseguido por el Santo Oficio por ocuparse de astrología' (p. 23) and that his father, Félix de Vega, was also a *bordador* (a common *converso* trade) and an *hidalgo de ejecutoria*.¹¹ However, such a title of nobility could be bought and was usually taken to be an indication that the bearer was not *limpio*. For example, in Lope's *San Pedro de Alcalá* (1613) the *Alcalde primero* insinuates that *hidalgos* buy their titles:

¿Qué pensáis que es ser hidalgo?
Tener el hombre dineros
y algún oficio importante. (p. 515)

Apart from this, the dialogue between the *Regidores* and the *hidalgo* suggests that the inhabitants of Alcalá despised *hidalgos de ejecutoria* as *no limpios*:

¹⁰ 'El Arte Nuevo' (para. 29 of 51).

¹¹ See Juan Pérez de Montalbán, *Fama póstuma a la vida y muerte del doctor Frey Lope Félix de Vega Carpio*, in *Obras escogidas de Lope de Vega*, ed. by Federico Carlos Sainz de Robles, 3 vols (Madrid: Aguilar, 1962), II, 1515-26.

inventing ancient family trees, Lope claimed descent, as will be seen, from the famous Bernardo del Carpio, whose existence, according to Thomas E. Case, was mythical:

Today we know that his [Bernardo del Carpio's] existence was totally legendary, but in Lope's time he was considered to be historical. In a sense Bernardo is a second Cid. He is also dear to Lope, who was to be ridiculed by his contemporaries for his pretensions to be a descendant of the hero and for having placed the nineteen castles Bernardo del Carpio reportedly conquered on his personal coat of arms. Recent scholarship on Lope de Vega's uncle, the Inquisitor Miguel del Carpio, by Ricardo Espinosa Maeso, has concluded, as did some of Lope's contemporary literary enemies, that his claims of having origins that went all the way back to Bernardo del Carpio were absurd. (pp. 47-48)

If Lope had had a true *cristiano viejo* and noble descent he would not have had the need to invent a false genealogy. While some *cristianos viejos* sought to establish noble origins and some nobles wished for *cristiano viejo* status, Lope tried to acquire both. His claim to be descended from Bernardo del Carpio suggests that he was looking for a nobility so ancient that its *limpieza de sangre* could not be the subject of inquiry: a more recent nobility could have been suspected as purchased, like the nobility of many *conversos*. However, the falsehood was so hyperbolical that Lope's contemporaries made fun of him perhaps not so much for his pretensions to descent from Bernardo del Carpio, but for his even more absurd invention of a coat of arms with nineteen towers. Luis de Góngora, indeed, was amused by Lope's obsessive desire to grow for himself a noble and *cristiano viejo* family tree:

Por tu vida, Lopillo, que me borres
las diez y nueve torres del escudo,
porque, aunque todas son de viento,
dudo que tengas viento para tantas torres.
¡Válgante los de Arcadia! ¿No te corres
armar de un pavés noble a un pastor rudo?
¡Oh, tronco de Micol, Nabal barbudo!
¡Oh brazos Leganeses y Vinorres!
No le dejéis en el blasón almena.
Vuelva a su oficio y al rocín alado
en el teatro sáquele los reznos.
No fabrique más torres sobre arena
si no es que ya, segunda vez casado,

nos quiere hacer torres los torreznos.¹⁵

Góngora not only mocks Lope's obsession with nobility but refers clearly to Lope's Jewish origin with the allusions to Micol, Nabal, and 'torreznos'. Significantly, Lope stopped using this coat of arms around 1610.¹⁶

If it is reasonable to suggest that a man may be known by his friends, then Lope's friendships provide interesting information. Caro Baroja notes: 'Lope tenía en su derredor un coro de admiradores y discípulos de origen judío o francamente judaizantes. [...] Vivía en estrecha amistad con médicos portugueses de esta estirpe.'¹⁷ An important example is the Duke of Sessa, whom Wade sees as 'probably a *converso* in ancestry' (p. 123). The Portuguese writer Manuel de Faria e Sousa, probably of *converso* origin, was also a close friend of the Phoenix. He wrote a sonnet in praise of Lope, where, in the tradition of Cartagena, he eulogizes people of mixed origin for their sincere Christian faith: 'Fidelissimo a Siglos mas futuros, / de Iudea, i de Espana el pueblo misto.'¹⁸ Lope's funeral, described by Menéndez Onrubia, is also a revealing event:

Es Godínez el que se encarga de componer y pronunciar la extensa oración fúnebre de las exequias del Fénix (1635). [...] Además de dedicar una primera parte a alabanzas a personajes del Antiguo Testamento (que indirectamente se proyectan hiperbólicamente en Lope), no sale en su segunda de repetir los tópicos creados en torno al Fénix. (pp. 34-35)

The already mentioned *Oración* by Godínez is a part of the *Fama póstuma* by Pérez de Montalbán. Both writers were not only well-known *conversos*, but, as was seen before, both had been condemned by the Inquisition for judaizing. Menéndez y Pelayo

¹⁵ 'Leganeses y Vinorres' refers to 'dos locos en Madrid, llamados el uno Juan de Leganés y el otro Vinorre, que andaban tirando cantos por las calles'. 'Segunda vez casado' and 'torreznos' is a 'juego de palabras aludiendo al oficio del padre de la mujer, torreznero. Se trata de la segunda mujer de Lope, Juana de Guardo' (John Beverley, 'Nota' on Luis de Góngora, *Soledades*, ed. by John Beverley (Madrid: Cátedra, 1982), p. 261). Apart from its ironic reference to Lope's possible *converso* status, would also refer to bacon being sold in the victualler's shop; 'Nabal' was thought to refer to 'nabo' (turnip), and 'Micol', to 'mi col'.

¹⁶ See Daniel L. Heiple, 'Political Posturing of the Jewish Question by Lope de Vega and Faria e Sousa', *Hispanic Review*, 62 (1994), 217-34 (p. 227).

¹⁷ *Inquisición, brujería y criptojudaismo*, p. 68.

¹⁸ See Heiple, p. 230-31.

recognizes the intimate connection between Godínez and Lope in what he calls the 'judaizing' elements in some of Lope's *comedias* which match those of Godínez. He cites *La corona derribada y vara de Moisés* and at the end of his essay he writes:

¿Y es realmente de Lope esta comedia? [...] Puede parecer [...] obra de un discípulo aventajado; [...] llama la atención el espíritu judaico que toda la pieza respira, la ausencia de toda alusión cristiana, la delectación con que el autor insiste en los pormenores rituales de la circuncisión, [...] calculados de intento para exaltar la arrogancia del pueblo proscrito. [...] Infiero de aquí que la comedia es de un judaizante o, por lo menos, de un cristiano nuevo. Quién puede ser este: [...] únicamente el doctor Felipe Godínez. (I, 210-11)¹⁹

Significantly, as was seen, this critic characterizes Lope's *La hermosa Ester* and *David perseguido y montes de Gelboé* as having the same 'espíritu judaico' as *La corona derribada y vara de Moisés*.

In regard to the above, one may wonder how Lope, being a nephew of the Inquisitor of Seville and being a *Familiar* of the Inquisition, could feel and show sympathy for Jews? These two facts are the corner-stones for the belief that Lope was not only of *cristiano viejo* origin, but an anti-Semite. However, according to Castro, being an inquisitor is more indicative of being of *converso* origin than of being *cristiano viejo*:

Un modo de reaccionar contra la propia mancha era echársela en cara a los igualmente manchados – de ahí que muchos conversos ingresaran en la orden dominicana y de allá ascendieran al rango supremo entre ellos, el de inquisidores.²⁰

Caro Baroja cites Tomás de Torquemada, Alonso Manrique, and Diego de Deza as Inquisitors General of *converso* origin.²¹ Kamen even denies that being a *familiar* was a sign of having been accepted as a *cristiano viejo*: 'In the Inquisition itself, the rules [of *limpieza de sangre*] were often disregarded. In the late sixteenth century *familiares* were often (cases are documented in Murcia and Barcelona) appointed without any proofs at

¹⁹ This play has been generally ascribed to Lope, but, according to S. Griswold Morley and Courtney Bruerton, it is of uncertain authorship (see *Cronología de las comedias de Lope de Vega*, trans. by María Rosa Cartes (Madrid: Gredos, 1968), p. 412).

²⁰ *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles*, p. 193.

²¹ See *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 313.

all' (p. 240). Zuckerman-Ingber says that being a *familiar* 'was, however, a lesser honour than acceptance into one of the military Orders'. Lope was eventually awarded an *hábito de San Juan* and ~~(she proceeds to quote)~~ Bataillon) ^{ZUCKERMAN-INGBER QUOTES BATAILLON ON THE ISSUE OF SUCH AWARDS:}

Sólo en 1627 pudo Lope anteponerse el decorativo *frej* al recibir del Papa la Cruz de San Juan. Es verosímil que en épocas anteriores, y tal vez aún después de ordenarse, haya sentido el prurito de conseguir un 'hábito' español de Santiago o Calatrava. Si no lo consiguió, fue sin duda porque las pruebas de limpieza tropezaron con algún testimonio adverso a la hidalguía del linaje paterno. (pp. 173-74)

More direct witnesses are Lope's letters addressed to the Duke of Sessa, examined by Blanco, who underlines Lope's characteristic fear of *opinión* and his need to appear as champion of the status quo. Blanco sees this fear and the cautious behaviour, the humbling oneself, as the typical self-defence of a *converso*. The same characteristics may be recognized in the works of Maimonides, Cartagena, Rojas, as well as some *alumbrados* and *erasmistas*. Here is a quotation from a letter, which was written as an attempt to persuade Sessa to pretend to be Olivares's supporter and friend:

La mayor discreción es hacerse de los enemigos amigos y humillarse como el caldero al pozo para sacar el agua. La comparación es de San Bernardo, hablando de la humildad: *Humilitas gratiam haurit, sicut vas inclinatum* [Humility receives favours, bending down like a cup turned to receive liquid]. ¡Ah, señor! Gran cosa es no perder lo que importa por temas que no importan, que no han de pasar todos adelante y quedarse atrás quien es mejor que todos. (*Carta* 146, 284)

Gilman notes that the technique of 'humillarse' was necessarily used in Rojas's time by many *conversos* as self-defence, and the need for this had not changed by Lope's time, owing to the recrudescence of the Jewish problem in the early part of the seventeenth century, as was seen Chapter 1:

The need for self-erasure was intense [...] mimicking Christian behaviour to apparent perfection'; it was important for the *converso* to immerse himself 'in the point of view of the collectivity, of the watchers surrounding him. Suspected by everybody, the *conversos* lived in a world in which no human relationship could be counted on, in which a single unpremeditated sentence could bring unbearable torture. [...] It was a world in which one had constantly to observe oneself from an alien point of view, that of the watchers from without. It was a world of simulation and camouflage. [...] Against this bureaucratic monster, against the infinite number of amateur and professional eyes and ears which

served as its organs of sense, the individual *converso*'s only defence was to wear at all times his frail [...] armour of conformity [...] within which he might hope to live unnoticed.²²

There is evidence in Lope's letters, as was seen above, that his thinking was at times typically *converso*, but in *La buena guarda* Lope could have written something more revealing about his possible *converso* origin. Félix, the *mayordomo* of the convent where Doña Clara de Lara is *abadesa*, is in love with her and threatens to die if she refuses his advances. Eventually, she is persuaded to elope with him. They live together for three years, when Félix leaves her because she always wears an *escapulario*. Félix recounts to Carrizo, his servant, Doña Clara's explanation of wearing the 'habitillo pequeño':

¿Qué te espanta?
Que como el primer esposo
me dio, Félix, estas armas,
y nunca el amor primero
de todo punto se acaba,
así estimo aquestas prendas,
porque estas son las del alma,
como las tuyas del cuerpo.

In the same speech Félix confides in Carrizo that he feels guilty of having seduced the innocent young nun who, like all nuns, believed herself to be married to Christ:

Dormí mal aquella noche,
imaginando la espada
de Cristo sobre mi cuello,
del adulterio en venganza.²³

Eventually, by means of a miracle, Doña Clara returns to her convent and Félix repents:

Que sin entrar en mi casa,
iré a confesar mis culpas,
y a que en una jerga parda
se envuelva este triste cuerpo. (p. 125)

What is important in this story as regards Lope's origin is the possibility that Félix, like Belardo the gardener in several *comedias* by Lope, may be, as was suggested

²² *The Spain of Fernando de Rojas*, pp. 98-106.

²³ Lope de Vega, *La buena guarda*, ed. by Pilar Díez y Giménez Castellanos (Madrid: Clásicos Ebro, 1964), p. 89.

before, a transposition of the author. This possibility is accepted by some critics. Pilar Díez y Giménez Castellanos says: 'El mayordomo se llama Félix, nombre revelador porque es el mismo de Lope, que no rehuía ponerse a sí mismo en escena. Como Lope, su homónimo, es vehemente, apasionado, supersticioso y versátil' (p. 13). Jaime Blume is of the same opinion:

Queda así configurado un perfil de acusados rasgos, que afectan tanto al tenorio como al dramaturgo. Juventud, nobleza, posición desahogada y servicio en el convento en calidad de mayordomo son trazos que definen el exterior de Félix. Piel adentro, la pugna entre un profundo sentimiento religioso y la pasión morbosa que explota y avasalla todo a su paso son polos que se atraen y repelen, dejándonos la imagen de un ser atormentado por sentimientos contrarios. La conversión final y la vida penitente coronan un cuadro de vivísimas luces, hijas ciertamente del oficio dramático de Lope, pero sobre todo de una experiencia vital como la suya, que corre por idénticos cauces.²⁴

The parallels between Félix's and Lope's behaviour are striking. In 1593 Lope met his new lover, Micaela Luján, a beautiful married woman, with whom he maintained a relationship for fifteen years and who bore him five children. Despite this, in 1598 Lope married Juana de Guardo, daughter of a rich butcher, but it was only in 1608 that he broke off his affair with Micaela Luján and began to write religious poems that express his repentance for living in adultery. These parallels between Lope and Félix are witnesses to the likelihood of Félix being a transposition of Lope, but what is of paramount importance in the question of Lope's origin is what Doña Clara feels after she is abandoned by Félix:

¡Ay, miserable de mí,
perdida y en tierra extraña,
sola, sin Félix... ¿Qué digo?
Sin Félix no fuera nada;
mejor dijera sin Dios,
a quien he vuelto la cara,
y sin mi querido Esposo,
a quien rompí la palabra.

²⁴ 'De la monia que sse foi do moesteiro: *Memoria Feroz de una Leyenda*', *Cuadernos de la Facultad de Historia, Geografía y Letras* (Ñuñoa, Chile: Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación - Centro de Informaciones Pedagógicas), 33 (2000) <http://www.umce.cl/~cipumce/cuadernos/facultad_de_historia/monografias_tematicas/cuaderno_33/memoria_feroz_lope_vega.htm> [accessed 20 September 2003] (para. 51 of 81).

Dofia Clara is not being spiteful as a woman scorned, but speaks the truth as a sincere repentant when, in the same monologue, she says of Félix:

Engañóme la esperanza:
púsela en un hombre vil,
baja sangre, oscura casta. (p. 90)

‘Baja sangre, oscura casta’ refers to Félix’s and therefore possibly to Lope’s racial origin and raises doubts about Félix’s and Lope’s *cristiano viejo* status. Is it possible that in a penitential mood about his affair with Micaela Luján, Lope may have wanted to confess publicly, although indirectly, an even greater sin – that of being of ‘baja sangre, oscura casta’?

Lope’s possible *converso* descent could perhaps shed some light, as was seen, on his sympathy for biblical and historical Jew, even for *cripto-judíos*; as will be seen presently, he had sympathy also for the *converso*, in whose sincerity as a Christian Lope may well have believed. To render Lope’s sympathy for the above more verisimilar, it may be useful to recall that Lope did not ignore the plight of other marginalized groups, as was mentioned in Chapter 4. He extends his sympathy for Jews in his *comedias* to other marginalized groups as well and in this he resembles other writers of confirmed or possible *converso* origin: Rojas in *La Celestina*; Cervantes in several of his *Novelas ejemplares*, especially *El coloquio de los perros*, and in his *entremés* *El rufián viudo*; Mateo Alemán in his picaresque novel, *Guzmán de Alfarache*, and Enríquez in his *El valiente Campuzano*. Lope also shared his sympathy for Negroes (for example, in *El santo negro Rosambuco*) and for Indians (for example, in *El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*) with Las Casas in all his polemics.²⁵ These works present a positive image of the marginalized and, in parallel, a negative one of many Spanish characters as greedy exploiters and oppressors. Presenting Rosambuco as a saint, Lope clearly attributes virtue to Negroes, thus undermining the theory of some Spanish

²⁵ For Las Casas’s *converso* origins, see Américo Castro, *Cervantes y los casticismos españoles* (Madrid: Alianza, 1974), pp. 190-227: ‘Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas o Casaus’.

Aristotelians such as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, according to which certain races, such as Negroes, were inferior, incapable of virtue and therefore destined to be slaves.

Regarding Indians, Lewis Hanke writes:

The majority of the Spaniards [...] tended to look upon the natives as “noble Indians” or as “dirty dogs”. Las Casas may be taken as an extreme example of the “noble indian” group. [...] Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, official historian and sworn foe of Las Casas, was one the most prominent among the rival school.²⁶

According to Oleh Mazur, Lope allies himself with Las Casas and attributes to the Indians in the *comedias* already cited (and in many others) the possession of ‘natural light’, that is, rationality and the capacity for salvation, thus maintaining the equality of the Indians.²⁷

Lope’s sympathy for the sincere *converso* is consistent with his sympathy for Negroes, Indians, and other marginalized groups. In his *Sentimientos a los agravios de Cristo Nuestro Bien por la nación hebrea*, Lope shows awareness of the marginalization of this group, despite the fact that many were sincere Christians:

Bien es verdad que a muchos [judíos] que ha tocado
el corazón Espíritu Divino
prosигuen el camino
Católico sagrado.²⁸

Raquel’s dying words in *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo* confirm this sympathy, which is also recognized by Caro Baroja:

Lope de Vega reconocía en unos versos antisemitas que en España había mucha gente de origen judío que se había incorporado de lleno al Cristianismo. Y esto era decir mucho en ocasión como la que tomó para escribir sus lamentos contra los judíos.²⁹

²⁶ *The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), p. 11.

²⁷ ‘Lope de Vega’s “Salvajes”, “Indios” and “Bárbaros”’, *Ibero-Romania*, 4 (1970) 260-81 (p. 281).

²⁸ *Obras sueltas de Lope de Vega*, ed. by Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch (Madrid: Rivadeneyra, 1884), pp. 359-63; see also Joaquín de Entrambasaguas, ‘Un código de Lope de Vega autógrafa y desconocido’, *Revista de Literatura*, 38 (1970), 5-117

²⁹ *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 293.

