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WOMEN IN THE THEATER OF
JUAN RUIZ DE ALARCON

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

THE GENERAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE THEATER OF THE GOLDEN AGE

The great genius, Lope de Vega, set the pattern for the drama of the Golden Age. The other authors of the age such as Tirso de Molina, Calderón de la Barca, Guillén de Castro, Moreto, and Rojas Zorrilla followed to a great extent this pattern. The women characters, although treated with respect and endowed with various good and virtuous attributes, were rather stereotyped; the men were less so. There are some general characteristics which typify most of the men: strong feelings of honor, duty to God and to king; bravery; and gallantry. In general, the men had a much wider field of action and had many more ways in which to distinguish themselves than did the women. The types run from the bold and aggressive Don Juan Tenorio in Tirso's El burlador de Sevilla to the timid Don Dionís in El vergonzoso en palacio; and from the arrogant and conceited Don Diego in Moreto's El lindo Don Diego to the modest Don Juan in Alarcón's Las paredes oyen. The men had a greater variety of roles and, therefore, furnished better opportunities for clear character delineation; yet one cannot overlook the vast importance of the women characters and the interest which they lent

to the theater.

Until the time of Lope de Vega and the Golden Age of Spanish literature, women had always had secondary roles in the Spanish drama. There were two reasons for this: 1) Women were not fully appreciated in the society of the times. 2) Women were prohibited from appearing on the stage for many years, and boys usually took their parts. With the advent of Lope de Vega and his arte nuevo de hacer comedias, the situation was changed.

Lope, the expert in gallantry, in manners, in observation, placed her in her true setting, as an ideal, as the mainspring of dramatic motive and of chivalrous conduct.¹

Although the drama of the Golden Age in Spain was primarily a drama of intrigue rather than a drama of characterization, there were authors who distinguished themselves in the creation of feminine characters. There were in Madrid two types of women: those who remained at home watched over by fathers, brothers or uncles, who led a withdrawn and tranquil life and only left their homes to carry out their religious duties, and those who, without being women of the town, were usually confused with these because of their unwillingness to conform to the established social customs. These women presented brilliant examples for the dramatists to imitate. They are often

¹James Fitzmaurice-Kelly, A History of Spanish Literature, p. 257.

the inspiration for the dramas of intrigue. Clearly, once these women became respectable married women, they no longer held any interest for theater-goers. It is for this reason that a mother is seldom pictured in the drama of the period. All the young women characters live under the care of the nearest male relative. A religious respect seemed to surround the mother and prevented her being represented in the plays of the period. The theater of the Golden Age is, therefore, a theater of orphans as far as the young women are concerned.²

In general, the women in the drama of the Golden Age have the same characteristics. They are flirtatious, coquettish, passionate, sagacious, and always discreet. They will resort to almost any means of trickery to "get their man"; however, if they do not succeed in marrying the primary object of their affection, they are perfectly content with whomever is left for them. Although the women are pictured kindly and with respect, the Spanish dramatists had neither the inclination nor the talent to occupy themselves with the portrayal of the profundity of their characters. "Sólo a media luz es posible lanzar una mirada incierta en las almas de los personajes."³

²Julio Jiménez Rueda, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y su tiempo, p. 213.

³Ludwig Pfandl, Historia de la literatura nacional española en la edad de oro, p. 421.

The above-mentioned characteristics are especially true in the theater of Lope de Vega Carpio. His comedias were comedies of intrigue. The psychological study was strictly limited to love, jealousy, vengeance, and honor.⁴ Lope idolized women and he, in turn, was their idol. It was probably for this reason that his women characters seem to be created with much more affection than are his masculine types. They are tender, generous, faithful to duty, prompt to sacrifice, patient, energetic, determined, and courageous. They, not the men, are the true heroic souls.⁵ Julio Rueda says,

Sabe pintarla [a la mujer] con los mejores rasgos de la pluma, complaciéndose en los detalles, matizando sus actitudes, moldeando, con verdadera delectación sensual, su escorzo. Por ello, quizás, sus tipos pequen de extraordinariamente discretos. Es una imagen no reflejada, directamente, de la realidad sino, antes, embellecida por la imaginación de un poeta excesivamente amoroso.⁶

One is particularly impressed by the great number of disguised women in Lope's teatro. Many times he uses the situation in which the honorable woman leaves home disguised as a servant, lackey, or galán in order to pursue her unfaithful lover. His women are always endowed with a great amount of moral courage.⁷

⁴César Barja, Libros y autores clásicos, p. 412.

⁵Pfandl, op. cit., p. 449.

⁶Rueda, op. cit., p. 213.

⁷Rudolph Schevill, The Dramatic Art of Lope de Vega, Volume VI of Modern Philology, p. 20.

For examples of Lope's women we might look to the two plays, El mejor alcalde, el rey and La moza de cántaro. The principal woman in the first-mentioned play is Elvira. She is a villana and has promised to marry Sancho, a poor hidalgo. At the suggestion of her father, Nuño, Sancho goes to Don Tello, the most powerful landowner in the province, in order to gain his approval. Nuño hopes that Don Tello will sponsor the wedding and will give the couple a handsome gift. Sancho gains Tello's approval, and the latter promises to attend the wedding himself. When he arrives and sees that Elvira is very beautiful, he decides that he wants her for himself. He kidnaps her that night and takes her to his home. When Sancho learns what has happened, he tries to rescue her, but to no avail. He takes his case to the king, who personally sees that Elvira is freed and returned to her husband. Elvira is typical of many other women in the plays of Lope. She is loving and tender, but not particularly interesting. The only occasion on which she shows any spirit or color is the one when Don Tello tries to persuade her to give herself to him. She is determined to retain her honor and says,

No, señor
 Que amor que pierde al honor
 El respeto es vil deseo,
 Y siendo apetito feo,
 No puede llamarse amor.
 Amor se funda en querer
 Lo que quiere quien desea,

Que amor que casto no sea.
Ni es amor, ni puede ser.⁸

On another occasion she says,

Soy mujer, y tengo amor.
Nada has de alcanzar de mí.⁹

Dofia María, in La moza de cántaro, is a much more forceful character, although even she follows the general lines of the other women characters created by Lope. She typifies the courageous and valiant Spanish woman who risks everything, even her own life, in order to save the honor of the family name. Dofia María's father has been insulted, and since there is no one else for the job, she takes it upon herself to avenge him. She kills the offender and flees to Madrid disguised as a servant girl; she plays her role well and seems to be an ideal moza de cántaro. She is loquacious, gay, and gossipy, but impudent and impertinent when offended. When, at the end of the play, she learns that the king has granted her a pardon, she easily assumes again her natural role of a high-born dama and marries Don Juan, the man who, even though a noble, fell in love with her even though he thought her a moza de cántaro. We see that she has the characteristics of the typical woman of Lope. She is prompt to sacrifice,

⁸Lope de Vega, Comedias, Vol. XXXIX of Clásicos castellanos, p. 212.

⁹Ibid., p. 214.

energetic, courageous, determined, faithful to duty, and heroic.

The women of Tirso de Molina are the determining factors in his dramas. He knew the feminine types well and evidently did not esteem them highly, for he pictures his women in a rather disdainful light.¹⁰ He did not actually satirize them, however:

El burlón perdominaba en él sobre el censor, la diversión sobre la sátira, el humor sobre la malicia, el poeta sobre el hombre.¹¹

His women are calculating, sometimes lewd, and often without scruples or shyness. At times the fury of jealousy drowns even the blood ties of two sisters when they both fall in love with the same man.¹² A good example of this may be found in the play Amor y celos hacen discretos. Here the two sisters, Doña Victoria and Doña Margarita, are both in love with Don Pedro. Pfandle says,

La mujer hace aquí lo que en la comedia suele ser exclusiva del hombre: rinde franco homenaje al amor libre, busca y procura la consumación del matrimonio antes de concertarlo; la constancia y la fidelidad no son consideradas como virtud, sino como prejuicio. Pero al mismo tiempo no existe por parte del autor ningún propósito moralizador, como en Ruiz de Alarcón, ni tampoco la defensa de la

¹⁰Pfandle, op. cit., p. 458.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

liberación de la mujer de los lazos del duro convencionalismo, como en Rojas Zorrilla; su tendencia es más bien únicamente exageración satírica.¹³

The women of Tirso's plays have the gracefulness of Lope's women, but more malice. They are adventuresses, fond of intrigue, and ingenious at inventing tricks to trap their lovers.¹⁴ Don Gil de las calzas verdes presents an outstanding example of the adventuress type. Here Doña Juana has been spurned by Don Martín, who has already given his promise to marry her. His father has arranged a more profitable match for him, and he goes to Madrid to court his bride-to-be, Doña Inés. Juana, however, is not content to be resigned to her fate. She disguises herself as a galán and calls herself Don Gil. She follows Don Martín to Madrid, and in her disguise as Don Gil she succeeds in making Doña Inés, as well as her cousin Doña Clara, fall in love with her. She takes a house next to Doña Inés's, and she alternates between her disguise as Don Gil, who is never seen without his calzas verdes, and another disguise as Doña Elvira. Matters finally become so complicated that in the last scene of the play there are five people disguised as Don Gil.

Another play by Tirso which is somewhat similar to

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Rueda, op. cit., p. 214.

Don Gil de las calzas verdes is La mujer por fuerza, in which Finea leaves her home disguised as a man in order to pursue her lover, Don Federico. She disguises herself as a poor galán and is hired by Don Federico, whom she is pursuing. As is the usual case in plays of this type, the plot becomes complicated and entangled; however, when everything is unraveled at the end of the play, Finea succeeds in marrying Don Federico.