This says not only 'mucho', it says all that could be said in favour of the Jews. Since in the popular mind *conversos* were identified as Jews, showing sincere Jewish converts as good people implied that Jews in general could be good, which was precisely what Cartagena, St ^{IGNATIUS} ~~Ignacio~~ of Loyola and many other Christians affirmed, and Golden-Age racism denied. However, Lope has not shown sympathy for sincere *conversos* only in his *Sentimientos*: he has written six *comedias* (three with autobiographical elements) in which he presents a progressively more positive image of the *converso* and therefore, as will be shown, of the Jew.

6.2 SIX CONVERSO COMEDIAS OF LOPE

6.2.1 LA VILLANA DE GETAFE

The autobiographical element in this play refers to Don Félix, who, like Lope, is pursued by a jilted lover and is accused of not being a *cristiano viejo*. Pamp says that in his letters 'Lope alude claramente a esta persecución por lo menos seis veces' (p. 69). However, the accusation in *La villana de Getafe* is completely false.³⁰ Here the victim is a *cristiano viejo* but called and accused of being a *morisco*, a circumstance likely to have a connection with the impending expulsion of the *moriscos* (1609-14), which corresponds exactly with the probable dates of the composition of the play. Although the tone is light comedy rather than dark satire, the play could be read as an exposé of social snobbery, opportunistic materialism, and *limpieza de sangre* (the last being topical at the time, owing to Philip III's plan to expel the *moriscos*) and it effectively focuses these social themes. Within this context, the play questions prejudice itself and a society that ignores every vice in a man provided he is of the right race and class.

³⁰ Lope de Vega, *La villana de Getafe*, ed. by José María Díez Borque (Madrid: Orígenes, 1990).

The plot follows the scheme of a love triangle between Don Félix, Don Pedro, and Doña Ana. Don Félix de Carpio leaves his fiancée Doña Ana in Madrid to work in Seville for an *indiano*. On his way there he stops in Getafe, where he tries to seduce Inés, a poor *labrador*'s daughter, with a promise of marriage. While Inés is madly in love with Don Félix, she is under no illusions about his intentions towards her, as she makes it clear: 'Bien pensaba el cortesano engañarme' (l. 1149) and 'todo debió de ser [...] fingido amor' (l. 1163). Sixteen months later, Don Félix returns to Madrid to marry Doña Ana. Inés hears of this and decides to thwart the marriage. She takes on the job of servant to Doña Ana and sends her an anonymous letter 'revealing' Don Félix's *morisco* origins. Ana's father, reading the letter, takes the typical *cristiano viejo* attitude: 'Mudemos de pensamiento' (l. 2055). Doña Ana and her household also reject Don Félix. Having lost Ana, Don Félix publicly restores his damaged reputation and is about to marry Doña Elena, but is once again prevented by Inés, this time in male disguise, playing the part of Doña Elena's cousin from the Indies to whom she became engaged a long time ago. Doña Elena falls in love with Don Juan/Inés and breaks her engagement to Don Félix. In a final confrontation with Inés, Don Félix admits that he cannot marry her due to their unequal social position and her poverty. Inés persuades him that her *labrador* father is really an *hidalgo* and that she has just received a dowry of 40,000 gold ducats from an uncle in Lima. Hearing this, Don Félix promises, in front of all the characters involved, to marry her. He cannot change his mind when he finds out that she had lied and that she is neither noble nor rich, and he admits: 'Corrido estoy'.

Márquez Villanueva asks: '¿Estaremos pues ante un Lope disidente en un punto tan crucial como es la crítica y rechazo de la limpieza de sangre?'. This critic's answer is an 'enfática negativa':

El blanco moral de Lope es así, muy claramente, el vicio de la murmuración y no el concepto ni las prácticas de la limpieza de sangre. Lejos de comprometer

de algún modo el sistema, lo respalda de arriba abajo, mostrando su necesidad y la justicia eficaz de sus procedimientos.³¹

I would argue that the play is not about the tribulations of an innocent victim of *murmuración* and lies, which formed the target of Erasmus's attack in his *Lingua*. It is true that Don Félix is a *cristiano viejo*, but, taken temporarily for *morisco-converso*, his behaviour could and did lead *cristianos viejos* in the play to believe that he was a Moor or a Jew. His overheated libido is reminiscent of many Moorish characters in Golden-Age literature, whilst the *codicia* which causes him to choose Inés over Ana is more commonly taken to be a Jewish characteristic, as Doña Ana herself recognizes at the ironic happy ending of the play:

Don Félix, arrogante,
por codicia del dinero,
con demostraciones tales
se ha desposado con ella. (ll. 3391-94)

Pamp goes further and suggests that Don Félix's Moorish blood may well be a transposition of Jewish blood, justified by the assumption that the *morisco* was more acceptable to Spanish Christian society than the Jew and that therefore his rejection will appear more unjust (p. 46).³² Everyone in Urbano's household rejects Don Félix when they think he is a *morisco*, but, despite all his vices, they accept him when they learn that he is a *cristiano viejo*. It is in this way that the play questions a social system that ignored a man's vices as long as he was *cristiano viejo* and ignored a man's virtues when he was a *cristiano nuevo*.

The determining factor of this system of social valoration was, as mentioned before, *limpieza de sangre*. This valoration is questioned by means of ridicule. When accused of being of *morisco* descent, the *gracioso* Lope does not defend himself by

³¹ 'Lope, infamado de morisco: *La villana de Getafe*', in *Lope: Vida y valores* (Río Piedras: Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1988), pp. 302-35 (pp. 304-06).

³² María Soledad Carrasco-Urgoiti shares Pamp's opinion (see '*De buen moro, buen cristiano: Notas sobre una comedia de Felipe Godínez*', *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, 30 (1981), 546-73 (p. 550)).

denying it: he hyperbolizes and satirizes the symbols of *limpieza de sangre*, such as bacon, pigs, the Cid, and even the clergy. For example, as Jews and Moors do not eat pork, pigs are a symbol of *limpieza*, but the *gracioso* distorts this by the hyperbole of declaring himself the father of all pigs:

Yo he sido
el que el tocino inventé;
yo los puercos engendré,
mía la invención ha sido. (ll. 2156-59)

There are two other examples of this technique: 'Pues vive Dios que desciendo / de un estornudo del Cid' (ll. 2238-39) and 'hijo soy de un arcipreste, / muy católico y fiel' (ll. 2482-83). With the ridicule of the symbols of *limpieza*, by means the hyperbole typical of *engañar con la verdad*, the whole ideology of *limpieza* appears to be subjected to scrutiny. However, the most original example of Lope's criticism of racial prejudice is in the scene when Don Félix is accused of being a *morisco*. The usual way of ridiculing prejudice is creating sympathy for the victim, as will be seen in the other five *comedias*. Here, however, Lope does something extraordinary: the 'innocent victim' is a *cristiano viejo* for whom one cannot have sympathy, as he is so odious that, for the sake of poetic justice, one cannot but hope that Inés's anonymous letter will meet with success:

La lástima que os tengo, Señora doña Ana, me ha obligado a escribiros que este caballero con quien os casáis es morisco y así mismo lo es su criado; ya se les hace la información para echarlos de España. Su abuelo de don Félix se llamaba Zulema, y el de Lope, lacayo, Arambel Muley, que eso del Carpio es fingido, porque con los dineros que ganó su padre a hacer melcochas en el Andalucía ha comprado la caballería con que os engaña. (p. 165)

Instead of creating sympathy for Don Félix as a victim of racial prejudice (who in fact turns out not to be a *morisco*), Lope savagely satirizes the practitioners of racial prejudice. Ignoring the absence of any proof of Don Félix's Moorishness, Urbano, Doña Ana's father, says:

Ahora bien, doña Ana,
séalo o no, no quisiera
marido con esta fama. (ll. 2052-54)

Doña Ana, forgetting her love for Don Félix, is suddenly sure that she had always known that her intended husband was indeed a *morisco*: 'Morisco me ha parecido / y aun en el hablar bien' (ll. 2087-88). Urbano is equally convinced:

El tiene de moro el gesto
y aun lo parece en hablar.
Perdonad, señor, que voy
a mis negocios. (ll. 2093-96)

When Don Félix lovingly calls Ana his wife, she answers: '¿Mi marido? ¿Cómo o cuándo? / ¿Qué clérigo nos casó?' (l. 2100). Ramírez, Urbano's *escudero*, a friend before, suddenly becomes Don Félix's mortal enemy:

RAMÍREZ	Pues bien, Don Félix o calabaza, que ande tu honor en la plaza y que por moro te den y te hagan información para que de España salgas, y con sangres tan hidalgas quieres mezclar tu nación y la secta de Zulema. [...] ¡Váyanse, perros, a Argel! [...] ¡Aquí jamás los pies meta, que voy por una escopeta, y quisiera por un rayo!
FÉLIX	¡Abre, engañado escudero!
RAMÍREZ	Señor Zulema, no quiero; que no entran moros acá
FÉLIX	Dile a tu señor que oyendo sabrás engaño tan sutil.
RAMÍREZ	He de colgar un pernil para que vayan huyendo. (ll. 2115-50)

In this scene, Urbano, Doña Ana, and Ramírez are overcome by the power of racial prejudice. Like the audience of *El retablo de las maravillas*, they see, through the distorting glass of racism, what is not there, two *moriscos* when in fact they are seeing two *cristianos viejos*. The dramatic irony lies in the fact that the audience knows the truth and laughs, not only at the discomfited Don Félix and his servant, but more at their persecutors. The irony in this situation is emphasized by Don Félix's inordinate pride in

his own *limpieza de sangre*. He is as much a believer in its ideology as his persecutors, as may be seen in his servant's hyperbolic claim:

¿No eres tú Carpio, sobrino
del famoso don Miguel
del Carpio, que hoy cuentan dél
un valor casi divino? (ll. 1757-60)

Don Félix speaks of himself in hardly less hyperbolic terms:

Yo soy Carpio de Castilla
y de mi linaje hay hombre
que hoy se acuerda de su nombre
el castillo de Sevilla. (ll. 2172-75)³³

With Don Félix's reference to the legendary Carpio, Lope may be mocking his own claim to nobility and *limpieza de sangre* (as was seen before), and perhaps distancing himself from the ideology of racial prejudice. The play is saturated by *engaño*: all the characters live in a world governed by false rumours and blind prejudice, a world of selfish cynicism, unrelieved by any morality, in which they are slaves to *murmuraciones*. Inés is as dishonest in her hunt for Don Félix as he is to trap a rich bride. Thus, the principal theme of the play is ironic, that of the *burlador burlado*, Don Félix the fortune-hunter, hunted and eventually captured by Inés. Lope emphasizes her unscrupulous astuteness by using the sensitive contemporary issue of the impending expulsion of *moriscos* in her strategy to prevent Don Félix's marriage to Doña Ana. This gives Lope the opportunity to show the ubiquity, the ugliness and the heartlessness of racial prejudice.

According to the ideology of *limpieza de sangre*, the *no-limpio* is *codicioso*, but Lope in the *La villana de Getafe* appears to counter this ideology by showing an example to the contrary, that is, a *noble limpio* who is *codicioso*. Díez Borque maintains that, although Don Félix prefers money to love, this greed is personal and Don Félix is

³³ To avoid misunderstanding, it needs to be said that 'el castillo de Sevilla' (line 2175) probably does not refer to a castle in Seville but to the city of Seville itself, where the bishop and Inquisitor Miguel del Carpio, Lope's uncle, was well known.

not to be taken as a representative of the nobility in general. For Díez Borque, one cannot ‘extrapolar esta actitud particular de Don Félix al sistema que, en tantas comedias, rige el teatro del Fénix’.³⁴ I would argue the contrary, that Don Félix represents both the prejudices and the greed of the nobility; no one in the play is surprised by his shameless hunt for money and the mockery of his pretensions to a mythical nobility are indications that he is mocked not as an individual but as a representative of a class. This critical scrutiny of the nobility is extended in the following five plays to the whole of society, especially as regards the choices that *cristianos nuevos* have to make when tempted to marry *cristianos viejos* to buy *honra*, and to *cristianos viejos* when tempted to marry *conversos* to get hold of their money.

6.2.2 EL GALÁN DE LA MEMBRILLA

Once again, Lope presents a love triangle, this time between Félix, Ramiro, and Leonor.³⁵ The plot follows the fortunes of two youths, Félix, a noble but poor *cristiano viejo* from the village of La Membrilla, and Ramiro, a rich farmer and a *cristiano nuevo*, rivals for the love of Leonor, daughter of the wealthy farmer Tello, all four from Manzanares. At first, Tello considers Ramiro to be the more suitable husband for his daughter, but as soon as he hears a rumour that Ramiro may have Jewish blood, he rejects him as a suitor:

TELLO	Ramiro es rico y galán; no le está mal a Leonor.
BENITO	Tiene no sé qué, Señor; mas son cosas que ya están cubiertas por el dinero en el mundo. [...]

³⁴ ‘Estudio preliminar’ to Lope de Vega, *La villana de Getafe*, ed. by José María Díez Borque (Madrid: Orígenes, 1990), p. 46).

³⁵ Lope de Vega, *El galán de La Membrilla*, RAE, IX, 881-917. Another edition the reader may consult is *El galán de la membrilla*, ed. by Diego Marín and Evelyn Rugg, *Anejos del Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 1 (Madrid: 1962).

TELLO Bien sé yo lo que el dinero doró.
 [...]

 ¿Pues a Ramiro le toca

 algo en la sangre?

BENITO Tantico.

TELLO Pues desespere Ramiro

 que jamás mi yerno sea. (pp. 884-85)???

Ramiro is a rich *labrador*, but for Tello and Benito, another farmer, he is a Jew. Speaking of his rival, Félix says that Ramiro is ‘caballero y labrador, rico, ignorante y celoso’. Tomé, another *labrador* from Manzanares, adds: ‘Otra gracia tiene más. [...] Que es un judío’ (p. 882). Félix writes a letter to Leonor which is mistakenly delivered to Tello, and in the ensuing conversation Félix asks for Leonor’s hand in marriage. Tello agrees subject to the following:

Cuando el Rey Fernando
 de un hábito os autorice,
 o algunas rentas os dé,
 a mi Leonor os daré;
 pretended, id a la corte. (p. 889)

Félix goes to Court, seeking ‘hábito’ or ‘rentas’ to marry Leonor, but is unsuccessful with the king, who orders him to join his army in the siege of Granada. Félix agrees but warns the king that he, the king, will be responsible for whatever happens to Tello’s honour. After this he returns to Manzanares to elope with Leonor in male disguise and both join the king’s army. Ramiro, angry at being rejected, takes his revenge by serenading Tello with a song that tells of his dishonour as a result of his daughter’s elopement. Hearing this from Tomé, his servant, Félix returns to Manzanares with the intention of killing Ramiro, whom he catches *in flagrante delicto* singing the offending song and gives him such a beating that Ramiro is left crippled. As all this happens in the dark of night, Ramiro blames Tello for the attack. Tello is arrested but released immediately. As the richest man in the district, Tello is host to the king, to whom he denounces Félix for abducting his daughter and a warrant is issued for Félix’s arrest. In the meantime, Félix has been promoted to captain and is sent to Manzanares, where he

requisitions Tello's house. Presently, the king also arrives and Ramiro appeals to him for justice against Tello, whom he still thinks guilty of causing his injury. Tello naturally denies this and Félix fails to acknowledge his guilt. As an expression of his appreciation for Tello's hospitality, the king exonerates him and instead exiles Ramiro and his friends Laurencia and Fabio. When Tello himself appeals to the king for justice against Félix, the latter reminds the king of his responsibility. The monarch exonerates Félix and gives him Leonor in marriage.

The above résumé of the plot offers a taste of the entertainment provided by the play. The majority of the audience can enjoy the scenes when Tomé tells Félix that Ramiro is a Jew (p. 882) and when Tello dismisses Ramiro as a possible suitor for Leonor on the strength of a rumour of 'tántico' Jewish blood (p. 885). In spite of being a 'rico labrador', with landed wealth, the *converso* Ramiro is still accused of being a Jew, demonstrating the falseness of equating land with *honra*, as will be seen in the analysis of *La pobreza estimada*. Most of the audience might also savour the beating that the *cristiano viejo* Félix administers to the *cristiano nuevo* Ramiro, for which the aggressor is never punished. They can rejoice in Ramiro's and his friends's exile, and finally they can enjoy vicariously Félix's good fortune in marrying the beautiful and rich Leonor.

However, the actions in the play have, as is often the case with Lope's work, the purpose of entertaining his public: pleasing the majority by appealing explicitly to their anti-Semitic prejudices, and the minority by mocking implicitly the same prejudices. Anti-Semitism is represented by Félix, the male *cristiano viejo* side of the triangle, who demonstrates in the very first scene of the play his racism. Before hearing the rumour that Ramiro has Jewish blood, he speaks of his rival as a 'caballero y labrador'. Afterwards Ramiro becomes 'este rico y majadero' (p. 882). Despite his pride at being a brave soldier and his repeated claims for a reward from the king, he uses the darkness of

the night to injure Ramiro, but, although he is not brave enough to acknowledge to the king his role in this attack, he is not explicitly greedy for money.

The character who embodies both greed and anti-Semitism is Tello. He is obsessed by wealth, as is explicitly noted by one of his servants, Celio, when Tello gives his orders for the day: 'Todo aquesto es la codicia' (p. 903). An expression of his obsession is the suspicion that every man who wants to marry his daughter wants to do so for his money. In the middle of a conversation with Félix, he speaks the following aside:

No serán tus pensamientos
sólo emparentar conmigo;
ojo tienen al dinero (p. 889)

As for any father in the Golden Age, his *honra* depends on his daughter's behaviour, and her elopement with Don Félix dishonours him. However, what is significant is that for Tello his 'mejor prenda' could be his daughter, a part of his *hacienda*: 'Perdí mi *hacienda* y mi honor [...]; / matéme con llevar la mejor *prenda*' (p. 904-05).³⁶ The referent of 'mejor prenda' is ambiguous, but the implication is that Tello values his wealth at least as much as his honour, which in itself is a significant departure from the *cristiano viejo* concept that honour is beyond price. Tello's greed and wealth raises doubts about his *cristiano viejo* status, first voiced by Félix and confirmed by Tomé's ironic reference to the usual exaggerated demonstrations by *conversos* of their non-Jewishness:

FÉLIX	Por lo rico desconfío.
TOMÉ	Pues muy engañado estás, pues Tello mata cada año diez puercos. (p. 882)

The doubts are further confirmed in the argument between Leonor, Laurencia (who is in love with Ramiro) and Lucía, her friend:

LUCÍA	Los mejores casamientos
-------	-------------------------

³⁶ The use of *prenda* here is ambiguous; according to DRAE, it means 'property' as well as 'beloved'.

me dicen que despreciáis,
 subida a tanta hidalguía
 como se ha visto en el traje,
 tan nuevo en vuestro linaje.
 LEONOR Yo traigo el que merecía,
 y vos el que no es razón,
 porque ha habido en mi linaje,
 no sólo de aqueste traje
 muchos que tan nobles son,
 mas muchos hidalgos, antes
 que cristianos en el vuestro.
 LAURENCIA Mentís. (p. 897)

Here Lucía is clearly suggesting that not only Leonor's 'hidalguía', but also her 'linaje' are newly acquired, which would make Tello a converso. When Leonor protests her *cristiana vieja* status, Laurencia dismisses it by 'mentís'. It is significant that Leonor does not return either Lucia's or Laurencia's insults, being content instead to offer again a polite re-statement of her *cristiano viejo* status. Whether this attitude is a sign of calm self-confidence or fear of entering further into the argument is left for the audience to decide. However, the most insistent indications of Tello as *converso* lie in his own words and his behaviour. This is what Tello and Benito say about Ramiro:

BENITO Tiene no sé qué, señor;
 mas son cosas que ya están
 cubiertas con el dinero.
 [...]