El vergonzoso en palacio presents another picture of women characters which are typical of those which came from the pen of Fray Gabriel. The two principal women in the play are Magdalena and Serafina, two sisters. They are poles apart in their natures. Magdalena is full of tenderness and love for Don Dionís, while Serafina is haughty and full of self-love. They have one thing in common, however: both proceed freely in the serious business of choosing a husband.

Se convierten en un nuevo reflejo del tema de la libertad de amor, que, desde el Renacimiento, viene apareciendo en la literatura moderna. Estos atisbos de una moral femenina compatible con la naturaleza hallarán mayor eco en España que en otra parte.¹⁵

In speaking of Tirso's women characters, Julio Jiménez

¹⁵Tirso de Molina, El vergonzoso en palacio y El burlador de Sevilla, Vol. II of Clásicos castellanos, Prologo, p. xvi.

Rueda says,

El fraile mercedario conocía bien las almas de sus penitentes a través de las rejas del confesonario y sabía llevarlas al teatro con donaire. Sus contemporáneos pensaron ya que había cargado demasiado las tintas y clamaron contra la libertad que se permitía fray Gabriel al pintar muchas de sus mujeres.¹⁶

Pedro Muñoz Peña bears out the same idea in his critique when he says,

Las heroínas de Lope sufren y se resignan, las de Calderón olvidan u odian, las de Tirso luchan por el objeto de su cariño resultando por consecuencia de esta lucha atrevidas, osadas, incansables para inventar artificios con que reducir a sus amantes.¹⁷

Such, then, were the roles which women held in the theater of the seventeenth century. Ruiz de Alarcón conformed somewhat to the general pattern; yet in the opinion of many critics, his treatment of women characters constitutes his greatest weakness.

¹⁶Rueda, op. cit., p. 214.

¹⁷Pedro Muñoz Peña, El teatro del Maestro Tirso de Molina: estudio crítico-literario, p. 226.

CHAPTER II

IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN IN THE PLAYS OF JUAN RUIZ DE ALARCON

Alarcón did not have the experience with women which the other maestros of the Golden Age had. He did not know their souls as Tirso did, neither did he love them as Lope did.¹ He had "ni la práctica del confesonario ni el secreto de la alcoba."²

Si a su intención filosófica y sumo arte hubiera podido añadir el felicísimo pintar en la mujer la genial ternura y rendimiento de las que bosquejó Lope, el desenvuelto corazón y travesura de las de Tirso, la altiva nobleza e impetuoso ánimo de las que fantaseó Calderón, la poética ingenuidad y donosura de las de Rojas, sus mujeres podrían compararse con sus hombres, grandes y nobles, que los sacaba de su propia alma; pero Alarcón, por temperamento propio y acaso por el temperamento mejicano que después ya se ha clareado bastante más en los escritores modernos de aquella tierra, era mesurado en todo, discreto, algo gris, tímido, y melancólico, y no gustaba de los fuertes toques coloristas y pasionales de los otros dramáticos españoles.³

This lack may possibly be explained if one can imagine the physical aspects of Juan de Alarcón, who was hunch-backed

¹Julio Jiménez Rueda, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y su tiempo, p. 215.

²Ibid.

³Julio Cejador y Frauca, Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana, Tomo IV, p. 318.

and dwarfed. It is possible that many women upon seeing him exclaimed as Doña Ana did upon seeing Don Juan in

Las paredes oyen:

Ay, Celia, y ¡qué mala cara
Y mal talle de Don Juan!⁴

Alarcón's physical defects probably accounted for the fact that he has many of his women excessively conscious of the physical aspects of the galanes. For example, Anarda, in Los favores del mundo, says of Garci-Ruiz,

Aquel bizarro ademán
Con que la espada sacó,
El valor con que venció
Y dió la vida a don Juan,
La gala, la discreción
En darme disculpa, el modo,
Gentileza y talle, todo
Me ha robado el corazón.⁵

Doña Inés, in El examen de maridos, exclaims,

¡Cielos santos! ¿es posible
Que tales faltas esconda
Tal talle, y no corresponda
Lo secreto a lo visible?⁶

Leonor, in Quien mal anda en mal acaba, asks,

¿Hay algún galán en Deza
Que a su talle y gentileza
Pueda igualar?⁷

In La culpa busca la pena, Doña Ana remarks,

Estando yo aquí

⁴Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Volume XX, Comedias de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 44.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

⁶Ibid., pp. 476-477.

⁷Ibid., p. 213.

Habla este grosero así!
 Menos tiene de galán
 En el alma que en el talle.⁸

Generally speaking, the feminine characters in the plays of Ruiz de Alarcón are pictured vaguely, without marked lines or characteristics. He seems to contemplate them from a distance with shyness, reserve, and misgivings, and it is in this way that he carries them to the stage--seen together without precise colors or strong lines.⁹

Son figuras opacas que suelen a ratos solamente lucir a plena luz para escabullirse luego. Otras pasan por la escena como verdaderas sombras, tanta es su vaguedad; algunas parece que intentarían mostrarnos su mundo interior, pero, de pronto, cierran de golpe la puerta y nos dejan desconcertados.¹⁰

Not only does Alarcón not delineate his feminine characters clearly, but he is slow to concede to them qualities of spiritual and moral purity. One can find very few women in his plays who have superior moral qualities. Of course, the outstanding example of the few who are morally and spiritually superior is the villana, Jimena, in Los pechos privilegiados. Many of his women stoop to rather ignoble acts to gain their desired ends, but there is only one who has no active motivation for such deeds. This one is Leonor, the hypocritical niece in

⁸Ibid., p. 196.

⁹Clotilde Evelia Quirarte, Personajes de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 56.

¹⁰Ibid.

Mudarse por mejorarse, whose sole reason for her ignoble conduct is a vain and coquettish caprice. The other women who stoop to hypocrisy or trickery are strongly motivated by either love, vengeance, or jealousy.

Along with the defects which Alarcón pictures in the souls of his women, he also grants them gifts of discretion, daintiness, sweetness, and resignation. Thus, one can see that the Alarconian women are neither totally good nor totally bad.

Tienen una particularidad: que todas incuestionablemente, nos simpatizan y no conseguimos odiar a ninguna. Son damas finas, discretas, dulces, graciosas, que no saben amar con la decisión de una doña Isabel de Segura, pero que se muestran a menudo ingeniosas.¹¹

In order to discuss these women individually as to their importance in the various plays, I shall divide them into four groups: 1) those who have outstanding roles and are pictured graphically; 2) those who have minor roles; 3) those who have rather insignificant roles; but who retain a few individual characteristics, 4) those who are pictured so vaguely as to have no real identity.

Spanish women in the seventeenth century had little independence and freedom of action, being governed strictly by their fathers, husbands, or brothers. Any exception to this general situation demanded considerable individuality

¹¹Ibid., p. 57.

and force of character. Anarda, in Los favores del mundo, is such a character. She is a charming, animated, and sagacious heroine who is not content to accept the will of her uncle. She has been captivated by the handsomeness and valor of Garcí-Ruiz de Alarcón. She immediately decides to do three things: to make Garcí-Ruiz fall in love with her; to get rid of Mauricio; and to evade the matrimonial contract made by her uncle. She acts with discretion and energy, and even shows signs of rebellion. In Scene VII of Act I Alarcón gives us an interesting picture of feminine boldness. Here Anarda questions Hernando about his master:

¿Es caballero?

 ¿Es casado?

 ¿Es rico?

To the last pertinent question Hernando replies:

¡Gracias a Dios
 Que llegamos al lugar!
 ¿Si queríades preguntar
 Sólo ese punto las dos,
 Qué sirve parola vana
 Y hablar de falso primero?
 Bien sé que apunta al dinero
 Toda aguja cortesana.

Anarda goes on to ask,

¿A qué vino a este lugar?

 ¿Hase acaso enamorado?

 ¿Puede saberse la dama?¹²

¹²B.A.E., op. cit., p. 3.

Again Anarda shows her independence when she upbraids the Count for guarding her house:

Conde, a vuestro atrevimiento
 Y grosera demasía
 Ni conviene cortesía
 Ni es cordura el sufrimiento.
 ¿En qué favor fundamento
 El guardarme así ha tenido?
 A quien nunca fué admitido
 Pretendiente ni galán,
 Decid: ¿qué leyes le dan
 Las licencias de marido?
 Si con tanta libertad
 Guardáis mi puerta y mi calle,
 ¿Quién hará el vulgo que calle,
 O estime mi honestidad?
 Si bien me queréis, mirad
 Mi fama y reputación,
 Que es forzosa obligación
 Que al bien amar corresponde.¹³

Anarda's ingenuity is pictured when she arranges to meet the Prince, not to favor him, but to ask the whereabouts of Garci-Ruiz, for she fears he has left the city. From the Prince's statements she surmises that Garci has left. Since she then has no more use for the former, she says,

Señor, mi tío tosió:
 Perdóneme vuestra Alteza;
 Que su recato y rigor
 Me prohíbe este lugar.¹⁴

However, when Anarda discovers that Garci-Ruiz is there with the Prince, she slyly evades the excuse by saying,

Bien podéis, señor, estaros:
 Que ya no tose mi tío.¹⁵

¹³Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁵Ibid.

Again Anarda's rebellious nature is shown when her uncle tells her that she must marry Mauricio since he was wounded on her account. She is indignant at this and says,

¡Señor don Diego, mi tío,
Da tan cobarde consejo!
Bien se ve que el pecho frío
Al brazo cansado y viejo
Niega el heredado brío.
¿Morir no será mejor,
Que no que Mauricio diga,
En mengua de vuestro honor,
Que a sus gustos nos obliga
De sus armas el temor?
¿Somos Girones, o no?
¿Hanos el valor faltado?
¿Estoy sin parientes yo?
¿Quien en Castilla a un criado
De mi casa se atrevió?
Y si en tan justo ocasión
No quisieren defender
Nuestros deudos su opinión,
Yo basto; que aunque mujer,
Soy en efecto Girón.¹⁶

Don Diego, who is astounded at this outburst, exclaims,

¿Estás loca? ¿Qué es aquesto?
¿Piensas que es valor tener
Ese brío descompuesto?
Sólo el proceder honesto
Es valor en la mujer.
Deja ya vanos antojos,
Y admite este pensamiento,
O para alabar enojos,
Metiéndote en un convento,
Te quitaré de los ojos.¹⁷

Anarda, instead of accepting the decision of her uncle, as was expected of a young woman of her station, says,

¹⁶Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁷Ibid.

Vos no sois más que tío,
Y ni aun mi padre en razón
Puede forzar mi albedrío:
Casamiento y religión
Han de ser a gusto mío.¹⁸

In Anarda we have a picture of a wise and intelligent woman.

No hay en Anarda disimulo reprehensible o perfidia; procede como una mujer a quien el amor hubiese afinado la astucia y nada más. Que es resuelta, ya lo hemos dicho y que es encantadora y discreta no puede negarse.¹⁹

Anarda's independence, which was so rare in the drama of the Golden Age, makes her one of the most outstanding feminine characters of Alarcón's theater. I agree with Clotilde Quirarte when she says,

Es, si bien se mira, el de esta joven un tipo muy de nuestra época, pero un poquillo raro para doncella del siglo XVII; no obstante, Alarcón debió de ver algunas mujeres nobles con osadía y muy bien las pintó.²⁰

Dofia Sol, in La industria y la suerte, is one of the most enamoured and also one of the most determined and resolute of all the women in the theater of Alarcón. She is desperately in love with Don Juan, a poor galán who at one time has been her lover. In the meantime, Don Juan has fallen in love with Blanca, for whose hand a certain rich

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Clotilde Evelia Quirarte, Personajes de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 91.

²⁰Ibid., p. 89.

merchant is suing. Blanca favors Don Juan; however, her father wishes her to marry the richer of the two, Don Arnesto. Sol, of course, determines to do everything in her power to keep Don Juan from Doña Blanca. In the first act of the play, Doña Sol has discovered that Don Juan and Arnesto are going to the country to fight a duel over Doña Blanca. Immediately Sol decides to follow the two men to see how Don Juan will fare. Celia, her servant, is astounded when she hears this proposal, for honorable women did not do such things. She exclaims,

¿En tu estado,
Puedes hacerlo mayor?

To this Sol replies,

Tan ciego estado de amor
No mira razón de estado.²¹

In Scene X of the same act we see Sol's passionate declaration of her love to the object of her affections:

Enemigo,
Pendientes por Blanca son.
Mira que de tu traición
Te da el amor el castigo.
Mira bien que su hermosura
No iguala con mi firmeza,
Y no es mayor su belleza,
Aunque es menor mi ventura.
Mira que te quiero más
Que tú a Blanca; ver te obligue
Que huyes de quien te sigue
Y tras de quien huye vas.²²

²¹B.A.E., op. cit., p. 24.

²²Ibid., p. 26.

In Scene III of Act III Sol shows her firm determination to make Don Juan her husband even if it costs her her honor:

¡Ay, Celia! quien tiene el pecho
 Celoso y determinado
 Ya a ejecutar sus deseos,
 Y ya a vengar sus agravios,
 No mira en inconvenientes;
 Pues más increíbles casos
 Solicitan mis cautelas,
 Que tú habrás imaginado.
 Don Juan ha de ser mi esposo
 Con los enredos que trazo
 Aunque aventure el honor.²³

Finally Doña Sol, motivated by her great passion for Don Juan, succeeds in tricking Blanca into writing a letter which, without the latter's knowledge, is to be delivered to Don Juan. In it she requests that he come to her balcony that night. Sol, however, intends to be there and deceive Juan into thinking that she is Blanca. Thus she hopes to get his promise of marriage. Again Celia is astounded at the lengths to which her mistress is going in her amorous pretensions:

Advierte que es grande error
 En una honrada doncella.

To this Sol replies,

Celia, todo lo atropella
 Quien con celos tiene amor.

 Pues que si a don Juan entrego
 La mayor prenda, le obligo
 A que se case conmigo,
 Aunque esté por Blanca ciego

²³Ibid., p. 37.

Que siendo yo su parienta,
 En descubriendo el engaño,
 Ha de remediar el daño
 Pues que le alcanza la afrenta.²⁴

In spite of her determination to marry Don Juan, Doña Sol does not succeed. He marries Doña Blanca, and Sol has to be content with the wealthy Don Arnesto.

Doña Ana, in Las paredes oyen, is one of the most interesting characters created by Alarcón. We learn that she is a young widow, rich, honorable, and high-minded. In the three years of her widowhood the handsome and rich Don Mendo has captured her favor. We learn that she has another suitor also, Don Juan de Mendoza, a poor, ugly caballero with the highest of moral qualities. Although Doña Ana appreciates these qualities in Don Juan, she still cannot resist the handsome Don Mendo. Her feelings toward Don Juan are expressed when she speaks to Celia:

¡Ay, Celia, qué mala cara
 Y mal talle de don Juan!²⁵

Again, when Celia, who is definitely on the side of Don Juan, speaks of his high moral qualities, Doña Ana says,

¿Cómo puedo yo querer
 Hombre cuya cara y talle
 Me enfada sólo en miralle?²⁶

²⁴Ibid., p. 38.

²⁵Ibid., p. 44.

²⁶Ibid., p. 49.

There are strong indications that Alarcón, in creating the character of Don Juan, was modeling him after his own self. Alarcón knew only too well that wisdom, courtesy, loyalty, and discretion were not valued by most women, but that handsomeness and riches were the qualities sought in a suitor. Clotilde Quirarte says in this direction:

Nosotros creemos que la comedia titulada Las paredes oyen, es el símbolo del más humano y justo anhelo de don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón. Mas a pesar de lo que su consoladora fantasía decide en los tablados, en la realidad su derrota habrá sido segura y por ello el motejado dramaturgo sería poco amigo de galanteos y su vida escasa en lances de amor.²⁷

When Doña Ana finally learns the truth about Don Mendo and discovers for herself that he is a gossip and slanderer, she begins to feel differently toward Don Juan. She says to Celia,

Principio es de querer bien
El dejar de querer mal.
Pero no fácil se olvida
Amor que costumbre ha hecho.²⁸

Thus we see her forgetting Don Mendo and beginning to favor Don Juan. When Juan, despairing of his own chance to win her, comes to intervene with her on behalf of the Duke, Ana discreetly tells him to speak for himself:

De mi consejo, dejad
De terciar en ese intento;

²⁷ Quirarte, op. cit., p. 56.

²⁸ B.A.E., op. cit., p. 52.

Porque mayor esperanza
 Puede al fin tener de mí
 Quien pretende para sí
 Que quien para otro alcanza.²⁹

At the end of the play we see Ana completely won over by Juan, and as Celia says,

¿Ves lo que en un hombre vale
 El buen trato y condición?

Doña Ana replies,

Tanto, que ya en mi opinión
 No hay Narciso que le iguale.³⁰

In Doña Ana we see a woman rare not only in the drama, but in real life as well.

Difícil será en la vida que, como sucede en la comedia, la nobleza de Don Juan logre amenguar su fealdad y su pobreza y pueda vencer en lid de amores a un gallardo y rico señor, aunque mal caballero, según era don Mendo.³¹

Celia, the servant who accompanies Doña Ana in Las paredes oyen, is not so reserved as is her mistress. She is not a sly, cunning counsellor who only looks to her own convenience, as are many of the servants in the drama of this period. She is an intelligent and observant woman. At times she even lets fall bits of philosophy such as the following: "Para los tristes no hay fiesta."³² "Mudar

²⁹Ibid., p. 57.

³⁰Ibid., p. 60.

³¹Quirarte, op. cit., p. 56.

³²B.A.E., op. cit., p. 44.

consejo es de sabios."³³ A woman of good sense, she is decidedly in favor of Don Juan rather than Don Mendo as a husband for her mistress. She, not blinded by love as is Doña Ana, is able to see through the brilliant outer shell of Mendo into the rotten interior. Thus, in speaking with Ana, she always has a good word to say for Juan:

¡Cuán diferente es don Juan!
Ofendido y despreciado,
Es honrar su condición,
Cuando el lengua de escorpión
Ofende siendo estimado.³⁴

Again, when Doña Ana remarks on the ugliness of Don Juan, Celia says,

Pues ¡cómo! ¿en eso repara
Una tan cuerda mujer?
En el hombre no has de ver
La hermosura o gentileza.
Su hermosura es la nobleza,
Su gentileza es el saber.
Lo visible es el tesoro
De mozas faltas de seso,
Y las más veces por eso
Topan con un asno de oro.
Por eso no tiene el moro
Ventanas: y es cosa clara
Que, aunque el principio repara
La vista, con la costumbre
Pierde el gusto o pesadumbre.
De la buena o mala cara.³⁵

Celia dislikes Don Mendo for his odious habit of spreading false stories; however, her feeling is even deeper and more personal. She confesses this finally to Doña Ana:

³³Ibid., p. 52.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

Que desde que estando un día
 Viéndote por una reja,
 La cerré, y me llamó vieja,
 Sin pensar que yo lo oía,
 Tal cual soy, no lo querría,
 Si él fuese del mundo Adán.³⁶

Celia's good common sense is shown again when Doña Ana announces her intention of delaying her marriage with Juan in order that she may not appear imprudent, although she is certain both of her own love and his. Celia says,

¡Liviana dices, después
 De dos años que por tí
 Ha andado fuera de sí!