 TELLO Bien sé yo
 lo que el dinero doró,
 que fue el dorador primero (p. 884)

What is significant in Tello's reaction is the emphasis of 'bien' and 'yo', which suggests personal experience of the power of money to cover up undesirable circumstances. Ironically, Tello's words regarding the power of money come back to haunt him at the end, when Leonor excuses her behaviour saying: 'Padre, yerros por amores; / oro tenéis con que sean dorados' (p. 917). Tello demands that Félix, who is destitute, seek preferment and money at Court to avoid being suspected of giving his daughter in marriage to obtain *honra* and *limpieza de sangre*, as he himself explains to Félix:

Puesto que vos merezcáis

mujeres de más valor,
 como ya tan pobre estáis,
 pensarán que yo he querido
 honrarme como villano
 de un hombre tan bien nacido. (p. 889)

In Tello, Lope presents a man who desperately wants to appear to be a *cristiano viejo*, displaying all the racial prejudices associated with it. When Benito suggests that Ramiro may have 'tántico' Jewish blood, Tello rejects him immediately: 'Pues desespere Ramiro / que jamás mi yerno sea' (p. 885). Here Lope seems to criticize not only the prejudices and *codicia* of *cristianos viejos*, but the dog-in-the-manger attitude of some *conversos*, who, infected by the prejudices of their society, want to imitate them to appear to be cleaner than clean.

Seen against this background, Ramiro's image appears to be even more positive. He never denies that he is of *converso* ancestry, and does not share in the prejudices that seem to be common to everyone. He is part of his society and, until he is rejected and humiliated, he behaves impeccably. Lope does not present Ramiro as the typical Jew with a long nose, lecherous and cowardly, but as someone similar to the 'admirable' *cristiano viejo* Félix in all but his financial position. He attends mass regularly and his love for Leonor is more chaste than that of Félix, who elopes with the girl. Ramiro's positive presentation is reinforced by his sincere and intense love for Leonor, expressed in one of Lope's finest lyrical *redondillas*, beginning with: 'Ya se va mi dulce ingrata' (p. 898). His fatal flaw is his sense of irony and poetic justice, which he appears to share with his creator, Lope. Having been publicly humiliated by Tello for his Jewish ancestry, something he could not help, Ramiro visits poetic justice on Tello by publishing the dishonour of Leonor's elopement in a song, a dishonour that Tello could not help. This is how Ramiro declares his intention regarding Tello: 'Que pase por lo que paso' (p. 904). The irony of course is that the slander perpetrated by Ramiro was in fact the truth. For publishing it, Félix attacks and injures Ramiro in the dark of night,

but when the aggrieved man takes his case to the king, the king exiles him for three years. Lope makes Ramiro not only the victim of racial prejudice, but of royal injustice, and the events could remind a part of his public that the injustices done to Ramiro are reflections of those often done to *conversos*. While enjoyed by a majority, these injustices might arouse sympathy in a minority. Ramiro's positive image may be reinforced by recalling that the event seems to be autobiographical: Lope's jealous public attack on Elena Osorio (Leonor in the *comedia*) and her father in 1587 by a scurrilous sonnet resulted in the Phoenix's eventual banishment from Madrid for three years and from Castile for ten. Surprisingly, Lope appears to identify with Ramiro by giving him similar experiences to his own, moulding the young *converso* in the image of the young dramatist.

6.2.3 EL PREMIO DEL BIEN HABLAR

The main theme of *El premio del bien hablar* (1624) is the power of the *maldiciente* to ruin people's lives by spreading the rumour that they are descended from *conversos*.³⁷ The *comedia* is an attack on *maldicencia*, whose severity is similar to Erasmus's attack on it in his *Lingua*, as was mentioned before. In this play the love triangle consists of Leonarda, Don Pedro, and Don Juan. Leonarda, daughter of a Sevillian merchant who has made his fortune in the Indies, wants to marry don Pedro, who is of a noble family but poor. Don Pedro's brother, Don Diego, is opposed to the match and insults Leonarda as she leaves church with her face veiled:

¿Que trate
mi hermano por interés
con esta indiana casarse? (p. 494)

This scene is witnessed by Don Juan de Castro, on his way to the Americas with his sister Ángela to escape punishment for having killed a man in defence of a lady's

³⁷ Lope de Vega, *El premio del bien hablar*, RAE, XIII, 493-509.

honour. He stands up for Leonarda's honour (her *limpieza de sangre*) and in the ensuing fight wounds Don Diego, Don Pedro's brother, the *maldiciente*. Don Juan has to flee from immediate arrest and hides in the first house he finds open, which happens to be Leonarda's, without realizing the coincidence, Leonarda having been veiled outside the church. Leonarda falls in love with him and decides to hide him in her house. After many complications, Don Juan marries Leonarda and Leonarda's brother, Feliciano, marries Ángela, Don Juan's sister.

This play, once again, is autobiographical, as Pamp notes: 'Es una curiosa coincidencia que la biografía de Juan Pérez de Montalbán cuente que el primer desafío que tuvo Lope fue contra un maldiciente' (p. 50). The *maldiciente* Don Diego objects to his brother Don Pedro marrying Leonarda, because her father had been a merchant. In real life, of course, there were many merchants of impeccable *cristiano viejo* origin, for example Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, an impoverished member of a famous noble family of Córdoba, who worked for many years as *escribano público del número de Córdoba*.³⁸ However, although Leonarda's father is not openly accused of being a *converso*, only of not being of noble descent, in the mind of Don Diego, whose opinion is related by Don Juan, being a merchant is sufficient proof of Jewish descent:

Que, ¡vive Dios!, que me han dicho
que vendió en Indias su padre
carbón o hierro, que agora
se ha convertido en diamantes;
que puesto que es vizcaíno,
para el tolo que esta trae
son muy bajos sus principios. (p. 494).

As was mentioned before, an accusation of not being *limpio* could have been as dangerous for the accuser as for the accused, hence *nobleza* may have been in this play a transposition of *limpieza*; as Pamp says, 'nobleza equivale a hidalguía que equivale a sangre limpia' (p. 50). The text contains indications of this possible transposition. First,

³⁸ I owe this information to Ángel M. García Gómez, who told me that this case appears in a document in the Archivo Histórico Provincial de Córdoba (13.5.1620; 11739P, fol. 207r.).

seeing that 'vizcaíno' suggests, in the Golden Age, *cristiano viejo* descent, 'bajos principios' as the opposite would logically refer to a *converso* origin and not to the newly-rich or the newly-ennobled. Second, Leonarda and Don Juan, to defend their nobility, also claim descent from *La Montaña*, the favourite genealogical myth not of nobles but of *conversos*, as was indicated before; the first thing they do when they meet someone is to announce their Vizcayan, Galician, or Asturian nobility. For example, Don Juan says:

Nací en Madrid, aunque son
 en Galicia los solares
 de mi nacimiento noble,
 de mis abuelos y padres.
 Para noble nacimiento
 hay en España tres partes:
 Galicia, Vizcaya, Asturias,
 o ya montañas se llamen. (p. 493)

Leonarda does the same:

Yo soy
 nieta de tan noble abuelo,
 que por bien nacida al cielo
 siempre agradecida estoy.
 Es de mi padre el solar
 el más noble de Vizcaya:
 que a las Indias venga o vaya,
 ¿qué honor le puede quitar?
 Si le ha enriquecido el mar,
 no implica ser caballero. (p. 494)

Pamp also notes this tendency in Leonarda:

Leonarda, la mujer mentada, se apresura a poner en claro su 'sangre de Vizcaya' y hace que su criada dé a Don Juan la ejecutoria de hidalguía, todo lo cual recuerda la insistencia de Lope en su sangre montañesa y su escudo: cabe por lo menos la posibilidad de que la actitud de Leonarda también sea una manifestación de Lope. (p. 51)

In this play Lope presents *conversos* in a positive light, attractive and acceptable as romantic heroes and heroines in *comedias*, at the same time as he denounces the evil power of false accusations:

Que cuando se habla en corrillos,
 no es afrenta que se hace al ausente,

que no la oye, sino a los que están delante,
 porque es tenerlos por hombres
 que gustan de infamias tales;
 y hablar mal de los ausentes
 afrenta a los hombres graves. (p. 494)

Neither Don Juan and Leonarda, nor Feliciano and Ángela share the racial prejudices of their society. Despite the social pressure of the *maldiciente*, their choice of marriage partner is governed by love and not by wealth or *honra*, although Lope does not condemn marrying for these reasons, as may be seen in *La dama boba*, where Laurencio pursues Finea explicitly on account of her impressive dowry and the *indiano* Liseo chooses Nise for her noble blood. (After all, around the time *La dama boba* (1613) was written, Lope lost his second wife, Doña Juana de Guardo, whom he was known to have married for money.) Although, as will be shown presently, in *El galán escarmentado* Lope shows the dangers of *conversos* marrying into *cristiano viejo* families, in *El premio del bien hablar* there is no suggestion that people should only marry their own kind. Like *La villana de Getafe*, this play is a comedy in which the young *converso* protagonists are presented in a positive light. The play has a happy ending with two marriages for love and those who have been maligned live happily ever after. On the other hand, although the *maldiciente* is punished for his crime, every member of Lope's audience would have known that this was an inversion of the ugly reality of their daily lives.

Another example of an attack on *maldicencia* and a happy ending for those maligned is in the secondary plot of *La buena guarda*. Don Carlos loves and wants to marry Doña Elena. The *maldiciente* is Don Juan, who, also in love with Doña Elena, tells Don Pedro, Doña Elena's father, that Don Carlos, his best friend, is *no limpio* in his blood. Don Carlos complains thus to his friend Ginés:

Yo sé que me ha hecho tiro
 en esta ocasión Don Juan,
 porque, de Elena galán,
 le cuesta más de un suspiro.

Con siniestra información
a Don Pedro ha persuadido,
por quien a Elena he perdido,
mi honor y reputación,
que pienso que en sangre mía
ha puesto falta; y si en ella
la dejo, vendrá a tenella
toda manchada algún día;
que de engaños de este modo
tantos peligros resultan,
que un hábito dificultan,
y se pierde el honor todo.
¡Cuántos, por mala opinión,
que han puesto los enemigos,
son, Ginés, falsos testigos
en más de una información!
[...]
Dios te libre de quedar
una opinión asentada,
que no puede ser lavada
con todo el agua del mar. (p. 70)

Pamp is amazed at this open criticism of false accusations about *limpieza de sangre*: 'A cualquier persona familiarizada con el teatro del Siglo de Oro le parecerá extraordinaria esta comedia, casi impensable dentro del marco ideológico de la época' (p. 48). The inverted happy ending in this play consists of the fact that, despite the accusations against Don Carlos, Don Pedro does not even permit him to explain his *antepasados* before agreeing to his marrying Doña Elena:

DON CARLOS Agora con más veras por el suelo
os besaré los pies.
DON PEDRO Señor Don Carlos,
no, ¡por mi vida!, ni esto aquí se trate,
que podrán entenderlo los criados,
y publicarse en la ciudad sin tiempo;
que un casamiento es pretensión de un hábito,
donde suelen hablar los enemigos. (p. 45)

What is important in Don Juan's and Feliciano's attitudes in *El premio del bien hablar*, and Don Carlos's and Don Pedro's in *La buena guarda*, is that society and the law conspire to ruin people on the strength of often unproven and anonymous accusations of having committed the crime of belonging to the wrong race. By attacking *maldicencia* against *conversos* directly, Lope could be creating indirectly a more positive image of

the Jew. I will now turn to the three *comedias* that show Lope's deep concern with the problems of *conversos*: *El galán escarmentado*, *El Brasil restituido* and *La pobreza estimada*.

6.2.4 EL GALÁN ESCARMENTADO

Since in *El galán escarmentado* the *converso* Julio is not the obvious protagonist, I will concentrate on that part of the play which deals with him and the *converso* theme.³⁹ In this play Celio, Julio, and Ricarda are the three sides of the triangle. On his return to Madrid from the war, Celio meets Ricarda, whom he still believes to be his fiancée, but who has forgotten him and has married Julio, a rich *converso*. Celio goes looking for consolation, trying to seduce a married woman and a young girl in Madrid, and another girl in the country. He finds only deception and disappointment and, as the title of the *comedia* in its obvious sense says, Celio is taught a lesson. Julio finds some old love letters written by Celio to Ricarda and, to protect his reputation as a husband offended in his *honor*, he decides, like husbands in Calderón's wife-murder plays, to kill his wife. When his servant defends Ricarda, Julio repents, but Ricarda has already fled. Julio assumes that she is being hidden by her father, Tácito. There is an argument about the disappearance of Ricarda which Tácito loses. He insults his son-in-law not only for being a Jew, but a *judaizante*: 'Tendrás quizás las armas en la Iglesia' (p. 846).⁴⁰ Julio defends himself from Tácito's physical attack, using some force to stop the older man but without hurting him. Tácito pretends to cry, Julio begs forgiveness, and in a cordial embrace Tácito stabs Julio to death. When he is arrested he gives a false version of the events, accusing his dead son-in-law of having killed Ricarda. The servant Tancredo

³⁹ Lope de Vega, *El galán escarmentado*, RAE, I, 789-883.

⁴⁰ AUT defines *armas de Iglesia* as 'las censuras y penas que la Iglesia discierne y con que castiga a los súbditos rebeldes por la potestad y jurisdicción espiritual'; in this context, 'las armas en la Iglesia' refer ironically to the *sambenitos* (penitential garments of condemned heretics, mostly Judaizers) hanging up in Churches.

and Ricarda steal the corpse of a young girl and bury it in Julio's garden as if it were Ricarda's. The judges, 'nobles y cristianos', let Tácito go free without ordering the identification of the corpse. At the end of the play, Ricarda appears alive and well, is reconciled with Celio, and the servants are rewarded for their cleverness.

Silverman considers *El galán escarmentado* as just another play with the usual theme of the 'exaltación de la honra y de la sangre limpia, no tachada de prosapia semítica' (p. 23), which could 'incluirse entre las comedias de orientación popular nacionalizante', such as *Fuente Ovejuna*, *Peribáñez*, and so on. According to this critic, the only difference is that it has a secondary *converso* character who is allowed to speak his feelings. Although Silverman notes that 'los personajes de Lope [...] hablan y viven por cuenta propia', in which he agrees with like Lida de Malkiel, he maintains that at the end of the play Lope forgets 'los sagrados principios de la justicia poética y el fin moralizador también'. He states that for Lope 'Julio era [...] un elemento social que sobraba', and that Lope's intention with the murder of Julio was to create 'una versión secular del bárbaro espectáculo religioso', an *auto de fe* that 'eliminaba a un hereje, a un intruso en el seno de la única fe posible' (p. 25). Silverman's interpretation would be more convincing if Celio were the true protagonist, the *galán escarmentado* of the title, and not Julio. Zuckerman-Ingber concurs with this interpretation:

In *El galán escarmentado* the play's principal action —the search by Celio for a woman to love— gives the entire work a comic, almost picaresque tone, greatly overshadowing the very serious honor conflict [Julio's tragic story] that is confined to portions of the second act. (p. 70)

In this case, as will be seen, Julio's death would not be considered an *auto de fe*, but a warning for *los que entienden*, especially for the *conversos*, to beware marrying *cristianos viejos*, who want *converso* money but not *converso* spouses. The conflict here appears to be between the *converso* who has married in good faith into a *cristiano viejo* family and the *cristiano viejo* family which has accepted him in bad faith. By covering the short and seemingly unimportant tragic story of Julio with the long comic

adventures of Celio, Lope manages to hide his criticism of the injustice that is meted out to the *converso* for his attempt to assimilate and acquire dignity. He employs a technique similar to Rojas's *píldora amarga* in the *dulce manjar*, as was seen in Chapter 2.

On discovering the love letters Julio expresses his feelings:

¡Oh, malditos papeles, cuántos daños
habéis hecho en el mundo!
[...]
¡Cuántos, sin culpa alguna, habréis culpado
por no poder saberse la disculpa!
¡Grande poder es un papel escrito! (p. 834)

Zuckerman-Ingber comments on these lines as follows:

The malditos papeles that threatened one's honour had their counterpart in the anonymous letters of accusation that could, at any time, endanger a man's claim to pure blood. [...] In this way, Lope would allow his character to receive a good measure of audience sympathy before his lineage is called into question. (p. 154)

Silverman also remarks on this sonnet:

Es un ataque contra las cartas de amor. [...] Pero la violencia con que habla [...] nos indica que acaso esté pensando a la vez en [...] la apremiante situación vital del converso, su miedo y odio al malsín, al delator por denunciarlo a la Inquisición anónimamente o por alguna recompensa. (p. 24)

Both critics suggest the transposition of anonymous denunciations to the Inquisition into jealous love letters. The discovery of love letters by husbands is not uncommon in *comedias de honra* (for example, Gutierre's discovery of Mencía's letter to Enrique in Calderón's *El médico de su honra*), but the husbands are *cristianos viejos*. The attitude of the *converso* Julio is different. At first he behaves according to the traditional *cristiano viejo* code of honour, intending to kill Ricarda on mere suspicion, but soon comes to see the irrationality and injustice of his attitude. After some hesitation, he acts rationally, recognizing that his 'ingenio' has become a prisoner of his 'celosa fantasía':

Creo que ya me arrepiento,
que estoy más templado ahora.
[...]
Extraña fue mi locura,
si la pienso a sangre fría.

¡Oh, celosa fantasía,
cárcel del ingenio oscura! (p. 835)

Julio's rejection of the code of honour recalls the attitudes of husbands towards their wives's adultery in two works by Cervantes: Cañizares's towards Lorenza in *El viejo celoso*, and Carrizales towards Leonora in *El celoso extremeño*. The situation in the *entremés* and in the *novela ejemplar* parallel in some respects the situation in *El galán escarmentado*. The two young girls regret having married for money and decide to take a lover. Surprisingly, their blatant adultery does not meet with any disapproval or punishment. Far from being the unsuspecting victims of adultery, Cañizares and Carrizales consciously decide to act like the *converso* Julio and forgive their wives. Cervantes could only have accomplished this subversion of the code of honour by introducing into the situation Cañizares and Carrizales, who reject the code of honour. The same hesitation and eventual resolution in favour of reason occurs in Julio's argument with Tácito. Despite the insults and the violence from Tácito, Julio ends the argument: 'Tiernamente / te doy, señor, mi arrepentido brazo' (p. 845). His repentance of his vengeful attitude towards both Ricarda and Tácito leads, ironically, to his own death at the hands of a truly vengeful Tácito.

In contrast to Julio, who admits his mistakes, Tácito remains unrepentant. He is a mature and experienced *cristiano viejo* and it may be assumed that he gave his daughter Ricarda in marriage to a *converso* in return for the latter's money. It would be understood by an audience used to such alliances that the marriage of Julio and Ricarda was of mutual benefit to the two families: the *mal nacido converso* Julio brought welcome money to the poor *cristiano viejo* family of Tácito and Ricarda, while Ricarda and Tácito brought honour to Julio and his family. This was a frequent arrangement between the rich *converso* middle class and the impoverished aristocracy, already mentioned in Chapter 1. In the argument with Julio, Tácito betrays the contradiction between what he thought and what he did regarding his daughter's marriage to Julio:

TÁCITO Yo he tenido la culpa en dar mi sangre
 a quien la tiene, por ventura, en mezclas.
 JULIO Yo soy hidalgo y conocido hidalgo,
 de hecho notorio y de solar antiguo.
 TÁCITO ¿Solar? ¿De qué solar? ¿De los que ahora
 se labran en Madrid en muladares?
 ¡Qué gallardo que hablas por ser rico!
 Tendrás quizás las armas en la Iglesia.
 (pp. 845-46)

One may ask why had Tácito, knowing all this, married his daughter to the *converso* Julio and, having arranged the marriage, why does he now blame himself and insult his son-in-law for being a Jew. It is possible that Tácito hates himself because he has defied the hypocritical social belief which equated new *riqueza* with *deshonra*. I call this belief 'hypocritical', because, while everyone was condemning inter-marriage with rich *conversos*, many were practising it, as was seen in Chapter 1. Tácito's hatred of Julio and *conversos* may have been a projection of his self-hatred for having married his daughter to a man he considers to be a Jew: he embodies the double-think about the *converso*, who aroused envy and admiration at the same time. The contradiction between Tácito as a *cristiano viejo* and his behaviour, in the popular mind more fit for a Jew, reaches its peak at the end of his argument with Julio. Having tried to beat Julio with his walking stick and having been prevented by Julio, Tácito pretends to be sorry. Using his accustomed technique of inversion, Lope presents the *cristiano viejo* Tácito as cunning, more typical of a Jewish villain than of a *cristiano viejo*, as was argued in relation to the transposition Jew/woman in Chapter 3 and noted by Caro Baroja.⁴¹ This is how Julio's death is presented:

TÁCITO Hijo, yo reconozco que he tenido
 la culpa.
 [...]
 Vesme aquí de rodillas, que te pido
 perdón de las injurias recibidas
 [...]
 JULIO ¡Jesús!, señor, alzaos, por Dios, del suelo!
 [...]

⁴¹ See Caro Baroja, *Los judíos en la España moderna y contemporánea*, I, 98-104.

TÁCITO Dame hijo tus brazos.
[...]

JULIO Tiernamente
te doy, señor, mi arrepentido brazo.

TÁCITO ¡Muere, infame traidor!
Dale con su propia daga una puñalada.

JULIO ¡Ay, que me has muerto!
¡Ay, viejo astuto!
[...]

TÁCITO Así vence la industria a la violencia.
(pp. 845-46)

This inversion of the *cristiano viejo* as Jew could have been emphasized or softened depending on how Julio's death was staged. Knowing how easy it is for a director to manipulate audience reaction, it would be interesting to speculate on how a contemporary *autor* would have presented this scene. Shylock, for example, is defined on the stage by his posture, his clothes, his facial expressions, and his voice, to conform to the hated stereotype of the Jew. However, there is also the gentlemanly Shylock of Laurence Olivier who arouses sympathy by the same means. While Lope's text is neutral as to stage action, it is unlikely that the majority of an audience in the Golden-Age *corral* would have tolerated a sympathetic *converso* character opposed to an evil *cristiano viejo*. Hence one can imagine Julio probably represented as a stereotypical Jewish villain rather than as an innocent young man. The *autor* had also the power to manipulate the audience's reception by choosing the tone of the representation: serious or farcical, realistic or artificial. A realistic representation would have tended to show Julio in a sympathetic light, hence one can imagine that the *autor* may have opted for a rather comical tone, making Julio more a puppet than a flesh-and-blood human being, one whose murder could be watched without pity. On one hand, the action of the scene lent itself to Julio's representation as a stereotypical Jewish villain, on the other hand, the small section of the audience, *los que entienden*, would nevertheless have caught, in the text and in the action, the underlying message of the scene: that the *converso* Julio was the innocent victim and the *cristiano viejo* Tácito, the treacherous assassin. What is

more, Tácito rejoices at having acted with such 'industria', while Julio, a sincere Christian, asks with his last breath for a priest to make his confession.

The irony of presenting a *cristiano viejo* who acts like a stereotypical Jewish villain is, according to Cruickshank, reminiscent of the *cristiano viejo* Gutierre in Calderón's *El médico de su honra*, who, obsessed by the fear of losing his honour, murders Mencía, his wife. Through rejecting true Christian values, the *cristiano viejo* becomes the vengeful Jew. To ensure that at least part of his public understood the play in this way, Calderón fills Gutierre's speeches with references to Jewish customs, such as 'the daubing of blood on Gutierre's door' which 'is bound to evoke the Passover'.⁴² This critic mentions two other references to Jewish customs, one real, the other a blood-libel, and both shedding light on Gutierre's conduct as a crypto-Jew. The first reference concerns:

The ritual killing of animals to be eaten: Jews would cut their throats, allow the blood to drain away, and then cover it with earth. Gutierre is eager to cover his dishonour with earth: he uses the expression 'cubrir con tierra' twice (as opposed to the more usual *echar tierra a*), and the second time mentions blood as well: 'Con la sangre le lavara, / con la tierra le cubriera'. (p. 35)

The second example refers to the ritual murders that Jews are supposed to commit during Passover:

A kidnapped child would be crucified and its heart removed. The heart, it was alleged, would then be eaten, and the blood drunk, as a horrible parody of the Eucharist. What does Gutierre remind his listeners of when he claims that: 'A pedazos sacara con mis manos / el corazón, y luego / envuelto en sangre, desatado en fuego, / el corazón comiera / a bocados, la sangre me bebiera?' (p. 36)

The fact that Gutierre acts like a Jew does not mean that he was in fact of Jewish descent, but, ironically, that as a *cristiano viejo*, who has acted in an un-Christian manner to avenge his honour, he sinks to the level of barbarity of a Jew. Just as Gutierre's bloody cruelty brings to mind a *criptojudío*, Tácito's cowardly behaviour recalls a Jewish villain. The effect of the inversion of making the *conversos* behave like

⁴² 'The Metaphorical "criptojudaísmo" in Calderón's Gutierre', p. 35.

good Christians and the *cristianos viejos* behave like evil Jewish stereotypes highlights the usual projection onto the Jews of the worst attributes of the *cristiano viejo* society.

The *cristiano viejo* Tancredo is another denial of the rule: *cristiano viejo* = good, *cristiano nuevo* = bad. He is first Julio's servant and, after Julio's assassination, becomes Tácito's and Ricarda's, organizing the deception of the Justices to save Tácito from the consequences of his crime. Referring to Julio's murder and to his own lies, Tancredo says hypocritically:

Es negocio tan piadoso,
y hanle tomado de suerte
que llaman justa su muerte.
[...]
Nadie podrá llamar
mi industria engaño o malicia. (pp. 860-61)

For Tancredo's lies to succeed a corpse had to be found (and was) and Ricarda has to disappear forever, as Tancredo himself recognizes:

Si no hallaran la muerta donde sabes,
¿qué negociaría Tácito? Sospecho
que tuviera suceso peligroso. (p. 875)

Despite this, Ricarda reappears at the end, and the inference is unavoidable that Julio had never killed Ricarda, that Tácito and all the other *cristianos viejos* had been lying and perverting the course of justice, and that Tácito was guilty of premeditated murder. However, neither Ricarda, Tácito nor Tancredo fear the Justices, on the contrary, the play ends with the marriage of Ricarda and Celio, with Tancredo well rewarded for his deception and Tácito absolved of all guilt by the *cristiano viejo* Justices, who do not even attempt to identify the unknown girl's corpse.

It seems that Lope has deliberately left the plot hanging to remind the public that the play is not completed since justice has not been done. Tancredo himself recognizes

the venality of the *viejo cristiano* Justices: 'Piadosamente se ha creído todo' (p. 875).⁴³

He adds that Julio's blow in self-defence did not justify Tácito's killing of him:

Un báculo, al fin, que un hombre trae
no le pudo afrentar, porque le sirve,
ni fue caso pensado en el contrario. (p. 875)

Yarbro-Bejarano comments on this from the feminist point of view:

Tácito is imprisoned for the murder of Julio, but is soon set free, showing the collusion between the judicial system and the construction of the male subject's *hombria* in the defense of his honour. Later, the judges' clemency is explained in terms of their Christian nobility ('Son los jueces nobles y cristianos'). (p. 211)

According to Silverman, Tácito is not punished for Julio's murder because he killed only a *converso*, 'un intruso que no era digno de formar parte del sistema oficial' (p. 25). However, this point of view could be difficult to uphold. According to this critic, the *converso* Julio was guilty of infiltrating the ranks of *cristianos viejos* and consequently, as was seen, his killing was a kind of *auto de fe*, approved of by Lope. But in the context of the contradictions in the play Lope's intention could be seen as less to praise than to condemn this 'versión secular del bárbaro espectáculo religioso'. As Lope finishes the *comedia* with a hyperbolic, ridiculous contradiction, the entrance on stage of the 'dead' Ricarda, *El galán escarmentado* appears as yet another example of the different way that Lope uses apparent anagnorisis as a component of the technique of *engañar con la verdad*, as described in Chapter 2.

In this *comedia*, the *cristianos viejos* are not presented as entirely admirable: the three amateur whores, whom the callow Celio wants to seduce, cheat him; the murderer Tácito, Ricarda who so easily forgets her fiancé and prefers Julio's money, the criminal servant Tancredo, and the venal Justices, are all denizens of a corrupt society. With the contradiction between the supposed honesty and honour of the *cristianos viejos* and their dishonest behaviour, with the unpunished murder of Julio, with the corruption of

⁴³ According to AUT, *piadosamente* means 'en estilo familiar vale haciéndole merced en creerle lo que dice'. Tancredo is implying that the Justices had deliberately either not investigated the case or had shut their eyes to the truth.

the Justices and with this inversion, *cristiano viejo* = bad / *cristiano nuevo* = good, Lope appears to subvert anti-Semitism. Julio's behaviour is more Christian than that of the *cristianos viejos* in the play and, ironically, in contradiction to the stereotypical image of the Jew as vengeful, it is also authentically Jewish in not exacting revenge. Contrary to the image of the vengeful Jew, *La buena guarda* illustrates that Judaism also condemned revenge. In the context of Don Carlos's desire to avenge his offended honour, as was seen before, an angel warns him, referring to the Old Testament, not to do so:

Carlos, no quiere Dios que los agravios
venguen los agraviados; y así dice
que no busquéis venganza, en el Levítico,
ni os acordéis de la pasada injuria;
suya la llama en el Deuteronomio,
Judit dice que esperen los humildes;
David le ruega a Dios que se levante,
y que le vengue de sus enemigos. (p. 84)

Julio's rejection of the code of honour could be considered as an example of the influence of the rational and tolerant nature of the *converso* and Erasmian ethics, as was seen in Chapter 1. In the person of the innocent victim, Julio, the play seems to offer a positive image of the sincere *converso*, who, nevertheless, was always identified as a Jew in the Golden Age.

6.2.5 *EL BRASIL RESTITUIDO*

El Brasil restituido begins with Don Diego de Meneses, a Portuguese noble of the city of Bahia in Brazil, reneging on his promise to marry his pregnant lover, Doña Guiomar, because she is of *converso* descent.⁴⁴ To atone for her transgression, she asks her father Bernardo to kill her. He assures her that with the imminent conquest of Brazil by the Dutch she will have a chance to avenge her dishonour, adding that the conquerors will

⁴⁴ Lope de Vega, *El Brasil restituido*, in *El lusitanismo de Lope de Vega y su comedia 'El Brasil restituido'*, ed. by José María Viqueira Barreiro (Coimbra: Coimbra Editora, 1950).

also free the *conversos* from inquisitorial persecution. The Dutch duly occupy Bahia and Doña Guiomar marries Leonardo, a Dutch captain, who, out of jealousy, kills Don Diego but eventually abandons her. The rest of the play presents the reconquest of Bahia by a Spanish-Portuguese armada led by Don Fadrique de Toledo. Doña Guiomar is saved from the *brasero* by the *gracioso*, Machado, for a thousand *dobloones* and Bernardo is told that he ought not to be left unpunished.

At first sight the play appears to be an attack on the treacherous Jews who sold Brazil to the Dutch. José María Viqueira Barreiro accepts this anti-Semitic interpretation and repeats it continuously in his analysis.⁴⁵ The assertion that the Dutch invaded Brazil at the invitation of the *converso* community in Bahia was, as Arnold Wiznitzer notes, ‘the opinion widely current in Spain, Portugal and Brazil in 1624 and 1625. [...] Most Spanish, Portuguese and other historians had mechanically accepted it as fact’.⁴⁶ Here is a present-day Brazilian account regarding the Dutch invasion, referring to a seventeenth-century Portuguese source, Frei Vicente do Salvador in his *História do Brasil* (1627). This also alleges *converso* collusion in the Dutch invasion:

Logo após a recupera ção da cidade, D. Fadrique de Toledo Osório, capitão-geral das forças de reconquista, começou a ‘tratar dos negocios da justiça que Vossa Majestade me encarregou, e castigo dos culpados’. [...] É o auditor-geral do Exército, D. Jeronimo Quesada de Salorzano, que deveria providenciar. [...] Parece que os nomes dos moradores que retornaram à cidade a convite dos holandeses constavam numa lista, que foi afanosa e inutilmente procurada por Salorzano. Mesmo assim, quatro portugueses e dois negros foram, segundo Frei Vicente, julgados e executados. Outras fontes mencionam cinco portugueses, acrescentando que se tratava de christãos-novos, e mais alguns índios.⁴⁷

The historical reality, however, appears to have been that the important and well established *converso* community had nothing to do with the invasion. Wiznitzer

⁴⁵ See ‘Introducción’ to Lope de Vega, *El Brasil restituído*, in *El lusitanismo de Lope de Vega y su comedia ‘El Brasil restituído’*, pp. 239-40.

⁴⁶ *Jews in Colonial Brazil* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 57.

⁴⁷ Carlos Alberto Carrillo, ‘Memória da Justiça Brasileira’, in *Publicações do Tribunal de Justiça do Estado do Bahia* <http://www.tj.ba.gov.br/publicacoes/mem_just/volume1/cap14.htm> [accessed 2 July 2003] (para. 4 of 7).

explains that the Dutch had their own motives for invading Brazil, which had nothing to do with *conversos*:

Their [the Dutch's] economic objective was the acquisition of goods in [...] America through purchase, barter or piracy and without Portuguese interference. Another aim was political: to divide the Spanish fleet and, in general, to weaken Spain to the greatest possible extent. (p. 48)

Significantly, after the reconquest of Bahia, only one *cristiano nuevo* was punished for collaboration:

Historians have claimed without evidence that five or more New Christians, as well as a number of Indians, were executed after the victors entered Bahia. But from the report of Don Juan de Valencia y Guzmán, an eyewitness whose history of events in Bahia in 1625 remained ~~unpublished~~ until 1870, we find that only one [Spanish] Christian, Diego Lope de Abrantes, was executed. The other persons sentenced were Portuguese and Negroes; there were incidentally no Indians. (p. 56)

Neither did the Jewish community in Holland take an active part in the invasion: 'Eighteen Jews of Amsterdam had subscribed only 36,100 guilders to the West India Company by 1623. The total sum subscribed to the Company in 1628 was 7,108,106 guilders' (p. 48). Apart from this, 'New Christian merchants in Portugal [...] proposed to the Crown that they finance the establishment of similar organizations, with headquarters in Portugal' (p. 50). If the Jews in Holland or Brazil had been involved with the Dutch invasion, they would not have wanted to establish their own Company with headquarters in Portugal.

The play also appears to be an encomium of Spanish Monarchy, nobility, and Catholicism, presented with the allegorical figures of the Monarchy, Brasil, Fame, Faith, Heresy, and Angels uttering the most hyperbolic panegyrics of King Philip IV. On closer observation, however, one may note that, once again, Lope employs his technique of *engañar con la verdad* to destroy the impression that he first creates. On one hand, he makes the *cristiano viejo* characters declare conventional beliefs (anti-Semitic, aristo-monarchist, and pro-Christian) and, on the other hand, he subverts it by hyperbole and by making them act contrary to what they have said. The conventional

anti-Semitic attitude is represented by Don Diego, Machado, the *gracioso*, and the Gobernador. This is what Don Diego says to Guiomar to excuse his treachery:

No se ha cansado de amarte,
Doña Guiomar, el deseo.
[...]
Está cierta que cumpliera
la palabra prometida
si fueras mejor nacida
o yo Meneses no fuera;
y cuando amor permitiera
que mi honor se aventurara
a manchar sangre tan clara,
vivís de manera aquí,
que aun la fe que vive en mí,
como el honor se agraviara. (ll. 31-2, 41-50)

What is left unsaid but shown, is the truth, that Don Diego had been fully aware of Guiomar's Jewish blood and her family's judaizing before he had seduced her.

Referring to Guiomar's Jewish descent, Don Diego says:

¿Esto no es público aquí?
[...]
Bien sabes tú que habéis dado
al tribunal que sabéis
ocasión en que veréis
castigar la obstinación
con que en tanta dilación
esperáis lo que tenéis. (ll. 63-70)

Lope points to the dishonesty of Don Diego, for whom the Jewish girl is good enough to have sex with, but not to marry. In his description of Don Diego's behaviour Lope could also be attacking the common male view of his age that there were two kinds of women: one suitable for marriage, and the other suitable only as providers of sexual pleasure.

Machado, the *gracioso*, speaking to Don Diego, mocks Bernardo for his Jewishness and accuses him of treason:

Si tostados
a lento fuego estuvieran
ciertos hombres que sé yo,
que tienen su descendencia
de las montañas, no digo
de Asturias, ¡ni Dios lo quiera!,
que allá les dieron principio

las montañas de Judea,
que nunca hubieran llegado
los de Holanda donde llegan.
Advierte que te han vendido. (ll. 355-65)

This *gracioso*, like Mingo in *El árbol del mejor fruto*, is the official spokesman for anti-Semitism. He tells Don Diego, Don Fadrique, the Gobernador, the soldiers, the Indians, and so on, that the Jews in the person of Bernardo had sold not only Brazil but each and every one of them to the Dutch: 'selling' is the central image for the Jew in the play, as it is in *La pobreza estimada*, as will be seen. The accusations against the Jews of 'selling' are related by the Gobernador to the sale of Christ, a well-known anti-Judaic topic:

Poca novedad me hicieron
los que ingratos me vendieron,
estando seguro yo
que este achaque les quedó
desde que a Cristo vendieron. (ll. 438-42)

Again, what is not said, but is shown in the action is the truth. It is Machado himself who is greedy and corrupt, and who agrees to save Guiomar only if she gives him all her money:

MACHADO	¿Qué escudos tenéis ahí?
GUIOMAR	Mil en doblones.
MACHADO	¡San Pedro!
	Yo soy Marqués de Brasil
	por librarte del brasero. (ll. 715-18)

Don Diego projects his treachery onto Bernardo when he himself is the only traitor in the play, abandoning Guiomar. Machado accuses Bernardo of selling people when he is the only person in the play who sells human life, that is, her own life to Guiomar. The immoral actions of these characters in the play tend to subvert the negative image of the Jew, by means of Lope's typical inversion of the good *cristiano viejo* / bad *converso*.