 Yo hallo
 Más crueldad en dilatallo
 Que en decillo liviandad;
 Que el tiempo sirve de dar
 Del amor información,
 Y es necia la dilación
 Si no queda que probar.³⁷

Thus we see that Celia is not only intelligent, sincere, and prudent, but she is also feminine and human.

Leonor, in Mudarse por mejorarse, is one of the few women created by Ruiz de Alarcón who is completely hypocritical. The other women in his plays who stoop to ignoble actions are always strongly motivated by love, vengeance, or jealousy. Leonor, however, is not; her hypocrisy comes only from a frivolous whim. She is an exceptionally beautiful girl, but she is completely lacking in scruples or morals.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 58.

Having been left an orphan, she has been brought to Madrid by her young, beautiful, and widowed aunt, Doña Clara, who is doing her best to be a mother to her. Don García, who has been a suitor of Clara's for two years, upon seeing Leonor, completely forgets the older woman and begins to concentrate his attentions on the niece. The latter, although she does not really love García, does not reject his attentions, but encourages him merely as a diversion. She says to him,

Pues siendo así,
Y que os tengo, don García
Por cuerdo, y dejáis mi tía
Por mejoraros en mí,
Perdóneme vuestro amor;
Que a resistir me prevengo,
Hasta que sepa si tengo
Otra sobrina mejor.³⁸

This is only her cynical way of saying that she will receive him as her lover, for she really means that she will not resist his attentions. She and Don García decide to arrange a signal. When García's head is uncovered, it is a sign that whatever he is saying is really meant for Leonor. When her face is uncovered, it is a sign that whatever she is saying is meant for him. Thus we have the added complication of a double meaning in many of their remarks. The disloyal Leonor is able to have the confidence of her aunt at the same time that she is deceiving her. Thus far, Leonor

³⁸Ibid., p. 102.

appears rash, selfish, bold, and unscrupulous. However, when she meets the rich Marquis we see a complete change in her. In his presence she is dignified, retiring, and discreet. She even appears severe when she says to him,

Quien ostenta calidad
A quien le trata de amor
Al amor opone honor,
Y al deseo honestidad.
Con esto licencia dad
Para avisar a mi tía.³⁹

Leonor deliberately tries to gain the Marquis for her husband because he not only has an illustrious lineage, but also has great wealth. Wishing now to get Don García out of her way in order that she may have a clear field with the Marquis, she cruelly says to him,

Perdonad;
Que ya perdió de alcanzarme
La ocasión vuestro cuidado.

He replies,

¿Cómo, cruel, te has mudado
Tan presto?

Ironically she says,

Por mejorarme.
· · · · ·
¿Negaréis la mejoría,
Aunque en sangre sois igual,
De poco a mucho caudal,
De merced a señoría?⁴⁰

Leonor is a complete contrast to Doña Clara, who is kind,

³⁹Ibid., p. 108.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 117-118.

noble, and trusting. Clotilde Quirarte says of the former,

En este carácter torvo no hay nada favorable que lo rehabilite, y sin embargo, nadie dirá que Leonor no es una dama fina y pulida, como todas las de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, y dotada, además, de una irresistible belleza, cosas que a primera vista nos ocultan la miseria espiritual.⁴¹

Doña Inés, the principal character in El examen de maridos, is a very different type in a quite different situation. The story of the play is based around a stipulation in the will of the late Marquis, father of Doña Inés. This is the proverb: "Antes que te cases, mira lo que haces." Inés determines to follow the will of her father:

Ni puede más resolver,
De que a mi padre he de ser
Tan obediente en la muerte
Como en la vida lo fui.⁴²

Although both rich and beautiful, she is characterized in the main by discretion and intelligence. Of her, Clotilde Quirarte says,

En justa tan original donde ella habría de ser juez, derrama ingenio y gracia, tantos, que Alarcón puso en doña Inés todo el donaire y todo el gracejo propios de los papeles de criados y graciosos.⁴³

With the object in mind of obeying her dead father, Inés

⁴¹Quirarte, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴²B.A.E., op. cit., p. 469.

⁴³Quirarte, op. cit., p. 80.

decides upon her course of action:

Que elegir esposo quiero
 Con tan atentos sentidos,
 Y con tan curioso examen
 De sus partes, que me llamen
 El examen de maridos.⁴⁴

She follows this plan to the last degree, requiring each suitor to list his faults and virtues. Her comments on the characteristics of each suitor show discretion, intelligence, and subtle humor. About a rather old man she says,

Apruebo el seso maduro;
 Maduros años no apruebo
 Para un marido, Beltrán.⁴⁵

About a suitor who hoped to come into an inheritance soon, she says,

No contéis por caudal propio
 El que está en poder ajeno;
 Y más donde el morir antes
 O después es tan incierto.⁴⁶

She has this to say about a hot-headed man whose rash temper passes in a moment:

Si con el arder primero
 Me arroja por un balcón,
 Decidme, ¿de qué provecho
 Después de haber hecho el daño,
 Será el arrepentimiento?⁴⁷

Of a "ladies' man" she remarks,

⁴⁴B.A.E., op. cit., p. 469.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 479.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 480.

Condición que muda el tiempo;
 Casará y amansará
 Al yugo del casamiento.⁴⁸

About a widower she says,

Borradle presto;
 Que quien dos veces se casa⁴⁹
 O sabe enviudar o es necio.

During her examinations of the various men, she truly falls in love with one, the Marquis, Don Fadrique. However, there is an added complication: Doña Blanca, a scheming woman, is also in love with Don Fadrique, and in order to turn Inés against him, she tells her that he has a terrible, secret fault. Inés tries to erase him from her list of eligible suitors, but she finds that she cannot erase him from her heart:

No le borréis, que es en vano,
 Entre tanto que no puedo,
 Como su nombre en el libro,
 Borrar su amor en el pecho.⁵⁰

She finally narrows the list down to Don Fadrique and Don Carlos, the Count. Finally, against the dictates of her heart, she chooses Don Carlos; however, because of his action toward Don Fadrique, Doña Inés reverses her decision and happily offers her hand to Don Fadrique.

Doña Inés is an attractive woman, without frivolity

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

or complexity. She is not in the least flirtatious or coquettish, and the play is completely lacking in the conventional balcony scenes. In my opinion, Doña Inés is not only one of the best-portrayed women characters created by Alarcón, but is also one of the best of all the author's characters.

None of the women characters created by Alarcón is as likable as is Jimena, the villana in Los pechos privilegiados. She is a strong and hardy country woman, brave, tender, loyal, and loving. She forms a vivid contrast to the scheming and ambitious Ramiro and the deceit which characterizes the court life. Although she is not really a principal character, she is not soon forgotten. One of her most admirable attributes is her love for Rodrigo. She was his wet nurse and cared for him during his childhood; she loved him with the true feeling of a mother. She says to him,

Me ofrezco
A magollar a puñadas
A quien vos praza, los huesos.⁵¹

When Jimena finds out that Rodrigo is worried about something, she tries to make him tell her his troubles:

Esfogad conmigo el pecho,
Si vos miembra que del mío
Vos di el primer alimento.
Ama vuesa so, Rodrigo:
A nadie vuese secreto
Podedes mejor fiar;
Que madre vos quiéro.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid., p. 422.

⁵²Ibid.

She proves her threats when the King, Don Alfonso, finds Rodrigo with Elvira and, furious with jealousy, pulls a dagger on him. Jimena, who has hidden in the bushes, has watched the proceedings and at the crucial moment intervenes against the King, seizing him in her strong arms. When the latter cries, "Suelta, villana ¡A tu Rey te atreves!"⁵³ she replies,

Rey, el mío fiijo 54
Defiando, non vos ofendo.

Her bravery and disregard for her own safety is shown again in the last act of the play when she takes the sword of the cowardly gracioso, Cuaresma, and places herself in front of the King and defends him against Don Sancho and the Count. She says,

E vos, don Sancho, arredraós;
Porque Jimena non sofre
Que en contra de su rey cuide
Orgullecer ningún home.
Guardad vuesas nobres vidas,
Rey Alfonso é Villagómez;
Que mi valor sobrejano 55
Fará tremer estos montes.

Compared with the cowardice of Cuaresma, the bravery of Jimena seems even more outstanding. A striking contrast in the make-up of Jimena is the gentle tenderness which she

⁵³Ibid., p. 426.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 431.

shows toward her hijo de leche and the fierce fortitude with which she fights her adversaries bare-handed.

Es el [carácter] de Jimena, en suma, el más fugaz, pero también el más bello modelo femenina creado por Alarcón.⁵⁶

Having discussed the women who have outstanding roles in the theater of Alarcón, I shall now discuss those included in the second classification: those who have minor roles. The first of these is Doña Flor in the play Ganar amigos. She is beautiful, coquettish, and egotistical. It is because of Flor's vain egotism that the events in the plot take place. Don Fernando de Goday is desperately in love with her. She, however, is in love with the Marquis, Don Fadrique. Instead of telling Don Fernando that she does not love him, she encourages him, but she forces him to keep his love for her a secret. After many mix-ups and entanglements, matters are finally straightened out; however, the faithful and deserving Don Fernando does not get his just deserts, for Doña Flor marries the Marquis.

Without the life-like characters of Doña Ana and Doña Lucrecia in the play La culpa busca la pena, it would be a dull and insignificant work. These two characters, with their jealousy and enmity, provide the most realistic element in the play. While they visit each other with apparent friendliness and courtesy, they subtly duel with

⁵⁶Quirarte, op. cit., p. 65.

barbed words. Doña Ana, who is the more important figure, is a high-born Portuguese lady who, like many of Alarcón's women, is vain and flirtatious.

The first two scenes of the play reveal immediately the hearts of the two women. Doña Lucrecia, supposedly on a social call, has really come to complain that her former lover, Don Juan is now pursuing Doña Ana. The latter, who is not in love with Don Juan, informs Lucrecia that she has not encouraged him and that she will not do so in the future. While Lucrecia is there, a servant informs them that Don Fernando, Ana's brother, is coming. Since he is in love with Lucrecia and she does not return the feeling, she wishes to leave without his seeing her and asks how she may do so. To her question Doña Ana replies,

En las casas
De mujeres como yo,
Lucrecia, no hay puerta falsa.⁵⁷

When Rodrigo, in Scene IV of the same act, admires the beauty and gracefulness of Lucrecia, Doña Ana shows her hurt pride by saying,

¡Estando yo aquí
Habla este grosero así!
Menos tiene de galán
En el alma que en el talle.⁵⁸

In her conversations with Rodrigo, Ana is bold, but sly

⁵⁷B.A.E., op. cit., p. 196.

⁵⁸Ibid.

and coquettish. It is perhaps because of her haughty pride that she suffers many stings of jealousy. Once when she suspects Rodrigo of infidelity, she recalls to mind every little detail which might possibly back up her suspicions. In speaking to Inés she says,

¿No te acuerdas tú que cuando
 Don Rodrigo y don Fernando
 Llegaron a este lugar,
 Lucrecia estaba conmigo,
 Y al partirse la miraron,
 Y su buen aire alabaron
 Don Fernando y don Rodrigo?
 ¿No salió luego
 Don Rodrigo, Inés, de aquí
 Para su posada?⁵⁹

When once more Lucrecia and Ana meet, we note a change. In the first meeting, Ana was the reserved and astute one, while Lucrecia was impulsive and perturbed. Here the situation is exactly reversed. Lucrecia, who still believes that Ana has encouraged Don Juan, sees her chance for vengeance. She tells Ana that Don Rodrigo has asked her father for her hand and that the marriage contract has already been drawn up. After Lucrecia sees the effects of her deceit, she says in an aside,

De mi intención conseguida
 Me informa, triste y turbada;
 Que me publica vengada,
 Pues se confiesa ofendida.⁶⁰

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 202-203.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 206.

After leaving Lucrecia's house, Doña Ana, raging with jealousy, happens to meet Rodrigo on the street. She cannot restrain herself from making the following remark:

Aguardad,
Engañoso, fementido.
· · · · · ¡Viven los cielos,
Que habéis de ver en mi furia
Que injuria al sol quien injuria
A doña Ana Vasconcelos!⁶¹

When the intrigue is straightened out, Doña Ana marries Don Rodrigo and Lucrecia marries Juan. Before, however, Rodrigo, alias Sebastián, has killed Fernando in order to avenge his father. Ana's only comment is,

¡Ay de mí, que en vez de galas
Visto de luto mis bodas!⁶²

Teodora, in El tejedor de Segovia, is one of the few women created by Alarcón, who wears a disguise. However, the purpose of her disguise is not to pursue and entrap a fickle lover, as is the case in many of the plays of Tirso and Lope, but to be with and protect her esposo, Don Fernando, who has been betrayed and unjustly named a traitor. She is willing to sacrifice anything for the sake of her lover. She gives up her noble station and, disguised as a tejedora, goes to live with him in Segovia. She even goes with him to the mountains, and, disguised as a man, she

⁶¹Ibid., p. 206-207.

⁶²Ibid., p. 210.

helps him in his activities as a bandolero. She reaffirms her faith in him when he says,

Tú Teodora,
¿Hállaste bien salteadora?
Pero acostumbrada estás
A robos de más valor;
Pregúntaselo a tus ojos,
A quien rinde por despojos
Almas y vidas amor.⁶³

To this Teodora indignantly replies,

Mi firme fe has agraviado,
Mi bien, con pregunta igual;
Que no se me atreve el mal
Mientras gozo de tu lado.⁶⁴

Teodora is one of the few women in the theater of Alarcón who is neither flirtatious, coquettish, nor frivolous. Whenever Fernando is in any kind of danger she is ingenious in devising a means of escape for him. When Fernando is confronted by the treacherous Count, they draw their swords for a duel. Teodora, however, pretends that she wants to be the one to kill Fernando and takes the Count's sword. She gives Fernando the sword, thus leaving the Count unarmed and avoiding possible death for her lover. She is always unswerving in her love for Fernando and always completely unselfish and brave in her defense of him.

Although they are essential to the plot, Jacinta and Lucrecia, in La verdad sospechosa, are stereotyped women

⁶³ Ibid., p. 401

⁶⁴ Ibid.

characters. They have the usual characteristics of the woman in the drama of the Golden Age: They are discreet, coquettish, and are happy with whatever man it is their lot to marry.

Aurora, in La amistad castigada, enjoys the flattering pleasure of having several men in love with her. These men are Policiano, Ricardo, Filipino, and last but not least, the King himself, Don Dioniso. Unscrupulously, she encourages all of them. For example, while talking with Ricardo she says in an aside,

Pues, ¿qué arriesgo en no negar?
¿Qué pierdo en agradecer?⁶⁵

Despite this, the one she really loves is Filipino, perhaps because he is the most unattainable. One of the most entertaining scenes in the play is Scene XII, Act II, in which Aurora cleverly arouses the jealousy of Filipino and finally forces him to declare his love for her. Before the end of the play, however, we see Aurora changed from a vain coquette to a sensible woman. For example, she says to her uncle about Policiano,

Que quien es tan mal amante,
¿Cómo será buen marido?⁶⁶

Celia, in El desdichado en fingir, although not too well delineated, shows herself to be bold, fiery, and outspoken.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 292.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 297.

She does not hesitate to express herself freely to anyone, nor to declare her love to Arseno, who has spurned her and is now pursuing Doña Ardenia.

¡Eso de vos a oír vengo!
 Conocéis que amor os tengo
 Y arrojáisos confiado.⁶⁷

One of the most lively scenes in the play is Scene X, Act I, in which Celia, using the lines of a poetic narrative or romance to charge Arseno with infidelity, finds that the tables are turned and that the romance incriminates her instead and gives Arseno grounds for complaint. Celia is indeed one of the liveliest of Alarcón's women, and we leave her perfectly happy with Persio, another of her former lovers who had previously spurned her for Ardenia.

Teodora, in Los empeños de un engaño, shows herself to be a very passionate and jealous young woman. The situation is this: Doña Teodora and Doña Leonor live on different floors of the same house. Each is engaged to the other's brother. Teodora, however, has a secret lover, Don Diego. He, in order to cover up his love affair with Teodora, has made Leonor think that he is in love with her. Therefore, we have the situation of two women in love with the same man. Diego, on an amorous visit to Teodora, finds himself trapped upon being informed that her fiancé is coming. He is discovered, but Leonor saves him from the vengeance of

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 141.

Don Sancho by announcing that he has asked her hand in marriage. Then all the trouble begins. Diego cannot renounce Leonor, and thus Teodora rejects him. We have the situation of two warm friends turned into bitter enemies upon discovering that both love the same man. Teodora shows her hatred for Leonor when she says,

No dés color mentiroso
De honor a lo que es amor,
Pues diera al mundo tu honor
Desengaño tan forozoso
Con ser don Diego tu esposo;
Y pues mi razón adviertes,
Si me costase mil muertes
No has de conseguir tu gusto.⁶⁸

Although Teodora has rejected and renounced Don Diego, when she hears that he is badly hurt, her attitude changes completely and she hurries to help him:

¡Ay, mi bien, cuánto te cuesto!
¡Mal haya, amén, tu fineza!
Que ya, conforme te quiero,
Sufriera de mejor gana,
Que tus desdichas, mis celos.⁶⁹

As the plot unravels, Teodora and Don Diego marry and Leonor is left for Teodora's brother, Don Juan.

The two women are definitely the heroines of the play, since every intrigue of plot is caused by their amorous machinations. It is very interesting to note the various weapons which the two young women use against each other to

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 256.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 260.

gain their ends.

One of the most despicable women characters in the theater of Alarcón is Belisa in Todo es ventura. At the first of the play she rejects the poor caballero, Don Enrique, who is sincere in his love for her. "Cuando rechaza la pretensión amorosa de don Enrique, lo hace en forma agresiva y sin el comedimiento que observamos en otras damas del poeta mexicano."⁷⁰ We find an apt example of her abruptness in Scene X of the first act:

Piensa que sigues el viento
Con torpes pies, imagina
Que un rayo sigues, que sigues
Al sol en su esfera misma.⁷¹

Soon, however, we learn that Belisa is the type of woman who does not begin to love a man until she finds that she is about to lose him. In truth, Don Enrique has never loved anyone but her; however, through the entangled circumstances of the plot, Belisa is led to believe that he is only using her as a pretext for seeing Leonor. Belisa even vents her raging jealousy on Tristán, the gracioso:

Vete, embustero, de aquí
Vete, y dí a tu dueño ingrato
Que ya su alevoso trato,
Ya mi agravio conocí.
Que siga sus pretensiones,
Sin que imagine el traidor

⁷⁰Quirarte, op. cit., p. 93.

⁷¹B.A.E., op. cit., p. 128.