Don Fadrique is an exception to the other *cristianos viejos*. He is a stern judge and condemns his enemies to death:

¡Por vida del Rey de España

que no ha de quedar inglés,
alemán, belga, holandés,
que no degüelle en campaña! (ll. 599-602)

However, he seems reluctant to order even the arrest of the *conversos* whose punishment is demanded by Machado. All that he says is: 'Luego mandaré prenderlos' (l. 706).⁴⁸ On Machado's request he frees Guiomar, one of the *conversos* accused of treason, without investigating her case:

Alzad, señora, del suelo.
Y agradeced a Machado
el perdón. (ll. 712-14)

With this, Lope may have wanted to show that the Admiral was not acting according to what would have been expected of a usual *cristiano viejo* judge. Don Fadrique's appointment as leader of this important mission would have been made by the Count-Duke of Olivares and one may speculate that Don Fadrique would have been a supporter of King Philip IV's *valido* and his favourable policy towards *conversos*, as was described in Chapter 1. The play was written in 1623, two years after Olivares's rise to power and when his pro-*converso* politics were already being felt. According to Viqueira Barreiro, the play was written in homage to Don Fadrique (p. 293), but this homage to the Admiral would also have included praise for the Count-Duke's policy of defence of *conversos*.

In contrast to the negative image of the *cristianos viejos* in the play (except for Don Fadrique), Bernardo's image is positive. The accusations of treachery against him, of selling Brazil to the Dutch, are not supported by the text. The Spanish *converso* community in Brazil seeks the aid of the Dutch, he says, only to escape the danger of the coming of the Inquisition:

Temiendo que el Santo Oficio

⁴⁸ Perhaps it needs to be said that *luego* had at that time and has still the double meaning of 'sin dilación' and 'después' (AUT and DRAE). The future tense of 'mandaré' suggests that the meaning here is 'después'; if 'sin dilación' had been intended, the indicative 'mando' was more likely to have been used. In any case, it is significant that Don Fadrique only announces an intention and does not give the order for the arrest.

envía un visitador,
 de cuyo grave rigor
 tenemos bastante indicio,
 los que de nuestra nación
 vivimos en el Brasil,
 que tiene por gente vil
 la cristiana Religión,
 por excusar las prisiones,
 los gastos, pleitos y afrentas,
 y ver deste yugo exentas
 de tantas obligaciones
 nuestras familias, que ya
 a tal extremo han llegado,
 porque dicen que enojado
 Dios con nosotros está,
 habemos escrito a Holanda. (ll. 147-163)

Bernardo's defence of the *conversos* conforms to historical records: according to Wiznitzer, 'the New Christians were terrified by rumors of the Spanish king's intention to introduce the Inquisition in Brazil' (p. 35). As to Bernardo's 'selling' Brazil, the truth is that he not only does not ask for a reward, but when offered one by the Dutch Commander, he refuses it:

LEONARDO	Premio es justo que se dé a su padre [el de Guiomar]
BERNARDO	El premio ha sido, Señor, haberte servido.
CORONEL	Mis brazos os quiero dar. (ll. 457-61)

Although at first Bernardo speaks of revenge on Don Diego, when he has the opportunity, during the Dutch occupation, he does not execute it, thus showing a forgiving nature similar to Julio's in *El galán escarmentado*.

Another facet of Bernardo's positive image is his dignity. Taken prisoner together with other *conversos* he neither excuses his conduct nor begs for mercy. Machado makes the ridiculous accusation to Don Fadrique that Bernardo had sold the Admiral himself:

¡Vive Cristo,
 que es este pícaro hebreo
 el que te vendió! (ll. 712-14)

Bernardo comments simply: 'Señor, infórmate bien' (ll. 715-16). He has courage and honesty. Even Don Fadrique shows him respect and seems to be reluctant to pronounce sentence on him and is content to say non-committally: 'No puedo / dejaros de castigar' (ll. 717-18). Bernardo's positive image is reinforced by his tactful treatment of his daughter:

El refir es prevención
del mal al principio o medio,
pero después, el remedio
es piedad y discreción.
No te aflijas; padre soy,
Hombre soy, mancebo fui. (ll. 127-32)

His loving words may be echoing Lope's feelings towards his youngest daughter Marcela. Despite his opposition to her becoming a nun at the age of sixteen, he gave her permission to profess and a great deal of money which he had to borrow to pay for her entry into an expensive convent.⁴⁹ Bernardo's kindness to his dishonoured daughter and his integrity place him next to Pedro Crespo of *El alcalde de Zalamea* as one of the most tolerant fathers in a *comedia*. Like Julio in *El galán escarmentado*, as was seen, and Ricardo in *La pobreza estimada*, as will be seen, the Jew Bernardo is unusual in Lope's output. With him, the popular coupling of the Jew with treason and the Christian with loyalty seems to be inverted: the Jew can be loyal and the *cristiano viejo*, excepting Don Fadrique, treacherous. The treason on the individual level, with Don Diego and Leonardo betraying Guiomar, is paralleled by treason on the collective level, with the Dutch forces betraying the Jewish community. This parallelism throughout the play between the collective level of the main plot and the individual level of the subplot is noted by Diego Marín.⁵⁰

It is not authorial comments that subvert the negative image of the Jew in this play, but the contrast between the sympathetic portrait of the *converso* Bernardo and the

⁴⁹ See Antonio Villacorta Baños, *Las mujeres de Lope de Vega* (Madrid: Alderabán, 2000), p. 166.

⁵⁰ See *La intriga secundaria en el teatro de Lope de Vega* (Toronto and México: University of Toronto Press; Ediciones de Andrea, 1958), p. 102.

unflattering representation of the *cristianos viejos*. The qualities *conversos* have to possess in order to emerge as sympathetic appear to be loyalty, generosity, forgiveness, dignity, courage, honesty, love, and kindness, amply demonstrated by Bernardo's behaviour. Characteristics in *conversos* that Lope is not prepared to defend are the opposite of those above, amply demonstrated in the behaviour of the rich farmer Tello or of the *mayordomo* Félix in *La buena guarda*, as was seen when Lope's antecedents were examined. By means of the transposition Spanish *converso* / Brazilian *converso*, Lope also gets nearer to challenging the persecution of *conversos* in Spain than it seemed possible. Perhaps the Brazilian setting for this play, as distinct from a Spanish setting, gave Lope freedom to present in Bernardo a more positive image of the Jew.

6.2.6 LA POBREZA ESTIMADA

The triangle in this play consists of Dorotea, Leonido, and Ricardo. Dorotea, beautiful but poor, lives alone with Isabel, her Moorish slave, as Aurelio, Dorotea's father, is the captive of Audalla, king of Algiers.⁵¹ She has two suitors: Leonido, a poor *cristiano viejo*, and Ricardo, a rich *converso* of Jewish origin, as one learns from references made by Felisardo, a friend of Leonido, to 'confeso', 'San Benito' and the 'Macabeos' (p. 421). Not knowing which suitor to choose, Dorotea writes to her father, who, advised by Audalla, tells her to choose Leonido. She marries Leonido and they live in utter poverty. Leonido, whose only talent is fighting, feels that he must leave for the wars. His absence permits Ricardo to court Dorotea, who will accept neither presents nor money, remaining faithful to her husband and above suspicion. Leonido is shipwrecked on a beach in Algiers, where he captures Audalla, whom he subsequently ransoms in exchange for Aurelio's freedom. On their return to Spain, they are robbed by bandits. In the meantime, Ricardo realizes that it is impossible to seduce Dorotea and, beginning to

⁵¹ Lope de Vega, *La pobreza estimada*, BAE, XXX, 407-69.

admire her virtue, he leaves her anonymous gifts of money, which she does not accept. In the end, he gives all his money to two beggars in the street, who turn out to be Aurelio and Leonido. Ricardo then retires to a monastery to be in the future 'de pobres amigo' (p. 466). The end of the play sees Leonido and Aurelio even richer because Audalla sends a large sum of money through his son Zulema to ransom Isabel, who turns out to be his daughter.

This *comedia* deals directly with the problems of *conversos*, represented in the difficulties of Ricardo to marry the *cristiana vieja* Dorotea. Lope gives expression to these problems in verbal and physical battles between *cristianos viejos* and *conversos* throughout the play. The argument appears to be not so much, as Yarbrow-Bejarano maintains, 'between wealth and *limpieza*' (p. 211), but, as the concept of *limpieza* includes the concept of *honra*, between the values of *honor-opinión* and *honor-virtud*. Perhaps it is in this play that the questioning of the values of *honra* in the tradition of Cartagena, Rojas and Erasmus are most clearly expressed. This debate is an example of a general trend noted by Thacker: 'The *comedia* constituted a forum for the debate of certain social issues once critically considered set in stone' (p. 217). I propose to analyse this debate in the play by examining the ideology which considers *pobreza* a guarantee of *limpieza* and how Lope undermines it once again by inverting the virtue of *cristianos viejos* and the *converso* Ricardo's vice.

In order to understand better the conflicts between Ricardo and Leonido, it is necessary to keep in mind that the conflict between *cristianos viejos* and *nuevos* was to a large extent, as seen in Chapter 1, a social and economic conflict of classes. The *cristianos viejos* presented the point of view of feudal aristocracy, according to which clean wealth and honour derived exclusively from conquest and agriculture: 'La España cristiano-vieja [estaba] polarizada entre las armas y la agricultura.'⁵² The middle class, a

⁵² Márquez Villanueva, 'El problema de los conversos', p. 53.

sizeable proportion of which was *converso*, presented the urban point of view, according to which wealth gained by activities such as commerce, industry, medicine, administration, and so on, was also clean. This last opinion was shared by society at large, despite the claims of those who wanted to attack newly-gained wealth.

The main proponent of *cristiano viejo* ideology in the play is, ironically, Audalla, the king of Algiers. He does not behave like a real Moorish king. In the first place, African Moors were not racist, since the Jews found a refuge in North Africa and in the Turkish empire. Second, the Moors did not despise wealth obtained in business or the professions. Audalla's offer of his son Zulema as husband for Dorotea (p. 428) makes it clear that he is a Spanish *cristiano viejo* in everything but name. Audalla supports this ideology by his personal experience. Born noble but poor, he was able to attain power and wealth by means of war in the Turkish empire, as he says to Aurelio:

Y porque creas
que la nobleza viene a casos prósperos,
mira que yo nací pobre en extremo,
y que en mis mocedades fui soldado:
serví en Persia a Salín, hizome alférez,
fui Azpo y Belerbei, que es hombre de armas,
y últimamente a Argel por Rey me envía. (p. 432)

Audalla's history reflects ironically on Spain, where Leonido, also born noble but poor, is unable to 'prosperar' as could Audalla in the despised Turkish empire. This is how Audalla sums up his ideology, which makes him advise Aurelio to choose Leonido as Dorotea's husband:

Pues mira, dala al pobre bien nacido,
que te ha de dar, Aurelio, honrados nietos.
[...]
El mal nacido finge las costumbres;
en el hidalgo viven naturales.
No vendas por dinero a Dorotea;
que es infamia y deshonor de los padres,
y nunca de dos sangres diferentes
jenízaro se vio menos que bárbaro. (p. 431)

Audalla's first speech could be interpreted as being about clean wealth and the second about clean blood, because *noble* in the first speech and *bien nacido* in the second are equivalent to 'clean'. The two clean substances, clean wealth and clean blood, are inseparably linked. Audalla supports his ideas through the conventional religious admiration for poverty as the natural condition for a *crisitano viejo*. Man is born and dies with nothing: 'Que al fin cuando morimos todo sobra / y nadie lleva más de la mortaja' (p. 431).

While Audalla acts as spokesman of the ideology of '*pobreza-limpieza*', Leonido is its embodiment. The problems of how to obtain clean wealth by those of clean blood is dramatized in his and Dorotea's married life of utter poverty (p. 446). He considers a number of possibilities of making money, but rejects them all:

Soy hidalgo, y en razón
de mi esquivia condición,
no acierto a pedir prestado.
Soy maldito notador
de billetes de pedir:
vivir del juego, es vivir
muy a costa del honor.
Hacer mohatras, sí hiciera;
pero ¿de qué he de pagar?
Hidalgo, ¿dónde he de hallar
quien darme esos lances quiera?
Pues servir, no tengo a quién,
ni sé lisonjas decir,
ni ya conoce el servir
los que son hombres de bien.
[...]
Por esto, mi bien, me voy
donde pueda procurar
con qué os poder sustentar:
¡tan pobre he nacido y soy! (p. 446)

It is ironic that, as a *crisitano viejo caballero*, Leonido is prepared to engage in fraudulent commercial practices ('hacer mohatras'), generally attributed to Jews, but refrains from doing so only because he lacks the initial capital to buy his goods: 'Pero

¿de qué he de pagar?’⁵³ Leonido decides to seek his fortune outside Spain. He will not say where or how, but both he and Dorotea know that it can only be in war:

DOROTEA	¿Dónde vais?	
LEONIDO		No sé.
DOROTEA		Recelo
	que lo sabéis.	
LEONIDO		Como vos. (pp. 447-48)

This is the ideology of ‘*pobreza-limpieza*’, an ideology based on hypocrisy and falsehoods, and contradicted by life. According to Kamen: ‘The concept of honour discriminated against the unsuccessful. The poor [...] were deemed incapable of honour’ (p. 230). Van Beysterveldt agrees with this: ‘Toute la production dramatique espagnole du Siècle d’Or témoigne d’une vénération de la richesse et d’un mépris de la pauvreté.’⁵⁴ He nevertheless recognizes the power of the opposing ideology, according to which there is a close rapport:

Entre richesse – Nouveaux Chrétiens, d’un part et, de l’autre, pauvreté – Vieux Chrétiens. Le passage suivant d’*El mercader amante* [by Gaspar de Aguilar] fait nettement ressortir ce rapport. Dans cette comedia [...] Lidora se met en colère, lorsque sa servante insinue que Belisario, négociant, a du sang juif dans les veines. Furieuse, elle lui dit:

‘ser rico es aparejo
para ser cristiano un hombre,
y ser rico no es buen nombre
para ser cristiano viejo.’

Le seul fait d’être riche éveillait ainsi des soupçons que la personne en question n’était pas tout à fait de *sangre limpia*.⁵⁵

⁵³ *Mohatra* is ‘compra fingida o simulada. [...] Es trato prohibido’ (AUT). COV says: ‘Pienso que es nombre hebreo, y que vale hoyo, del verbo [...] *hatar, fodere*’ (p. 758).

⁵⁴ *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l’honneur dans la ‘comedia nueva’ espagnole*, p. 185.

⁵⁵ Van Beysterveldt, *Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l’honneur dans la ‘comedia nueva’ espagnole*, pp. 188-89. ‘Ser rico es aparejo’ does not appear to make logical sense in this context, because it is contradicted by ‘ser rico no es buen nombre’. However, the key to the contradiction may be the difference between *ser cristiano* and *ser cristiano viejo*; the first is easy, because one has only to be *cristiano*, which at that time had also the meaning of ‘virtuoso’ (AUT), especially ‘charitable’. The second is much more difficult, because one has not only to be, but appear to be (‘buen nombre’) *cristiano viejo*. The reason why it is so difficult to appear to be *cristiano viejo* is illustrated in the remainder of the speech: ‘Pues si el rico ha de cobrar / alguna deuda notoria / y el pobre la ha de pagar, / en viéndose ejecutar, / le niega la ejecutoria’ (Gaspar de Aguilar, *El mercader amante*, BAE, XLIII, 123-42 (p. 128)). As soon as a *cristiano viejo* feels himself at a disadvantage, he accuses the man with the advantage of being a *cristiano nuevo*.

It is by dramatizing the contradiction between the theory that the *pobreza* of the *limpio* is a guarantee of *honra*, and life, where the *riqueza* of the *no limpio* is no guarantee of *deshonra*, that the play lays bare the hypocrisy of Golden-Age *cristiano viejo* society, represented by Leonido, Aurelio, and Ricardo's servants. Leonido's hypocrisy is revealed when, on one hand, he condemns and, on the other hand desires, the wealth of the *converso*:

¡Oh, poderosa riqueza,
que me ganas por la mano!
Y aunque al dolor se atribuya,
digo que por tanta gloria
trocara mi ejecutoria
por la rica infamia suya. (p. 421)

It is significant that Lope has set this play about '*pobreza-limpieza*' in the context of a trade in human beings. Leonido captures a defenceless Audalla and then sells him for ransom, thus obtaining, ironically, 'clean' wealth: the morality that clean wealth can only be obtained in war comes here under scrutiny. The commerce in human beings, and therefore Leonido's behaviour, are unjust in Christian terms, as they do not obey any one of the three well-known rules of the just war formulated by St Augustine:

Todas las guerras debían ser justas y, para serlo, debía reunir las tres condiciones siguientes: 1. Debían hacerse por orden de la autoridad constituida. 2. Debían hacerse por una razón justa, p. e., [...] para recuperar lo que hubiese sido arrebatado injustamente. 3. Los que van a la guerra deben tener una intención justa, p.e., pretender hacer el bien o evitar el mal.⁵⁶

The Moors and the *cristianos viejos* in the play sell human beings, which they deem more honourable than selling objects. When Zulema appears with 'ducados' and 'joyas', Leonido knows that he has come to ransom Isabel: 'Sin duda es éste el tributo / del rescate' (p. 468). Lope also mocks the hypocrisy of Audalla, who sells Christians for ransom, then reminds Aurelio not to sell his daughter Dorotea to Ricardo: 'No vendas por dinero a Dorotea; / que es infamia y deshonra de los padres' (p. 431). Such an irony could not have fallen on deaf ears in the *corral*. Lope appears to censure the system of

⁵⁶ Lewis Hanke, *La lucha por la justicia en América*, trans. by R. Iglesia (Madrid: Istmo, 1988), p. 260.

selling people into slavery when he makes the captive Aurelio exclaim in a manner which is clearly not rhetorical, but the existential lament of a man who has lost his liberty due precisely to the existence of the trade in human beings, as is underlined by the words 'precio' and 'comprar':

¡Oh, libertad preciosa,
que el oro de la tierra
es precio vil para poder comprarte! (p. 427)

There are also inconsistencies in Aurelio's and Dorotea's thoughts about the latter's marriage. On one hand, they believe that *conversos* have no honour and that therefore it would be dishonourable for Dorotea to marry one, while, on the other hand, Dorotea seriously considers marrying Ricardo, a *converso*, for security. This is what she says to Isabel about him: 'Aqueste caballero / es hombre de gran valor' (p. 417). 'Valor' can indicate either wealth or courage, but in this case, as Dorotea is talking about the *converso* Ricardo, she must mean wealth and not courage. Afterwards she writes to her father:

Este mozo es hombre cuerdo,
y aunque en la sangre ofendido,
de Adán descendemos todos. (p. 430)

Here Dorotea voices pro-*converso* ideas, indicating that she is disposed to accept Ricardo if her father agrees. Speaking of her two suitors, she writes:

Ahora de aquestos dos
escoge y piensa el más digno,
que pueda darme hijos pobres,
o que te dé nietos ricos. (p. 430)

She appears to be a realist, using only *pobreza* or *riqueza* as criteria for a suitable partner. Her father is also willing to accept Ricardo as son-in-law, but he seeks Audalla's advice:

Como ése es rico y mal nacido, dice
que escuche su dinero, y que a su sangre
cierre los ojos. Tú, ¿qué me aconsejas? (p. 431)

At first, Aurelio does not appear to agree with Audalla's racial prejudices: he expresses realistic, egalitarian and philo-Semitic ideas:

Mil reyes comenzaron por esclavos,
y esclavos han venido a ser mil reyes.
De un hombre hemos nacido.
[...]
Mira el valor de los hebreos, mira
el libro de los Reyes y Jueces. (p. 432)

Neither does he seem to be prejudiced against wealth. On the contrary, he says that 'no hay honra allá en España sin dineros. [...] / Quien tiene, tiene deudos; quien no, deudas' (p. 431), an observation that coincides with the already mentioned opinions of Kamen and Van Beysterveldt. The play, however, subverts Aurelio's ideas of tolerance and equality by making him not practise them, and in this sense his words appear to be a pretence to be fair to *conversos*. Neither is Dorotea's letter to her father to be taken seriously. In retrospect it is clear that when she wrote the letter she had already fallen in love with Leonido's looks and had made up her mind to marry him. Her letter is another example of pretending to be fair to *conversos*, a practice that recalls the Inquisition's carefully orchestrated judicial processes.⁵⁷ However, while Dorotea is true to herself, Aurelio is a hypocrite. He is disposed to accept Ricardo's money, but despises him as a *converso*. He begs Audalla's help and advice, yet despises him as a Moor and a barbarian.