Con la capa de mi amor
 Encubrir otras pasiones.
 ¿Qué ha visto en mí? Soy yo menos,
 Para que sus desvaríos,
 A costa de agravios míos
 Conquisten gustos ajenos?⁷²

In Scene XIII of the third act, Belisa shows herself to be even more despicable. She, Celia, and Leonor remain alone in the house, as all the servants have gone to the bull fight. The Duke enters with the determination to dishonor Leonor by force, and when she calls to Belisa for help, the latter pretends to faint in order not to assist her:

Yo me finjo desmayada,
 Celia, por no darle ayuda;
 Tú finge otra cosa.⁷³

Celia, the servant in the play, does not have morals of a high standard either. She will stoop to almost anything for money--even to disloyalty to her mistress. Her sentiments are well expressed in the following passage:

Mi intención he conseguido:
 Al Marqués quiero avisar
 Para que vaya a gozar
 De aqueste favor fingido.
 Los prometidos doblones
 Me ofrezca, y salga después
 De un engaño; que esto es
 Gozar de las ocasiones.
 Dama hermosa y de valor
 Pretendida y festejada,
 Enriquece a una criada,⁷⁴
 Si sabe usar del favor.⁷⁴

⁷²Ibid., p. 134.

⁷³Ibid., p. 136.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 131.

Celia finds it profitable to terciar for both the Duke and the Marquis and, thus, is very little help to Doña Leonor.

Lucía, the servant in La prueba de las promesas, does not frown on making a dollar either. She conspires with Don Illán, the father of her mistress, Doña Blanca, to do everything she can to aid Don Enrique in the favor of Blanca and to thwart the pretensions of Don Juan, whom her mistress really favors. As Lucía leaves Don Illán after making her promise, she says to herself,

Pues perdóneme don Juan,
Y da el negocio por hecho;
Que tantas doblas ¡qué pecho
De bronce no doblarán?⁷⁵

Lucía is almost as quick-witted as Celia in Las paredes oyen. One of her best speeches is the one in which she explains to Tristán the difference between love and friendship:

Tristán, amor se precia de humildades:
No hallan lugar en él las ambiciones,
Y con desvanecidas presunciones
No caben amorosas igualdades.
Nunca conserva firmes amistades
Quien sólo atento va a sus pretensiones;
Y nunca de encontradas opiniones
Vi resultar conformes voluntades.
Siendo Dios el amor, habita el suelo,
Y no corona, siendo rey, las sienes,
Y anda desnudo, siendo poderoso.
Abata el que ama el levantado vuelo
O no le engendren quejas los desdenes,
Si siendo enamorado ambicioso.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 434.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 443.

Clavela, Blanca's servant in El examen de maridos, is vivacious and intelligent. Though she figures less in the plot than Mencía, the servant of Inés, she seems to be better characterized than Mencía. Because of her loyalty and affection for her mistress, she aids her in all her fraudulent tricks. From her speeches one can see that she knows human nature well, and she makes use of her knowledge and experience to aid her mistress.

Pienso que no te está bien
Mostrar al Marqués amor,
Porque es la contra mejor
De un desdén otro desdén.
Si tu mudanza recelas,
Tu firmeza te destruye,
Porque al amante que huye,
Seguirle es ponerle espuelas.⁷⁷

During her conversation with the old servant, Beltrán, Clavela proves herself to be a maestra en el disimulo. She sees that Carlos is in love with Blanca, a fact which the latter does not realize. Clavela, considering that the Marquis and the Count are good friends, advises Blanca thus:

Si ya el Marqués te olvidó
Con amarte, ¿qué le ofende,
Supuesto que es tan usado
En la corte suceder
El amigo en la mujer
Que el otro amigo ha dejado
Sin que esta ocasión lo sea
Para poder dividillos?
Que dicen que esos puntillos
Son para hidalgos de aldea.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 472.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 482.

Clavela is definitely a well-delineated character, and she makes herself more attractive than is her mistress.

Mencia, in Mudarse por mejorarse, has most of the characteristics of the average criada in the teatro of the period. She is always quick to advise her mistress, Leonor, and she encourages her in her hypocritical relations with Don García. She even becomes impatient with Leonor and says,

¿Para qué es la dilación?
 ¿De qué sirve resistir
 A lo antiguo, sino asir
 Del copete la ocasion?⁷⁹

When Mencia sees her mistress's favor change from García to the Marquis, her feelings change also, and she becomes just as active in working for the Marquis as she was at one time for Don García.

Isabel, the servant in La verdad sospechosa, does not enter greatly into the entanglements of the plot; however, she is an interesting character because of her intelligence and level-headedness. When Jacinta learns that García has lied to her about being an indiano, Isabel explains it in this way:

Los que intentan, siempre dan
 Gran presunción al dinero,
 Y con ese medio hallar
 Entrada en tu pecho quiso;
 Que debió de imaginar
 Que aquí le ha de aprovechar
 Más ser Midas que Narciso.⁸⁰

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 103.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 329.

She is loyal to her mistress and is always ready and even eager to aid in her amorous plots. Though not as much in the foreground as some servants, she still retains her personal characteristics and does not become a vague shadow, as do some of the servants in the plays of Alarcón.

In Los favores del mundo we have again the situation in which a servant, Inés, does not have such a large part in the play, but does show interesting individual characteristics. She distinguishes herself by being wise and quick-witted in an emergency. For instance, one night the Count surprises her in conversation with Hernando, a servant of Garci-Ruiz. Instead of being on the defensive, she wisely puts herself on the offensive:

No sé yo, por vida mía,
Desde cuándo acá o por dónde
Le ha tocado, señor Conde,
El cargo a vueseñoría
De alcaide o de guarda-damas
Desta casa. ¿Qué marido,
Padre o galán admitido
Es de alguna de mis amas
Para que las guarde así?⁸¹

When the Count rebukes her for speaking so boldly to a person of his station, she defends herself by saying,

Y al mismo rey atreviera,
Si tanta ocasión me diera.
Quien por su dueño responde
Se atreve muy justamente.
Pero yo le diré a Anarda
Que el Conde su puerta guarda
Para que el remedio intente.⁸²

⁸¹Ibid., p. 6.

⁸²Ibid.

The criada, Inés, in El semejante a sí mismo, has an added interest which brings her more into the foreground than many such servants. She has two men pursuing her: Sancho and Mendo. She succeeds well in keeping both in pursuit of her, and in making Sancho, for whom she really cares, jealous. In this she shows herself to be as clever as any of the noble women who pride themselves on their guile. Inés also seems to know human nature well. For instance, when Doña Ana asks her advice, Inés replies,

Yo ¿qué sé?
Ningún consejo te doy;
Que en amor es necedad.⁸³

Inés finally succeeds in making Sancho ask her hand in marriage, and with the marriage of both servant and mistress, the play ends on a happy note.

With this the list of women in the second classification, those who have minor roles in Alarcón's plays, is complete. In the third classification, which includes those women who are rather vague, but who still retain some individual characteristics, I have placed nine women whom I shall discuss in the following paragraphs.

The first of these women is Doña Clara in Mudarse por mejorarse. She is a very ingenuous and trusting woman. She is so much so that she never suspects that her lover is having another love affair with her own niece, whom she has

⁸³Ibid., p. 76.

cared for as a mother would have done. In spite of her many good attributes, she never attains sagaciousness. She always lives confident in her belief that those whom she loves and trusts will not betray that love and trust. She is a rather insipid figure by the side of the brilliant portrayal of her niece, Leonor.

Julia, in Los favores del mundo, is the opposite of Doña Clara. She is completely perverse and hypocritical. Despite all her plots against her cousin, Anarda, she loses in the end to the latter. Her wickedness is the only characteristic which distinguishes her, and without it she would be completely insipid.

Leonor, in Los empeños de un engaño, is distinguished mainly by her insistent desire to have Don Diego for her husband. She resorts to numerous tricks to accomplish this. She is placed in the background by Teodora, who seems much more human; however, Leonor is by no means a vague shadow of a woman.

Marcela is the only woman in El dueño de las estrellas who shows any color. She also is colorless until she becomes fired with the desire to have vengeance upon Diana and Licurgo. Then she seems to have some life and to merit being included in this group.

Although at first Leonor seems to be the principal dama in Los pechos privilegiados since she is the lover of Rodrigo, the principal character, upon looking further at

the play we see that Elvira is definitely the most interesting. A conflict takes place in her heart between her love for the King and the honor of her noble name. She remains firm in her decision not to receive the King as her lover when he will not have her for his wife. Finally, she gives him an ultimatum: He must either marry her or give her up. He finally decides to yield to his love and marry her; however, one must realize how much courage she has to make such an ultimatum to a man whom she has loved since childhood.

Lucrecia, in La culpa busca la pena, is not so well characterized as is Elvira; however, at times she comes out into the open and shows herself in her true light. In the first scene of the play, Lucrecia reveals openly the jealousy and anguish which is present in her heart as she tells Doña Ana of the infidelity of Don Juan and asks her not to receive him as a lover. After this scene, Lucrecia goes back into the background and seems to be nothing but a shadow until the second scene of the third act. Here she, moved by her jealousy and desire for vengeance, falsely tells Doña Ana that Don Rodrigo has asked her father for her hand. She shows a very human desire to hurt the woman who she believes has robbed her of the man she loves. These are the only two places in the play where Lucrecia is really seen in a full light.

Although Teresa, in La crueldad por el honor, shows

character and independence, she cannot be considered significant since her role in the actual plot is so slight. The main plot interest centers around the conflict between the Queen, Nuño, and Sancho. Teresa shows independence when she defies everyone and declares her intention to marry Sancho even though he is beneath her in station. As it turns out, she is not compelled to do this as, at the end of the play, it is revealed that Sancho is really the illegitimate son of Bermudo and, therefore, her half-brother. The latter, in order to legitimize his son, marries Teodora, the now-widowed wife of Nuño. Teresa is content to lose a lover in order to find a brother.

Dofia Blanca, in El examen de maridos, is greatly overshadowed by the more powerful figure of Dofia Inés; however, she is not completely insignificant. She is a woman of bad disposition; she is audacious and ambitious, and allows herself to be completely ruled by her strong emotions of jealousy and vengeance. She is moved by her love for the Marquis, who is in love with Dofia Inés. She is eager not only to marry him for his own sake, but she also wants his wealth and the social position which would go with being a marquesa. She stoops to dissimulation and deliberate lying to gain her end. She does not succeed in marrying the Marquis; however, she is not punished for her misdeeds. She gains a title and a man who truly loves her, Count Carlos.

Ardenia, in El desdichado en fingir, is the last of the

women in the third classification. Although Celia, whom I have already discussed, is a much stronger character, Ardenia still retains distinguishable characteristics. She is clever and discreet. She is the character who motivates the plot, for she is the one who suggests that Arseno pretend to be her brother, and it is she who is caught in her own trap. Although she suffers many pangs of jealousy caused by the false stories of Celia, she emerges the winner in the end when she marries Arseno.

There are five plays written by Juan Ruiz de Alarcón which, in my opinion, have no women characters of any significance. These plays are La cueva de Salamanca, Quien mal anda en mal acaba, El Anticristo, Siempre ayuda la verdad, and No hay mal que por bien no venga. The first three are plays dealing with magic, in which Alarcón was vitally interested at one time. In these three plays Alarcón concentrates all his efforts on the argument of the plot, and all of the characters are dim and vague. The last of the three, El Anticristo, is Alarcón's only religious play and is one of his least-read works. All the characters in it are mere shadows by the side of the monstrous and maniacal Anticristo. The women in Siempre ayuda la verdad have no distinctive characteristics. The play is believed to have been written in collaboration with Tirso de Molina. No hay mal que por bien no venga is definitely one of Alarcón's best plays; however, since the plot is so strongly centered

around Don Domingo de Don Blas, el acomodado, and Don Juan, the women are insignificant and only serve as conveniences to delineate better the character of Don Domingo.

From the foregoing discussions one must conclude that many of Alarcón's women characters are vague shadows who seem rather calculating and cold; however, one must concede that some of his women characters are well-delineated and form the motivating forces for the plays in which they appear.

CHAPTER III

WOMEN AND THE LOVE THEME

Since most of the plays of the Golden Age as well as those of Alarcón have love as a primary interest, in discussing the women of Alarcón one must view them in connection with the love theme. As has already been pointed out, most of the women in the plays of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón are vague, calculating, or cold; it follows naturally that his conception of love as portrayed in his plays should be more of a rational love than a sensual love.

El amor sensual no tiene entrada en su teatro, de castidad impecable. Del amor interesado, tiene más de una muestra. Por común, sin embargo, sus amantes son buenos caballeros, rarísima vez vengativos en materias de amor, prontos al sacrificio por el honor de su dama, aunque sean desdeñados.¹

To most of the women in the theater of Alarcón, love is simply a convenience. Although throughout the play a woman calculates, schemes, and does everything else in her power to win the love of a man, if she does not succeed in marrying him, she seems to forget him in an instant and seems perfectly happy with whoever is left for her to marry. Doña Blanca, in El examen de maridos, expresses the

¹Miguel Romera-Navarro, Historia de la literatura española, p. 356.

sentiments of these women when she finds herself paired off with the Count instead of the Marquis whom she has struggled so hard to conquer: "Yo me confieso dichosa."² What these women called love was really only a fondness or friendship, for to Alarcón friendship was a pasión razonada.

Doña Sol, in La industria y la suerte, is generally considered to be one of the most enamoured women in Alarcón's theater. She even risks her honor and good name in her struggle to make Don Juan her husband. At the end of the play, however, all her efforts are in vain, and she is left to marry Don Arnesto. She is perfectly resigned to this and confesses that she is happy with the arrangement.

Celia, in El desdichado en fingir, is another of Alarcón's women who seems to be truly in love with a pasión irracional. She does everything in her power to try to captivate Arseno, who was once her lover. She even goes so far as to declare boldly her love for him, a thing which was not considered good taste in a lady of the seventeenth century. When the plot is unraveled, Celia is left for Persio, another lover who had spurned her for Ardenia. Celia is satisfied with this and thanks the Prince for arranging it.

Another seemingly enamoured lady who is satisfied

²Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Vol. XX, Comedias de Don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza, p. 486.

with a man other than the primary object of her affection is Blanca in El examen de maridos. She even resorts to deliberate lying in order to prevent the marriage of Doña Inés and the Marquis. Blanca's love, however, is somewhat different from that of Sol and Celia. She seems to be more in love with the title, social position, and wealth of the Marquis than she is with the man himself. Thus, when she does succeed in marrying the Count, one can perhaps understand her resignation since he too has wealth, a title, and a high social position.

Alarcón also pictures women who have what he defines as an irrational passion. He calls this kind of love, locura. Antonio Castro Leal says,

Creía nuestro poeta que todo amor era locura. . . . En sus viajes alrededor de los sentimientos humanos, Alarcón quiere siempre entender. ¿El amor? Se vuelve a él, lo contempla y, tomando todo en cuenta, sólo se lo explica como un furor, como una especie de locura. ¿Y la amistad? Para Alarcón el amor es una pasión irracional, pero la amistad es una pasión razonada.³

In my opinion there are five outstanding women who really love with a pasión irracional. These women are Teodora in El tejedor de Segovia, Anarda in Los favores del mundo, Elvira in Los pechos privilegiados, Leonor in Los empeños de un engaño, and Doña Ana in Las paredes oyen.

³Antonio Castro Leal, editor, Ingenio y sabiduría de don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Prólogo, p. xii.

Teodora is a charming and admirable lover. She believes firmly in the following description of love as spoken by Garceran:

Por eso amor es loco;
Que no ama mucho quien arriesga poco.⁴

Teodora proves her love for Don Fernando by giving up her noble name, disguising herself as a tejedora, and even risking her life for him. She reasserts her love when she and Fernando are held prisoners by the Count:

Que iré
A las partes más remotas
A tu lado, obscureciendo
La fama a las Amazonas.⁵

Her love is definitely what Alarcón called locura. It can hardly be compared with the amor interesado which was characteristic of most of the women in Alarcón's theater.

The love which Anarda, in Los favores del mundo, held for Garci-Ruiz de Alarcón is something more than the characteristic fondness. Although it is not necessary that she go to the lengths to which Teodora went to prove her love, she does go somewhat outside the bounds of convention in her determined effort to rid herself of Mauricio and obtain Garci-Ruiz for her husband. She rebels against her father, saying that she will marry whom she pleases.

⁴B.A.E., op. cit., p. 404.

⁵Ibid., p. 401.

She says,

Casamiento y religión
Han de ser a gusto mío.⁶

Despite the trickery and deceit of her treacherous cousin, Julia, Anarda finally succeeds in marrying Garci-Ruiz.

Elvira, in Los pechos privilegiados, has a very difficult choice to make. The situation is this: The King is in love with her and she returns his love. However, he has already contracted a marriage with a princess of Castilla. He wishes her to receive him as her lover nevertheless; therefore, she has to make a choice between her love for him and her honor and good name. Finally she decides that she must preserve the honor of her family, and she tells him that he must either marry her or leave her altogether. Their love finally wins out when the King decides that she is more important to him than his political aspirations. In the following lines Elvira declares her love and her fears to her sister, Leonor:

Yo no puedo más, Leonor;
Ya me falta la paciencia;
Humana es mi resistencia,
Divino el poder de amor.
A Navarra, de León,
Por última citación
Me pretendo despedir
De Alfonso; y ya que su alteza
Me niegue la mano, el pecho
Parta al menos satisfecho
De que supo mi firmeza.⁷

⁶Ibid., p. 12.

⁷Ibid., p. 428.

Leonor, in Los empeños de un engaño, is the only one of these five women who does not succeed in marrying the man she loves. Don Diego has succeeded in making Leonor believe that he loves her in order that he might not cast suspicion on Teodora, whom he really loves. After a time, Leonor realizes that Don Diego does not love her; however, she is determined not to let him out of her clutches. On one occasion she locks him in a room, and when Campana tries to release him, Leonor knocks him down. At the end of the play the two lovers, Don Diego and Teodora, are united; Leonor, however, is not resigned to the arrangement as are many of the women in the plays of the era. She does consent to marry Don Juan; however, she does it only to avenge herself on the Marquis, a rejected lover of hers who helped Don Diego in his amorous pretensions to Teodora. Leonor says in an aside,

Del Marqués me he de vengar;
Que a don Juan he de pagar
A sus ojos su cuidado.⁸

Doña Ana, in Las paredes oyen, should be classified in a category apart from the other four women I have discussed. The other women, with the possible exception of Elvira, fell in love almost at first sight. They were attracted by the good looks, physical bearing, and bravery of the men.

⁸Ibid., p. 265.

Ana, although believing herself to be in love with the handsome Don Mendo at first, learns that there is much more to love than just the attraction to a handsome face. She learns that the inner qualities of truthfulness, fidelity, respectfulness, and courtesy are more valuable in a lover than an attractive outer shell. Her love for the ugly Don Juan comes about in a natural way. After she learns that Don Mendo is a slanderer, she begins to compare him with Don Juan, who always defends her and speaks well of her. Finally she realizes that Don Juan is the one she loves despite the fact that he does not have the handsomeness and wealth that Don Mendo has. She then says,

Que ya en mi opinión
No hay Narciso que le iguale.⁹

After giving her hand in marriage to Don Juan she says to Don Mendo,

A don Juan la mano dí,
Porque me obligó diciendo
Bien de mí, lo que don Mendo
Perdió hablando mal de mí.
Este es mi gusto, si bien
Misterio del cielo ha sido,
Con que mostrar ha querido
Cuánto vale el hablar bien.¹⁰

Alarcón expounds his ideas on love through the mouths of his characters. In nearly every play one can find several passages devoted to the explanation of love, and

⁹Ibid., p. 60.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 62.

in nearly every one of these passages love is defined as a form of locura. The following passages are a few such examples: In Las paredes oyen, Doña Ana has just learned that Don Juan, disguised as a coachman, has saved her from dishonor:

--¿Qué es esto, don Juan?