The idea that the poor ^{ARE} ~~is~~ always honourable is also questioned when the servants, who are poor, are presented as criminals. While it is true that *comedia* servants often steal food and drink, Tancredo does not belong to this category. He is not a petty scavenger but a villain, a traitor to his old master Leonido, a thief, a liar, a hypocrite, a perverter of the course of justice, and an evil counsellor to his new young master Ricardo, whom he eventually also betrays. He may be poor, but he is certainly not honourable, despite his *cristiano viejo* blood of which he is so proud. The values of

⁵⁷ See Kamen, p. 41.

cristiano viejo society are scrutinized not only by exposing its hypocrisy, but above all by opposing to it the critical attitude towards '*pobreza-limpieza*' of the young *converso* and his moral evolution.

The crucial point in Ricardo's philosophy is the importance he attaches to individual actions as opposed to inherited titles, a position typical of the the *converso* perspective enriched by Christian Humanism, as described in Chapter 1. Leonido counters Ricardo's view by attacking his rival's *limpieza*:

Como el vender y comprar
fue en vuestra casa primero,
que el blasón de caballero,
no lo podéis olvidar. (p. 437)

Ricardo counterattacks: 'La pobreza / fue siempre desvergonzada' (p. 438), and adds:

Que hidalgo seáis no sé;
pero cuando lo seáis,
ni con hablar lo mostráis,
ni en vuestro talle se ve.
¿Son las cartas de nobleza,
de solar y hechos notorios,
libelos infamatorios
contra la naturaleza?
Al que es vil, ¿recibe el cielo
descargo de que es hidalgo?
¿Estima la muerte en algo
al más hidalgo del suelo?
Son las hojas de que fundo
la más noble ejecutoria
cédula de vanagloria
que da firmadas el mundo.
Yo soy de mis obras hijo. (p. 438)

Against the ideology of poverty being a guarantee of *honra*, Ricardo maintains that only honourable actions make one honourable, not being rich or poor. However, although for Ricardo to be honourable was to act honourably, in the beginning of the play he is by no means a ^{PARAGON}~~pattern~~ of virtue. At first he tries to buy, then to rape Dorotea, but this does not imply that he is a ^{PATTERN}~~paragon~~ of vice; in fact, the general impression among the *cristiano viejo* characters in the play and some critics (Zuckerman-Ingber and Yarbrow-Bejarano) is that Ricardo practised deception in the sword fight with

Leonido. However, Ricardo's deceit is not evident, because while Leonido maintains that Ricardo stabbed him in the back, Ricardo roundly denies it.

In any case, it needs to be recalled that Ricardo is a product of a society where, even according to Leonido, 'es mayor señora la avaricia que el señor' (p. 446). Ricardo is also young, very rich, and without parents, having only his servants to guide him. However, from here on the plot charts Ricardo's spiritual voyage towards virtue, proving once again Cartagena's contention that Jews can be good. Ricardo is capable of change, while the *cristiano viejo* characters appear to be at times too self-satisfied to have this redeeming capacity. His transformation is gradual: after a while, he realizes that for Dorotea, as opposed to the other women he knows, love is more important than money. The second step in his transformation is when, informed that Dorotea had married Leonido, he says:

No es tiempo ya que mis agravios calle.
 ¡Ay, tesoros espléndidos!
 ¡Qué de empresas difíciles
 os parecieron con el oro fáciles!
 [...]
 Haciéndome fantástico
 y pretensor legítimo
 de la hermosura angélica,
 que goza un pobre rico.
 [...]
 Id, esperanzas frágiles,
 mal empleadas lágrimas,
 a Dorotea.
 [...]
 Bañad su alegre tálamo,
 decid que sois de un mísero,
 que ayer fue rico y fuerte, hoy pusilánime. (p. 445)

Here, for the first time, he becomes aware that money cannot buy love. This makes him feel humble, although at this point his physical desire for Dorotea is too strong to permit a radical improvement of conduct, as is shown by the fact that immediately afterwards, under the influence of the servants, he tries again to buy and even to rape Dorotea. Apart from paying for necessities, Dorotea has no interest in money, a continual

surprise for the money-conscious Ricardo. She is the only member of the *cristiano viejo* group in the play not obsessed by wealth, as Tancredo and Ricardo stress:

TANCREDO Lo que no puede interés,
 ¿quién lo basta a derribar?
RICARDO Que allí no tenga lugar,
 novedad extraña es. (p. 458)⁵⁸

Dorotea's indifference to money is one of the reasons for her transforming influence on Ricardo. The other is her determination at all cost to remain virtuous. When Ricardo succeeds in entering her house with Tancredo's treacherous help, Dorotea and Isabel take up swords and chase Ricardo and his servants away. After this humiliating battle, Ricardo is completely changed not only in his feelings, but in his actions. His lust for Dorotea is now transformed into admiration for something that he has never known in a woman, loyalty and chastity. When he finally perceives the spiritual beauty of Dorotea, he also begins to value spiritual virtues. He had known only mercenary women and, therefore, when Tancredo tells him that Dorotea has maintained her integrity, although 'sin comer se pasaba / algunas veces dos días' (p.462), Ricardo is astonished:

¡Que te adore y que le sobre
a los perros de mi casa!
[...]
Ya tu santidad, señora,
mucho más que tu hermosura,
me deleita y enamora,
que vivas no más procura
éste que tu vida adora.
Dineros me sobran; toma. (p. 462)

As he is rich and speaks of dogs in relation to Dorotea's poverty, many members of the audience would recall the parable of the Rich Man, who goes to hell for denying food to the hungry Lazarus, but feeds his dogs (Luke 16. 19-31). While the Gospel emphasizes that it is exceptional for the rich to go to heaven ('how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God': Luke 18. 24), at the end of the play Lope dramatizes the extraordinary salvation, not just of a rich man, but of a rich *converso*. Ricardo not only

⁵⁸ With 'allí', Ricardo is referring to Dorotea himself.

gives his money to Dorotea without asking for anything, but when she refuses, he gives it to two unknown beggars:

Cautivos, tomá ese lienzo;
que desde ahora comienzo
a ser de pobres amigo.
[...]
A un monasterio me voy. (p. 466)

Despite this positive image of Ricardo, the end of the *comedia* could be interpreted as yet another confirmation of the ideology '*pobreza-limpieza*', proposing that in the end the only way Ricardo could become honourable was by becoming poor. This interpretation would make *La pobreza estimada* an anti-Semitic play, because it would uphold the value of poverty and *limpieza de sangre* and condemn the *mal nacido* and his wealth. In fact, this is Yarbrow-Bejarano's interpretation:

By equating Jewishness with (dishonourably gained) wealth, this text fuels the antisemitism of those Old Christian classes, including the peasantry, competing with the *conversos* for the same positions and economic resources. (p. 213)

Gitlitz, on the other hand, argues:

Lope in these two plays [*El galán de La Membrilla* and *La pobreza estimada*] [...] has presented in a realistic and often sympathetic manner the reactions of conversos who have found themselves threatened and socially destroyed by the concept of purity of blood.⁵⁹

Once again, a play by Lope has generated two contradictory critical interpretations, paralleled by two apparently different messages delivered to two different parts of his audience. To that part *que no entiende* the play may suggest that Ricardo is *honrado* because in the end he becomes poor, confirming their hypocritical belief in the value of poverty. However, to that part of his public *que entiende* it could intimate that Ricardo is *honrado* not because of his newly acquired poverty, but because he had acted altruistically, helping the poor, and because he will devote the rest of his life to helping the needy. With this, the play seems to subvert the ideology which values *pobreza* and

⁵⁹ 'The New-Christian Dilemma in Two Plays by Lope de Vega', *Bulletin of the Comediantes*, 1 (1982), 63-81 (pp. 73-77).

limpieza de sangre and to defend the perspective which values virtuous actions. Lope makes Ricardo poor and thus, according to the identification of *pobreza* with *limpieza*, Ricardo should become also *limpio*, but ironically he never becomes *limpio* in the eyes of the other characters. For example, even after he had unostentatiously given away all his money to the poor, Dorotea simply cannot believe that a *converso* could do such a thing and continues to insult him: 'Traidor, la voz de Esaú / y las manos de Jacob' (p. 467). Lope exposes this contradiction in popular ideology by ironically showing Ricardo as *limpio* and *no limpio* at the same time, because, although he can give away all his *riqueza*, being a *converso*, he will never be *limpio*.

This is not the only irony in the play which exposes hypocrisy. The whole *comedia*, as is almost always the case with Lope's work, has an ironic infrastructure: the irony of a world in which those who sell human beings despise those who sell objects; the irony of those *cristianos viejos* who would do anything to be rich, except take up a trade, profession or business; the irony that the principal spokesman of the ideology of racial superiority is Audalla, a king but still a despised Moor. Almost every event and situation in the play is ironic, including the ending with the inversion of wealth and poverty, as Lope makes the poor and honourable Leonido rich and therefore, according to the logic of the play, dishonourable, but still honourable for being a *cristiano viejo*, and the rich and dishonourable Ricardo poor and therefore, according to the same logic, honourable, yet still dishonourable for being a *converso*. As usual, the title of the *comedia* is repeated in the closing lines. Significantly, it is addressed to Zulema by Leonido, adding the final touch of irony:

Acabe con tu venida
la riqueza mal nacida
y *La pobreza estimada*. (p. 469)

Leonido sees in Zulema's arrival only the end of the dangers to his marriage posed by the *riqueza mal nacida* of Ricardo: 'Acabe con tu venida la riqueza mal nacida.' The

irony consists in that Leonido does not see that the gold from Isabel's ransom will put an end, according to his own *cristiano viejo* ideology, to any possibility of him being *pobre* or *estimado*.

In parallel with the criticism of the behaviour of the *cristianos viejos*, the play questions the ideology that *pobreza* guarantees *limpieza* and *honra*, showing the *no limpio* and *rico* as *honrado* in the *converso* Ricardo and the *limpio* and *pobre* as *deshonrado* in the *cristianos viejos* Aurelio, Leonido, and the servants. The play seems to approve the ideal of good deeds as the touchstone of *honor*, a characteristic typical of the fusion of Christian Humanism with the *converso* perspective. In conformity with this ideal, the *comedia* appears to turn the sincere *converso* into a model of behaviour for all Christians. *La pobreza estimada* seems to subvert the negative image of the Jew by showing Ricardo's progressive adoption of an authentically Christian way of life (he ends up in a monastery, after all), suggesting that a Jew could be good, which is precisely what Spanish racism denied. Since the *converso* was always identified as the Jew, the positive image of the former implied a positive image accorded to the latter.

CONCLUSION

In general, it has been argued that Spanish Golden-Age *comedia* was sensitive to contemporary realities, but was it sensitive to the Jewish problem in particular, especially as it had been of crucial interest ever since the mass-conversions of Jews to Christianity at the end of the fourteenth century? Was the representation of the acute Jewish problem reduced on the stage to anti-Semitic references and to a few Jewish characters whose image was always negative? It is suggested in this thesis that the negative image of the Jew in the *comedias* analysed was often subverted by irony and ridicule, and that Golden-Age dramatists may not have been anti-Semitic, as maintained by a majority of critical opinion. I have presented the view of a group of critics who do not see the works of these dramatists as underpinning the dominant ideology of the time, but as alerting their audience to its injustices, including those committed against contemporary descendants of converted Jews. However, it needs to be borne in mind that, like Lope's hypothetical *converso* ancestry and his subversion of anti-Semitism, the presumed presence of a positive image of the Jew in *comedias* may not be easy to prove; the positive image had to be well concealed, for had it been easy to spot, the

authors of these plays would not have escaped the Inquisition's attention. My contribution to this argument has been to describe an important technique, *engaño*, used by these dramatists to question, covertly, the discrimination against the *conversos*, who, in Golden-Age Spain, were still identified as Jews. I have suggested that in Spanish literature the first writer to use *engaño* was the *converso* Fernando de Rojas and that his *La Celestina* was the first example in Spanish drama of the use of this technique. Lope developed Rojas's practice in his *comedias* and theorized his own work in his *Arte Nuevo*. The questioning of the negative image of the Jew was done in two ways: by a transposition of the Jew and by allowing the Jew to appear as a sympathetic character.

I have argued that Lope and his followers used transposition to challenge the negative image of the Jew, substituting the woman and also the biblical, legendary and foreign Jew for the contemporary *converso*. Transposition permitted these writers to deal with the Jewish problem. One may find good examples of transposition in *comedias de honra*, such as Calderón's *A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*. In the latter Leonor is locked up in her house, interrogated, found guilty and executed by her husband, a situation in which she could be seen as a transposition of the *converso* in the hands of the Inquisition.

The other way of questioning the negative image of the Jew was by presenting him as a character in the *comedia*. This was perhaps understood by a greater part of the audience, because the Jew could not be mistaken for another, such as the woman. As a consequence, there are fewer *comedias* where the Jewish problem is dealt with ^{MORE} openly than *comedias de honra*. I have analysed four plays in which the Jewish problem is treated explicitly: Cervantes's *El retablo de las maravillas*, Tirso's *El árbol del mejor fruto*, and Lope's *Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo* and *El niño inocente de La Guardia*. Finally, I have examined six *comedias* by Lope in which the problems of *conversos* are presented directly. In these I have attempted to show how, by indirect

means, the *converso* is presented as a positive and sympathetic character. In *La pobreza estimada*, for example, Lope contrasts the double standards of *cristiano viejo* characters with the honesty of a *converso*, thus presenting on stage the singular phenomenon of a sympathetic *converso* protagonist. This unusual character may have helped to awaken some understanding in a public used to being encouraged to hate the *conversos*. Since in popular perception even the sincere *converso* was still identified as a Jew, the presentation of the sincere *converso* as good could be interpreted to mean that a Jew could also be good, that Jewish blood did not prevent a man from being good. Thus the positive image of the sincere *converso* in a *comedia* could imply a positive image of the Jew.

Why did these dramatists want to change the image of the Jew? Could it have been self-interest, seeing that many of those in the arts and liberal professions had some Jewish blood? In the case of Lope, while some Hispanists have maintained that he was a 'subtle *saboteur*' of the status quo, only Pamp, Kossoff, Wade, and Blanco have related his critical stance to his possible *converso* lineage.¹ However, I have maintained that the connection may not be between the positive image of the Jew and the possible *converso* origin of authors such as Cervantes and Lope, but between this positive image and these writers's *converso* perspective combined with Christian Humanism. As Abellán noted in respect of the fifteenth century, this perspective appears to have been shared by seventeenth-century *cristiano viejo* writers such as Tirso and Calderón in respect of their desire for social justice for everyone. I hope to have shown that Spanish Golden-Age dramatists were sensitive to contemporary realities, that the Jewish problem was not reduced to a few anti-Semitic references, and that there was indeed in the *comedia* a positive image of the Jew. Given the general identification of the *converso* as Jew at this time, the presentation of a positive image of the biblical, legendary and foreign Jew may

¹ 'Subtle *saboteur*' are McKendrick's words in 'Honour/Vengeance in the Spanish Comedia', p. 317.

well have had the result of defending the contemporary *converso*, while on the other hand, the presentation of a positive image of the sincere *converso* would have implied a defence of the Jew. I also hope that the interpretations advanced in this thesis may stimulate new investigations into the image of the Jew in Spanish Golden-Age drama and further debate on its conservative or subversive nature.

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INDEX

- A secreto agravio, secreta venganza*, 31, 93, 95, 103, 285, 288
- Abellán, José Luis, 17, 29, 30, 31, 32, 41, 42, 122, 129, 286, 292
- Abrantes, Diego Lope de, 264
- Acceto, Torquato, 24
- Acosta, Cristóbal de, 90
- Acta Sanctorum*, 176
- Adagia*, 40, 59
- Aguilar, Gaspar de, 64, 70, 81, 95, 102, 159, 163, 226, 274, 288, 289, 290, 291
- Alemán, Mateo, 234
- Alfonso VIII, 102, 184, 189, 193, 194, 195, 294
- allegory, 7, 20, 49, 78, 134, 198, 207, 214, 264
- Alpert, Michael, 15, 292
- alumbradism, 18, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 178, 226, 231
- alumbrados*, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 178, 231
- Amán y Mardoqueo*, 4, 109, 111, 113, 131, 135, 138, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 289
- Amar después de la muerte o El Tuzaní de la Alpujarra*, 13
- ambiguity (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 67, 71, 111, 149, 197, 210, 216, 217
- anachronism, 76, 103, 124, 133, 182
- anagnorisis*, 65, 70, 171, 194, 261
- Andrés Martín, Melquiades, 38, 41, 43, 106, 292
- Animal Farm*, 78
- Anticristo, El*, 109
- anti-Semitism (*see also* racism), i, 6, 17, 19, 20, 21, 43, 56, 81, 89, 105, 117, 123, 131, 134, 148, 151, 161, 162, 163, 170, 179, 180, 184, 190, 191, 192, 197, 198, 199, 200, 208, 210, 215, 218, 230, 235, 244, 245, 262, 263, 264, 266, 281, 284, 286, 294, 297
- Apocalypse*, 78
- Aquinas, St Thomas, 53, 54, 212, 292
- Aragone Terni, Elisa, 199, 292
- Arbués, Pedro, 29
- Archelao, king of Jerusalem, 150
- Arco y Garay, Ricardo del, 59, 292
- Aristotle, 30, 31, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 69, 292

- Arte nuevo de hacer comedias*, 2, 22, 47, 60, 64, 67, 291
- Asenjo, Julio Alonso, 58, 292
- Asensio, Eugenio, 5, 37, 41, 42, 82, 154, 292
- atheism, 34
- audience, 20, 63, 65, 68, 69, 82, 102, 103, 104, 119, 125, 147, 152, 156, 171, 173, 177, 180, 182, 194, 217, 240, 244, 246, 251, 255, 256, 258, 280, 281, 284, 285
- Augustine, St, 213, 275
- auto de fe*, 33, 44, 69, 118, 137, 216, 254, 261
- auto sacramental*, 7, 20, 103, 109
- Averroes, 29
- Baer, Yitzhak, 23, 26, 29, 94, 203, 292
- Barrera y Leirado, Cayetano Alberto de la, 109, 292
- Bataillon, Marcel, 21, 37, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 55, 57, 59, 77, 79, 220, 224, 231, 292
- Belardo (character), 185, 187, 190, 232
- Beusterien, John, 5, 69, 88, 293
- Bible, 24, 48, 110, 112, 124, 133, 141, 142, 148, 149, 182, 191
- Biblia Poliglota*, 37
- biblical Jew, 2, 22, 90, 109, 112, 145, 148, 177, 181
- Biblioteca de Barcarrota, 55, 301
- Blanco, Juan Diego, 21, 60, 61, 200, 201, 202, 203, 206, 207, 210, 225, 231, 286, 293
- Blume, Jaime, 233, 293
- Bolland, Jean, 176
- Book of Chronicles*, 113
- Book of Esther*, 132
- Book of Job*, 110
- Book of Kings*, 113
- Book of Samuel*, 113
- Brecht, Bertolt, 78, 152, 183
- Bruerton, Courtney, 230, 300
- Burckhardt, Jacob, 40, 41, 293
- Cabrera, Victoria, 189, 293
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro, 21, 81, 114, 120, 288
- Cancer Ward*, 78
- Canetti, Elias, 78
- Cardaillac-Hermosilla, Yvette, 186, 293
- Cardoso, Isaac, 14, 45
- Carino (Heretic), 213
- Caro Baroja, Julio, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 31, 44, 45, 79, 87, 88, 100, 178, 181, 203, 225, 227, 229, 230, 235, 257, 293
- Carpio (Surname), 227
- Carpio, Bernardo del, 228
- Carpio, Miguel del, 228, 241
- Carrasco-Urgoiti, María Soledad, 10, 13, 135, 238, 293
- Carrillo, Carlos Alberto, 263, 294
- Cartagena, Alonso de, 20, 30, 31, 32, 49, 84, 91, 106, 192, 229, 231, 236, 271, 279
- Case, Thomas E., 10, 14, 76, 106, 228, 294, 300
- castigo sin venganza*, *El*, 95
- Castillejo, Cristóbal de, 90
- Castrillo, Andrea María del, 146
- Castro, Américo, 6, 8, 11, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 48, 63, 75, 76, 79, 82, 109, 220, 223, 225, 230, 234, 248, 294, 300
- Castro, Guillén de, 81
- Catholic Monarchs, 10, 26, 27, 126, 146, 197, 199, 207
- Cavallería (Family), 35
- Cavallería, Fernando de, 26
- Cazalla (Family), 38, 40, 297
- censorship, 86, 102, 110
- Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de, 1, 20, 31, 38, 41, 44, 46, 59, 64, 67, 78, 82, 84, 102, 104, 105, 148, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 221, 230, 234, 256, 285, 286, 289, 291, 294, 296, 297, 298, 300, 303, 304
- Charles V, 41, 115, 167
- Chauchadis, Claude, 79, 294
- Christ, 7, 15, 34, 54, 108, 109, 114, 115, 116, 117, 122, 124, 125, 150, 159, 161, 172, 176, 177, 178, 184, 198, 206, 207, 210, 214, 215, 232, 266
- Cicero, Marcus Tullius, 31, 294
- Cid*, *Le*, 81
- Cisneros, Cardinal, 37
- Claramonte, Andrés de, 106
- clavo de Jael*, *El*, 109
- code of *honra*, 59, 71, 129, 255, 256, 262
- Cohen, Martin A., 21, 27, 36, 294
- comedia* and ideology, 2, 1, 3, 4, 14, 21, 26, 36, 59, 72, 73, 75, 78, 83, 106, 117, 124, 231, 239, 241, 271, 272, 273, 274, 278, 281, 282, 283, 284, 286
- comedia de honra*, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 93, 118
- comedia de santos*, 151, 199, 200
- Comedia Himenea*, 45, 80
- comedia legendaria*, 151
- comedy, 21, 61, 64, 70, 236, 251
- Comisario* (see also Inquisition), 167
- Constantine, Emperor, 161, 163, 178, 180, 182
- Contreras y Contreras, Jaime, 6, 11, 36, 294
- conventional / unconventional (see also '*engañar con la verdad*'), 60, 63, 65, 67, 70, 71, 102, 117, 128, 194, 208, 264, 273
- conversión de la Magdalena*, *La*, 109
- converso* perspective, 2, 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 29, 32, 38, 43, 46, 60, 278, 283, 286

- double language, 2, 18, 22, 25, 32, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 58, 59, 65, 66, 67, 72, 218
- heterodoxy, 2, 18, 32, 35, 37, 39, 40, 43, 45, 47, 50
- immanence, 35
- individualism, 2, 18, 31, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 47
- pessimism, 160
- rationalism, 25
- conversos* (identified as Jews), 5, 19, 192, 236, 279, 283, 286
- Coplas de las calidades de las donas*, 90
- Copleston, Frederik, 24, 294
- Corneille, Pierre, 81
- Cornudo y contento*, 82
- corral*, 84, 104, 109, 177, 258, 275
- Covarrubias Orozco, Sebastián de, ii, 294
- Crawford, Chris, 56, 294
- creación del mundo y primera culpa del hombre*, La, 109
- cristiano viejo / cristiano nuevo* conflict, 4, 36, 93, 192, 254, 271
- Cruikshank, Don W., 79, 184, 188, 192, 193, 194, 259, 294
- Cruz, Isabel de la, 38
- crypto-Judaism (*see also* 'judaizante'), 3, 151, 176, 197, 205, 207, 208, 213, 214, 215, 217, 234, 259
- cuius regio, eius religio*, 26
- Dadson, Trevor J., 12, 295
- dama duende*, La, 65, 77, 96
- Dapaz Strout, Lilia, 192, 295
- Darst, David H., 192, 295
- David, 4, 21, 38, 90, 108, 109, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 133, 136, 148, 182, 185, 192, 195, 196, 230, 262, 290, 295, 297, 298
- David perseguido y montes de Gelboé*, 4, 109, 112, 114, 123, 125, 131, 133, 230, 290
- De anima et vita*, 38
- De officiis*, 31
- Defensorium unitatis christianae*, 31
- degollación de San Juan Bautista*, La, 109
- Deleuze, Gilles, 83, 295
- Della dissimulazione onesta*, 24
- demonization, 89, 90, 94, 135, 147
- Denzinger, Enrique, 110, 164, 179, 214, 295
- deus ex machina*, 124, 125
- Deyermond, Alan, 33, 34, 89, 108, 295, 297, 299
- Dialoghi d'amore*, 37
- Diálogo de mujeres*, 90
- Diálogo en laude de las mujeres*, 90
- Diamante, Juan Bautista, 194, 195
- Diana*, 38, 52
- Diccionario de Autoridades*, ii, 130, 179, 253, 261, 267, 274, 295
- Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, ii, 13, 57, 116, 126, 139, 168, 183, 245, 267, 295
- Die Blendung*, 78
- Diego Moreno*, 82
- Díez Borque, José María, 236, 241, 242, 290, 295
- Dille, Glen F., 74, 295
- dissimulatio*, 2, 22, 24, 35, 41, 42, 45, 46, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 218
- Dixon, Victor F., 21, 62, 114, 121, 184, 224, 294, 295, 301
- Domínguez Ortiz, Antonio, 3, 5, 8, 16, 18, 43, 76, 178, 295
- Don Quixote*, 38, 64, 221
- Dopico Black, Georgina, 21, 76, 83, 92, 98, 296
- dramatic irony, 47, 51, 67, 240
- dramatic techniques (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 75
- Dratch, Mark, 49, 296
- Duarte (Family), 146
- Dueñas, Juan de, 89
- Ecce Homo*, 129, 301
- Edwards, Gwynne, 21, 114, 288, 296
- El alcalde de Zalamea*, 100, 269
- El árbol del mejor fruto*, 4, 65, 148, 151, 159, 161, 163, 178, 184, 210, 266, 285, 289
- El arpa de David*, 4, 109, 113, 115, 117, 289
- El Brasil restituído*, 4, 222, 253, 262, 263, 290
- El burlador de Sevilla*, 176
- El caballero de Olmedo*, 58, 59, 290
- El castigo sin venganza*, 95
- El celoso extremeño*, 256
- El coloquio de los perros*, 221, 234
- El Conde Lucanor*, 153, 298
- El condenado por desconfiado*, 176
- El Duque de Visco*, 65
- El galán de La Membrilla*, 4, 6, 220, 222, 242, 281, 290
- El galán escarmentado*, 4, 7, 220, 222, 251, 253, 254, 256, 261, 268, 269, 290, 302
- El gran teatro del mundo*, 206, 288
- El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de La Mancha*, 64, 291
- El médico de su honra*, 79, 82, 93, 95, 255, 259, 294
- El mercader amante*, 274, 288

- El niño inocente de La Guardia*, 4, i, 132, 148, 151, 197, 199, 201, 202, 215, 218, 285, 293, 302
- El nuevo mundo descubierto por Cristóbal Colón*, 234
- El nuevo palacio del Retiro*, 6, 21, 122
- El pintor de su deshonra*, 93
- El premio del bien hablar*, 4, 221, 222, 248, 251, 252, 290
- El retablo de las maravillas*, 4, 20, 80, 148, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 159, 160, 184, 209, 210, 240, 285, 289, 297, 303, 304
- El rufián viudo*, 234
- El santo negro Rosambuco*, 106, 234
- El último godo*, 65
- El valiente Campuzano.*, 234
- El viejo celoso*, 67, 82, 256
- Elliott, John H., 43, 122, 296
- Enchiridion*, 40, 41
- engañar con la verdad*, 2, 22, 35, 47, 58, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 74, 75, 98, 128, 180, 186, 201, 207, 239, 261, 264
- Enríquez (Family), 36
- Enríquez Gómez, Antonio, 1, 36, 72, 73, 91, 99, 109, 127, 145, 221, 234, 289, 301
- Entrambasaguas, Joaquín de, 224, 235, 296
- Erasmism, 3, 18, 22, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 54, 57, 59, 106, 128, 178, 231, 292
- Erasmus, 20, 40, 41, 42, 45, 47, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 69, 77, 84, 91, 160, 238, 248, 271, 294, 299, 303
- escala de la gracia, La*, 109
- Escudero, José Antonio, 16, 17, 296
- Espinosa, Juan de, 90
- estatutos de limpieza de sangre*, 3, 5, 14, 16, 36, 58, 84, 91
- Estella, Diego de, 59
- Esther, 90, 132, 133, 134, 136, 143, 145, 297
- Ettinghausen, Henry, 129, 296
- Expostulatio Spongiae*, 224
- expulsion, 1, 2, 8, 10, 12, 19, 26, 27, 80, 94, 126, 146, 150, 195, 201, 202, 203, 204, 208, 210, 217, 221, 236, 241
- Familiar (see also Inquisition)*, 217, 230
- farce (see also 'engañar con la verdad')*, 71, 159, 160, 208, 215, 258
- Faria e Sousa, Manuel de, 229
- farmer, 6, 100, 242, 243, 270
- feminism, 76, 101, 105, 106, 261
- feminization, 88, 92
- Ferdinand, King, 26, 29, 35, 36, 210
- Fernández, Lucas, 63
- Ferrer, Vicente, 26
- Fita, Fidel, 208, 211, 296
- Flavius, Josephus, 150, 296
- forced conversion, 23, 26
- Fra Molinero, Baltasar, 106, 296
- Fuente Ovejuna*, 62, 63, 100, 218, 254, 290
- García Cárcel, Ricardo, 11, 12, 189, 296
- García Gómez, Ángel M., 24, 44, 65, 78, 104, 119, 249, 296
- Gargantue et Pantagruel*, 78
- genealogies, 225, 228
- Gerli, Michael E., 157, 160, 297
- Gide, André, 102
- Gilman, Stephen, 6, 17, 18, 32, 33, 42, 63, 223, 225, 231, 297
- Ginés de Sepúlveda, Juan, 235
- Gitlitz, David, 21, 220, 281, 297
- Glaser, Edward, 6, 21, 43, 133, 199, 297
- Godínez, Felipe, 1, 38, 109, 111, 112, 114, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 221, 222, 229, 230, 238, 289, 293, 297, 300, 301
- Goldberg, Alice, 143, 297
- Goldhagen, Daniel J., 15, 105, 297
- González Escanciano, José Luis, 211, 297
- Goytisolo, Juan, 30, 35, 48, 297
- Gracián de Alderete, Diego, 41
- Green, Otis H., 89, 297
- Guardadme las espaldas*, 82
- Guattari, Félix, 83, 295
- Guía de los descarriados*, 29
- Gutiérrez Nieto, José Ignacio, 84, 297
- Guzmán de Alfarache*, 234
- Guzmán, Fernando, 18, 199, 234, 297
- Habsburg Monarchs, 114, 115
- Hamilton, Alastair, 39, 54, 297
- Hanke, Lewis, 235, 275, 298
- Hassatt, Maurice M., 212, 298
- Hebreo, León, 38, 298
- Hebrew (*see also* biblical Jew), 49, 107, 108, 110, 112, 128, 149
- Heiple, Daniel L., 229, 298
- Helen, St, 161, 163, 164
- Henley, Nancy M., 105, 298
- heresy, 9, 18, 29, 33, 39, 41, 83, 111, 130, 140, 143, 144, 145, 199, 253
- Hernández, Francisca, 38
- hidalgo de ejecutoria*, 226, 227
- historia de Tobías, La*, 109
- História do Brasil*, 263
- Historia general de España*, 185
- Hitler, Adolf, 15, 297
- Honig, Edwin, 155, 298
- honor-opinión*, 31, 46, 90, 106, 128, 271
- honor-virtud*, 31, 90, 106, 271
- Hubert, Judd D., 152, 215, 298
- humbling, 231
- hyperbole (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 64, 68, 70, 210, 228, 239, 241, 261, 264

- hypocrisy, 51, 53, 67, 156, 274, 275, 278, 282
- Idea de un príncipe político-cristiano*, 122
- idolatry, 49, 165, 171, 173, 176, 177, 178, 179
- Ignacio of Loyola, St, 14, 58, 236
- Index (librorum prohibitorum)*, 41, 59
- Indian, 106, 234, 235, 264, 266
- Inquisition, 4, 9, 10, 11, 15, 17, 19, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 36, 44, 55, 72, 73, 74, 83, 94, 97, 98, 103, 110, 111, 126, 130, 135, 136, 137, 139, 141, 142, 143, 144, 146, 158, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 183, 197, 199, 203, 204, 208, 210, 213, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 241, 255, 267, 268, 277, 285, 292, 296, 298, 301
- intermarriage, 15, 35, 76
- irony (see also 'engañar con la verdad'), 2, 22, 25, 51, 53, 59, 65, 67, 68, 69, 71, 98, 103, 105, 120, 124, 125, 126, 152, 180, 181, 182, 183, 194, 214, 229, 238, 240, 241, 245, 247, 259, 273, 275, 282, 283, 284
- Isabella, Queen, 26, 36
- Islam, 9, 10, 24, 294
- Israel, Jonathan I., 44, 72, 121, 138, 139, 174, 214, 298, 301
- Jesuits, 14, 57, 176, 178, 299
- Jewish problem, 8, 9, 10, 14, 42, 43, 75, 80, 81, 130, 151, 220, 231, 284, 285, 286
- Jewishness, 145, 191, 245, 265, 281
- Jezabel, 102
- Jiménez de Enciso, Diego, 106
- John, St (Evangelist), 78
- Jones, C.A., 79, 291, 294, 298
- Juan Latino*, 106
- Juan Manuel, Don, 153
- Judaism, 2, 15, 16, 20, 24, 27, 28, 39, 48, 49, 54, 56, 58, 60, 78, 93, 101, 105, 106, 111, 125, 134, 135, 137, 139, 142, 143, 144, 145, 149, 159, 177, 180, 199, 202, 262, 292, 296, 299
- judaizante* (see also crypto-Judaism), 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 14, 15, 27, 28, 39, 43, 44, 72, 103, 127, 131, 136, 145, 158, 167, 198, 202, 226, 227, 229, 230, 253, 265, 294
- Judas Macabeo, 109
- Kamen, Henry, 8, 9, 27, 28, 110, 167, 168, 203, 230, 274, 277, 298
- katharsis*, 61
- Katz, Steven T., 49, 298
- Kenig, Evelynne, 23, 298
- Kossoff, A. David, 21, 224, 225, 286, 298
- La buena guarda*, 221, 226, 232, 251, 252, 262, 270, 290
- La Celestina*, 2, 3, 6, 16, 22, 32, 33, 34, 48, 50, 51, 52, 55, 58, 59, 63, 67, 89, 220, 223, 234, 285, 289, 292, 294, 295, 297, 299, 303
- La corona derribada y vara de Moisés*, 109, 230
- La corona merecida*, 102
- La cueva de Salamanca*, 156
- La dama boba*, 96, 251
- La dama del olivar*, 100, 101, 289
- La dama duende*, 65, 77, 96
- La desgraciada Raquel*, 4, 189, 194, 301
- La Dorotea*, 58, 291
- La española inglesa*, 44, 78, 104, 105, 296
- La Godina*, 111
- La hermosa Ester*, 4, 109, 112, 113, 125, 131, 132, 134, 135, 142, 145, 147, 194, 204, 230, 290, 297, 302
- La judía de Toledo*, 21, 194
- La moza de cántaro*, 77, 96
- La muerte de Herodes*, 95
- La mujer que manda en casa*, 102, 109, 112, 289
- La mujer que se queja del matrimonio*, 77
- La pobreza estimada*, 4, 90, 110, 220, 222, 244, 253, 266, 269, 270, 281, 282, 283, 285, 290
- La privanza del hombre*, 103
- La reina Ester*, 109, 113, 131, 135, 136, 141, 142, 143, 144, 289, 303
- La tragedia del Rey Don Sebastián y bautismo del Príncipe de Marruecos*, 115
- La vengadora de las mujeres*, 86, 87, 96, 290
- La venganza de Tamar*, 4, 102, 109, 112, 118, 119, 121, 288, 290, 304
- La victoria de la honra*, 95, 290
- La villana de Getafe*, 4, 65, 129, 194, 221, 222, 236, 238, 241, 242, 251, 290, 299
- Laguna, Andrés, 41
- Las Casas, Bartolomé, 213, 234, 235, 291
- Las lágrimas de David*, 4, 109, 112, 127, 128, 289
- Las paces de los reyes y judía de Toledo*, 4, 91, 148, 151, 184, 192, 235, 285, 290, 295
- Lázaro Carreter, Fernando, 108, 149, 298
- Le Goff, Jacques, 88, 299
- Lehmuhl, August, 57, 299
- Lengsfeld, Peter, 116, 299
- Lerma, Duke of, 102
- Levi de Barrios, Miguel, 78
- Libro de castigos y documentos*, 184
- Libro Verde de Aragón*, 11
- Lida de Malkiel, María Rosa, 34, 109, 200, 206, 208, 211, 225, 254, 299
- limpieza de sangre*, 2, 6, 14, 17, 22, 72, 73, 75, 76, 79, 80, 84, 85, 96, 103, 106, 117,

- 146, 148, 153, 155, 221, 224, 228, 230, 236, 237, 238, 241, 246, 249, 252, 281, 282, 301
- Lingua*, 54, 55, 160, 238, 248
- Lloyd-Jones, Kenneth, 54, 299
- locos de Valencia, Los*, 67, 290
- López de Illescas, 41
- López Pereira, Manuel, 44, 298
- Lortz, Joseph, 178, 299
- Los cabellos de Absalón*, 4, 109, 112, 114, 120, 121, 288, 289, 295, 304
- Los comedadores de Córdoba*, 31, 65, 68, 70, 72, 95, 194, 218, 290, 300
- los que entienden / los que no entienden* (see also '*engañar con la verdad*'), 68, 71, 104, 254, 258
- Los trabajos de Jacob*, 109, 113
- Los trabajos de Job*, 109, 113
- love triangle, 93, 237, 242, 248
- Lubac, Henri de, 48, 299
- Lucan, 53
- Luis de Granada, Fray, 59
- Luis de León, Fray, 41, 59, 110
- Luján, Micaela, 233, 234
- Luther, Martin, 26, 53
- Lutheran, 41, 52, 110
- Maccoby, Hyam, 15, 48, 299
- MacDonnell, Joseph F., 57, 299
- Maimonides, 24, 25, 29, 49, 231, 299
- maldicencia*, 55, 160, 248, 249, 251, 252
- Maldonado, Juan, 38, 41
- Maravall, José Antonio, 21, 299
- maravillas de Babilonia, Las*, 109
- Marcela (Lope's daughter), 269
- Margarita, Queen, 102
- Mariana, Juan de, 185
- Marín, Diego, 62, 63, 111, 242, 269, 290, 291, 299
- Márquez Villanueva, Francisco, 4, 5, 17, 18, 27, 29, 36, 37, 76, 220, 225, 237, 271, 299
- Márquez, Antonio, 4, 5, 17, 18, 27, 29, 36, 37, 39, 76, 220, 225, 237, 271, 299, 300
- marrano*, 3, 10, 18
- Martínez, Fernán, 26
- martyr, 197, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214
- Marucchi, Orazio, 162, 300
- Mazur, Oleh, 235, 300
- McCrary, William C., 186, 192, 295, 300
- McKendrick, Melveena, 21, 60, 68, 71, 72, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 84, 85, 87, 92, 99, 100, 101, 102, 105, 127, 218, 286, 300
- médico pintor, El*, 109
- mejor espigadera, La*, 109
- mejor esposo San José, El*, 109
- Mendoza y Bobadilla, Francisco de, 11
- Menéndez Onrubia, Carmen, 38, 137, 229, 300
- Menéndez Pidal, Ramón, 31, 300
- Menéndez y Pelayo, Marcelino, 21, 58, 127, 131, 145, 199, 203, 229, 300
- Messiah, 121, 130, 144, 159, 172, 173, 184
- meta-theatre (see also '*engañar con la verdad*'), 152, 160, 180, 183, 194, 210, 215
- mimesis, 60, 92, 152
- mimetism (see also '*engañar con la verdad*'), 60
- Mira de Amescua, Antonio, 109, 113, 115, 184, 189, 194, 195, 289, 301
- miracle, 156, 161, 174, 175, 176, 177, 198, 207, 214, 232
- Misas de amor*, 89
- misogyny, 86, 89, 105, 106
- mocedades del Cid, Las*, 81
- mocking society (see also '*engañar con la verdad*'), 2, 22, 61, 63, 71, 98, 124, 170, 186, 189, 241, 242, 244
- Montalbán, Álvaro de, 32
- Montemayor, Jorge de, 38, 41
- Moorish, 8, 9, 10, 13, 25, 106, 135, 184, 186, 188, 238, 239, 270, 272, 275, 277, 282, 294
- Morant, Isabel, 77, 300
- Moreno Nieves, José Antonio, 122, 300
- Moreto, Agustín, 211, 289
- moriscos*, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 84, 106, 123, 186, 221, 236, 238, 240, 241, 293, 297
- Morley, S. Griswold, 230, 300
- Muecke, Douglas C., 69, 300
- Nazism, 15, 78, 105
- negative image of the Jew, 20, 21, 46, 108, 148, 150, 152, 159, 160, 161, 163, 165, 170, 171, 177, 179, 181, 183, 191, 196, 197, 202, 210, 215, 266, 269, 283, 284, 285
- avarice, 182
- big noses, 167, 170, 182, 247
- blindness, 98, 159, 160, 161, 181, 182, 184, 194, 209, 210, 241
- conspiracy, 28, 133, 197, 202, 205, 206, 207, 216, 217
- cowardice, 88, 129, 165, 166, 169, 181, 182, 247, 259
- cunning, 175, 208, 241, 257, 258
- deicide, 4, 11, 15, 16, 88, 94, 149, 151, 161, 198, 202, 259
- flogging Christ's effigy, 178, 210
- greed, 2, 35, 165, 166, 187, 208, 234, 241, 245, 266
- hiding of the Cross, 171, 172, 173
- male menstruation, 88, 89, 90

- not eating pork, 28, 117, 172, 197, 205, 214, 229, 239, 245
- obstinacy, 13, 173, 177, 181, 182
- poisoning, 90
- ritual murder, 26, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 205, 207, 259
- treason, 48, 166, 181, 182, 185, 191, 229, 263, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 275, 277
- Negroes, 14, 105, 106, 234, 235, 263, 264, 296
- Netanyahu, Benzion, 16, 17, 18, 32, 295, 296, 301
- New Testament, 40, 41, 48, 108, 109, 112, 116, 117, 118, 121, 138, 141, 144, 176, 209
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 129, 301
- nobility, 5, 11, 12, 13, 15, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 51, 63, 72, 74, 84, 85, 90, 91, 106, 147, 158, 179, 208, 216, 223, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 233, 235, 237, 241, 242, 248, 249, 250, 251, 256, 261, 262, 264, 271, 272, 273, 278
- non-resolution (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 64, 70, 256
- Novelas ejemplares*, 78, 234
- Ocampo, Florián de, 184
- Oelman, Timothy, 99, 301
- Old Testament, 13, 19, 49, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 115, 116, 117, 121, 122, 124, 133, 138, 141, 143, 177, 209, 262
- Olivares, Count-Duke of, 7, 22, 44, 118, 122, 137, 195, 231, 267, 298
- opinión*, 8, 34, 90, 95, 106, 109, 128, 156, 200, 231, 252
- Oropesa, Alonso de, 36
- Ortega y Gasset, José, 68, 301
- Ortiz (Family), 5, 38, 76, 178
- Orwell, George, 78
- Osorio, Elena, 248
- Othello*, 81
- overtly / covertly (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 2, i, 19, 20, 29, 35, 48, 61, 69, 71, 73, 81, 152, 161, 167, 215, 219, 221, 234, 252, 271, 284, 285
- Pamp, Diane J., 6, 11, 21, 36, 220, 221, 224, 225, 226, 236, 238, 249, 250, 252, 286, 301
- paranoia, 123, 133, 146, 163
- Parks, Ted, 137, 301
- parody (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 73, 178, 209, 210, 214, 259
- Paternoy, Sancho de, 28
- Paterson, Alan K.G., 7, 21, 58, 62, 123, 288, 301
- Paul, St, 176
- Pedraza Jiménez, Felipe B., 60, 64, 67, 190, 192, 193, 225, 291, 301
- Pedro I, 25
- Pérez de Montalbán, Juan, 137, 224, 226, 229, 249, 291
- Pérez González, Fernando T., 55, 301
- persecution, 2, 4, 16, 22, 23, 27, 36, 52, 56, 93, 99, 100, 113, 118, 125, 130, 133, 142, 145, 147, 171, 172, 177, 178, 180, 205, 207, 224, 240, 263, 270
- Persius, 53
- Peter of Verona, St, 213
- Philip III, 102
- Philip IV, 7, 44, 88, 118, 121, 122, 264, 267
- Philologia*, 34
- Philosophia libera*, 45
- Pincus, Fred, 105, 298
- pobreza*, 222, 271, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278, 281, 283
- poetic justice, 65, 239, 247
- Poetics*, 3, 60, 61, 62, 64, 292
- Política de Dios, gobierno de Cristo y tiranía de Satanás*, 129
- positive image of the Jew, 2, i, 8, 19, 22, 48, 76, 106, 119, 120, 122, 131, 132, 133, 142, 174, 191, 194, 207, 222, 253, 270, 286
- as a human being, 119, 121, 122
- courage, 91, 173, 180, 269, 270, 276
- dignity, 18, 33, 95, 163, 172, 173, 255, 268, 270
- divinization, 89, 90, 135, 138, 139, 141, 142, 145, 147
- hero, 13, 19, 22, 67, 74, 93, 100, 119, 125, 228
- loyalty, 131
- not as a monsters, 119, 131
- pacifism, 131
- sincere converts, 24, 173, 177, 235
- post-figuration, 138, 139, 141, 145
- postrar godo de España, El*, 72
- Praise of Folly*, 40, 59
- predestination, 206, 207, 209, 218
- prefiguration, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 124, 125, 131, 133, 134, 138, 141, 144
- projection, 182, 257, 260
- Proust, Marcel, 102
- prudente Abigail, La*, 109, 127
- Quevedo, Francisco de, 82, 111, 129, 296, 302
- Rabelais, François, 78
- racism (*see also* anti-Semitism), 1, 2, 4, 8, 15, 17, 31, 32, 63, 76, 80, 84, 85, 87, 92, 105, 154, 155, 156, 158, 167, 192, 199, 217, 222, 224, 225, 234, 235, 236, 239,

- 240, 241, 244, 247, 248, 251, 252, 277, 282, 283
- Ramírez, Jerónimo, 202
- Reed, Kevin, 52, 301
- Reformation, 41, 45, 110, 178
- Rennert, Hugo A., 223, 294
- Reprobación del amor mundano o Corbacho*, 88, 291
- restrictio mentalis*, 49, 57
- Rey Hazas, Antonio, 82, 301
- Reyre, Dominique, 189, 195, 301
- Ribera, Suero de, 89
- rico avariento*, *El*, 109
- ridiculing society (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 84, 155, 161, 165, 167, 169, 170, 176, 183, 190, 239
- Rimas sacras*, 211
- riqueza*, 257, 271, 273, 275, 276, 282
- robo de Dina*, *El*, 109
- Rodrigo, King, 65, 72
- Rodríguez-Puértolas, Julio, 58, 103, 120, 168, 288, 292, 302
- Rohland de Langbehn, Regula, 17, 302
- Rojas, Fernando de, 48
- Roncero-López, Victoriano, 110, 302
- Roston, Murray, 110, 302
- Roth, Cecil, 23, 26, 27, 28, 36, 302
- Rudich, Vasily, 53, 302
- Rueda, Lope de, 63, 82
- Rufo, Juan, 70, 71, 291
- Ruiz de Alcaraz, Pedro, 38
- Saavedra Fajardo, Diego de, 122
- Sachar, Howard M., 23, 24, 302
- Salomon, Noël, 79, 302
- Salucio, Agustín, 5, 20
- San Diego de Alcalá*, 227, 290
- San Lucas*, 109
- San Pedro de Arbués*, 29
- San Pedro, Diego de, 17, 29, 30, 34, 154, 213, 226, 266, 302
- Sánchez, Alfonso, 224
- Sánchez, Gabriel, 28
- Sánchez, Miguel, 63, 66
- Santa Fe, Francisco de, 28
- Santa María, Pablo de, 16, 36
- santo negro Rosambuco en la ciudad de Palermo*, *El*, 106
- Scholberg, Kenneth R., 69, 302
- Seneca, 30, 53
- Sentimientos a los agravios de Cristo Nuestro Bien por la nación hebrea*, 235, 291
- Sepúlveda, Lorenzo de, 184
- Serrano Mangas, Fernando, 55, 302
- Sessa, Duke of, 229, 231
- Shakespeare, William, 152, 298
- sibila del Oriente*, *La*, 109
- Sicroff, Albert A., 21, 79, 131, 134, 147, 200, 201, 216, 302
- Sidanius, Jim, 105, 302
- Silíceo, Cardinal, 4, 16
- Silverman, Joseph H., 21, 220, 254, 255, 261, 302
- Slater, T., 57, 302
- Sloman, Albert E., 121, 302
- Smedt, Charles de, 176, 303
- Smith, Dawn L., 6, 155, 301, 303
- social criticism (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 117
- Solzenytsin, Alexander, 78
- Song of Songs*, 110
- Spinoza, Baruch, 18, 45, 129, 304
- Spitz, Lewis, 40, 41, 303
- Spongia*, 224
- stereotypes (*see also* negative image of the Jew), 2, 19, 21, 22, 90, 149, 182, 207, 258, 259, 260, 262
- Stern, Charlotte, 21, 32, 303
- Stroud, Matthew D., 82, 303
- Suárez, Enrique, 29, 102, 303
- subversion (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 2, 22, 35, 67, 73, 151, 152, 154, 160, 184, 186, 192, 201, 202, 214, 215, 218, 264, 277, 284, 287
- Swift, Jonathan, 78
- Syed Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, 24, 303
- Tacitus, 53
- Talavera, Arcipreste de, 88
- Talavera, Hernando de, 36
- Talmud, 48, 49, 57, 66
- Tanto es lo de más como lo de menos*, 109
- Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, ii, 9, 66, 88, 158, 274
- Thacker, Jonathan, 21, 271, 303
- The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, 78
- The Guide of the Perplexed*, 24
- The Sileni of Alcibiades*, 59
- Tirso de Molina, 21, 102, 118, 159, 163, 289, 303
- tizón de la nobleza*, *El*, 11
- Toledo, Fadrique de, 263
- Torah, 24, 26
- Torquemada, Juan de, 36
- Torre y Sevil, Francisco de la, 29
- Torrellas, Pere, 90
- Torres Naharro, Bartolomé, 45, 80
- Torres Rámila, Pedro de, 224
- Tovar, Bernardino, 41
- trabajos de Jacob*, *Los*, 109, 113
- trabajos de Job*, *Los*, 109, 113
- Tracy, James D., 41, 53, 54, 303
- tragedy, 61, 64, 65, 85, 121, 159
- tragicomedia*, 63, 134

- transposition, 2, 22, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 108, 112, 114, 118, 119, 125, 126, 127, 130, 131, 135, 145, 147, 148, 158, 183, 233, 238, 249, 255, 257, 270, 285
converso/Hebrew, 108, 114, 131, 148
 Jew/woman, 74, 76, 77, 79, 86, 87, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 105, 257
limpieza/honra, 76, 77, 79, 80, 83, 91, 92, 95, 96, 101
 Spanish *converso* / Brazilian *converso*, 270
- Trastámara, Enrique of, 25
Tratado en loor de las mujeres, 90
 Trent (Council of Trent), 41, 45, 110
 Trinkaus, Charles, 40, 41, 303
 Ucesa, Diego de, 20
 Unamuno, Miguel de, 64, 303
 unconventional / unconventional (*see also* 'engañar con la verdad'), 65
 Valdés, Juan de, 41, 54
 Valencia y Guzmán, Juan de, 264
 Valencia, Juan O., 95, 127, 128, 133, 289, 290, 303
valiente negro en Flandes, *El*, 106
 Van Beysterveldt, Antonie A., 21, 51, 76, 79, 80, 81, 90, 91, 92, 101, 274, 277, 303
vaso de elección, *El*, 109
vaso y la piedra, *El*, 109
 Vega (Surname), 227
 Vega Carpio, Félix Lope, 297
 Vega García-Luengos, Germán, 142, 145, 303
 Vega, Félix de, 226, 291
 Vega, Garcilaso de la, 89, 291
 Vega, Lope de, i, ii, 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 20, 21, 22, 31, 32, 46, 47, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 75, 76, 79, 82, 84, 86, 87, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 102, 103, 104, 106, 109, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115, 123, 124, 125, 127, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 137, 141, 142, 145, 146, 147, 148, 151, 157, 162, 170, 171, 184, 185, 186, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 241, 242, 244, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 257, 258, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 269, 270, 271, 275, 280, 281, 282, 285, 286, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304
- Vegas, Damián de, 202
 Vergara (Family), 38
 Vergara, Francisco de, 41
 Vespasian, Emperor, 149
 Vicente do Salvador, Frei, 263
vida de Herodes, *La*, 109
 Villacorta Baños, Antonio, 269, 303
 Villalón, Cristóbal de, 41
 Virgin Mary, 112, 134, 139, 214
 Virués, Cristóbal de, 63
 Vives, Juan Luis, 41
 Vives, Luis de, 38
 Vosters, Simon A., 115, 303
Vulgate, 140, 182
vulgo, 3, 8, 15, 20, 66, 67, 68, 77, 80, 85, 176
 Wade, Gerald E., 21, 220, 225, 229, 286, 303
 Wardropper, Bruce W., 17, 45, 109, 153, 304
 Weiner, Jack, 134, 145, 304
 Welles, Marcia L., 121, 304
 witchcraft, 34, 157, 178, 185, 186, 187, 198, 213, 214, 229, 293
 Witznitzer, Arnold, 263, 268, 304
 Woman
 active woman, 86
 passive woman, 93
 Yahil, Leni, 106, 304
 Yarbrow-Bejarano, Yvonne, 21, 86, 87, 88, 92, 94, 227, 261, 271, 278, 281, 304
 Yepes, Francisco, 202
 Yovel, Yirmiyahu, 18, 24, 35, 48, 304
 Zagorin, Perez, 52, 53, 104, 301
 Zárate, Fernando de (*see* Enríquez Gómez, Antonio), 72
 Zimic, Stanislav, 45, 156, 159, 304
 Zimmerman Lavine, Roberta, 124, 200, 304
 Zuckerman-Ingber, Alix, 21, 76, 79, 224, 231, 254, 255, 278, 304