--Amor.

--Locura, dirás mejor.

--¿Cuándo amor no fué locura?¹¹

Policiano, in La amistad castigada, says,

No sabe el amor ser cuerdo,
Ni el loco sabe temer.¹²

In the same play Aurora says to Filipo,

Bien decís: lo mismo es
Enamorado que loco.¹³

In El examen de maridos, Don Carlos speaks with Blanca's father concerning her love affair with the Marquis:

Fernando, bien sabéis vos
Que por no sujeto a ley
El amor, le pintan rey, 14
Niño, ciego, loco, y dios.

Constanza says to her mistress, Mercela, in Siempre ayuda la verdad,

¹¹Ibid., p. 56.

¹²Ibid., p. 287.

¹³Ibid., p. 289.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 470.

Ahora veo que amor
Es un ardiente furor
Que en las voluntades reina.¹⁵

Jimeno, the gracioso in La industria y la suerte, upbraids his master, Don Juan, for serving Blanca so faithfully for two years:

Antiguamente vivía
Un hombre quinientos años;
Si en pretensiones y engaños
Quince o veinte consumía,
No era mucho; más agora,
Que sesenta es larga edad,
Hace muy grande necedad
Quien más de un mes enamora.¹⁶

In La manganilla de Sevilla, Pedro Vanegas soliloquizes on his love for Alima:

No hay razón, no hay fortaleza,
Resistencia ni valor
Contra el imperio de amor
Y el poder de la belleza.¹⁷

Don Ramón, in La crueldad por el honor, in suing for the hand of Petronilla says,

Que no es verdadero amor
El que no priva de seso.¹⁸

In La cueva de Salamanca, Don Diego follows the English idea of "all's fair in love and war" when he says,

No son injustos ni extraños,
Señora, si bien los mides,
En la guerra los ardides,¹⁹
Y en el amor los engaños.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 453.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 311.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 95.

The gracioso, Sancho, in El desdichado en fingir, has this to say about a person in love:

Al demonio es parecido
El que vive enamorado,
Más perdido y más penado,
Y menos arrepentido.²⁰

Don Enrique, in La prueba de las promesas, says,

Que es imposible mayor
Mandarle que no se queje
A quien se abrasa de amor.²¹

In El semejante a sí mismo, Julia complains,

¡Oh loco desvarío
Del que a amor obedece,
Que siempre lo difícil apetece!²²

In Todo es ventura, we find the following passage:

Siempre el fin viene a alcanzar
Quien ama con sufrimiento.²³

After reading these passages one can see that Alarcón must have been a very keen observer of life and interpreter of human emotions. As these passages show, he sees more in love than just the locura which he so frequently describes. He sees the various qualities and tones of love. He notes the little changes which take place in the feelings of the lovers. As Antonio Castro Leal says,

Nuestro poeta se detiene a contemplar
el amor y va descubriendo rasgos sutiles

²⁰Ibid., p. 145.

²¹Ibid., p. 443.

²²Ibid., p. 78.

²³Ibid., p. 133.

de psicología amorosa. Con muy finos ojos percibe que el amor, como un crepúsculo que avanza, va cambiando las tonalidades; los sentimientos se van tornasolando, varía su matiz, muda su calidad. Estas variaciones las ha ido anotando el poeta en versos limpios, agudos y sintéticos. . . . Nuestra poetisa ha ido anotando también esos matices cambiantes que enciende el amor en los sentimientos.²⁴

Although Alarcón perhaps did not have so much experience with love as the other maestros of the Golden Age had, he made up for his lack of experience by his close observations and his knowledge of the psychology of human nature.

²⁴Castro Leal, op. cit., p. xiii.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL TREATMENT OF WOMEN

Juan Ruiz de Alarcón was one of the first dramatists to develop his characters psychologically and realistically. Romera-Navarro says on this subject,

Su fina observación psicológica se echa de ver en todo, en lo principal y lo accesorio. Sobre las dotes de fantasía, está siempre su inclinación a la observación de la realidad. Creación de personajes vigorosos y extraordinarios, como los tienen Lope, Tirso y Calderón, no se encontrarán en el teatro de Alarcón; pero en la pintura de los caracteres ordinarios ninguno de ellos le aventaja.¹

Most of the other great authors of this period were interested only in writing plots filled with intrigue, confusion and entanglements. They seemed to try to make their plots as fantastic as possible. Alarcón, however, had a higher purpose in mind. He endeavored to picture the characters realistically. When a change in the viewpoint of a character takes place, this change is always brought about in a realistic, natural manner. Alarcón seems to study his characters carefully in order that he may have them behave as nearly as possible as a real person

¹Miguel Romera-Navarro, Historia de la literatura española, p. 358.

would behave under the same circumstances. One can find many examples of keen psychological observation and analysis in his plays.

The outstanding example of Alarcón's psychological treatment of a character is to be found in a woman, Doña Ana, in Las paredes oyen. The entire play deals with a psychological process. The author first explains the situation. He then proceeds to show the various details which are instrumental in bringing the gradual change. He makes the explanations subtly, but in a natural and realistic manner. When the complete change occurs, the reader is ready for it, since the background and the steps leading up to it are laid so carefully.

We have in Doña Ana the struggle between a love which has been deep-rooted and long-established, and the pride of an offended woman. At the first of the play she has definitely decided to marry Don Mendo, and it seems that nothing will alter her decision. She says to Celia,

Sólo quitará el morirme,
Celia, a don Mendo mi mano;
Que está el plazo muy cercano
Y mi voluntad muy firme.²

Another factor enters into the case also. Doña Ana knows very well that since Don Mendo is so young, handsome, and

²Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Vol., 20, Comedias de don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 49.

wealthy, many women would like to marry him; she also fears that such a sought-after young man might easily change his mind before the marriage. She says, "Hasta el sí conyugal temo mudanza."³ Don Juan also confirms the fact that many women are in love with Don Mendo when he says,

A competencia lo quieren
Doña Ana y doña Teodora,
Doña Lucrecia lo adora,
Todas al fin por el mueren.
Jamás el desdén gustó.⁴

At this time Doña Ana becomes irritated even at the sight of the ugly and poor caballero, Don Juan. She asks Celia,

¿Cómo puedo yo querer
Hombre cuya cara y talle
Me enfada sólo en miralle?

Her firm determination receives its first jolt when she and Celia chance to overhear a conversation between Don Mendo, Don Juan, and the Duke. She hears Don Mendo speaking ill of her while Don Juan praises her to the Duke. Although this is a terrible blow to her pride, Doña Ana still does not wish to give up Don Mendo. Soon, however, she receives another attack from the same source. This time it is in the form of a letter which he has sent to Lucrecia, one of his former lovers. In the letter he denies his love for Doña Ana and asserts that he has two eyes and a heart with

³Ibid., p. 46.

⁴Ibid., p. 43.

⁵Ibid., p. 49.

which to choose the most beautiful woman. It is after this occurrence that Doña Ana says,

Desde la noche que oí
 Mis agravios, la memoria
 En tan afrentosa historia
 Tan rabiosamente piensa,
 Que entre el amor y la ofensa
 Dudaba ya la vitoria;
 Pero con tan gran pujanza
 La nueva injuria ha venido,
 Que del todo se ha rendido
 El amor a la venganza.⁶

It is at this psychological moment that the wise and discreet Celia begins to compare the bad qualities of Don Mendo with the good ones of Don Juan. This seems to have the desired effect on Doña Ana, who finally admits,

No niego que desde el día
 Que defenderme le oí
 Tiene ya don Juan en mí
 Mejor lugar que solía,
 Porque el beneficio cría
 Obligación natural:
 Y pues el rigor mortal
 Aplacó ya mi desdén,
 Principio es de querer bien
 El dejar de querer mal.
 Pero no fácil se olvida
 Amor que costumbre ha hecho,
 Por más que se valga el pecho
 De la ofensa recebida;
 Y una forma corrompida
 A otra forma hace lugar.
 Mas bien puedes confiar
 Que el tiempo irá introduciendo
 A don Juan, pues a don Mendo
 He comenzado a olvidar.⁷

Thus, we note that she does not forget Don Mendo in a moment and begin to love Don Juan. It happens as it

⁶Ibid., p. 52.

⁷Ibid., p. 53.

would in life; it is a gradual process rather than a sudden one. Clotilde Quirarte says,

El amor de doña Ana es pertinaz, de honda raigambre y, aunque disimula por delicadeza su sentir, lo denuncia en determinados momentos. Insistimos, esta fase del cariño de doña Ana es la más difícil de pintarse y la más sutilmente delineada por el poeta.⁸

The final blow comes when Don Mendo tries to dishonor Doña Ana in her coach. Don Juan and the Duke, disguised as coachmen, fight off the attacker and thus save her. It is only after this occurrence that Doña Ana is completely cured of her mal de amores. She is now completely in love with Don Juan and is able to ignore his physical faults. With this the psychological process is ended, for in a very natural and realistic way Doña Ana has been turned from one love to another deeper and more lasting love. Time, association, and a growing appreciation of inherent values have had their logical result.

In Mudarse por mejorarse we see Alarcón's keen insight at work again. Leonor, the principal character in the play, is a frivolous, disloyal, vain, and hypocritical girl. She captures the affections of Don García, who is supposedly courting her widowed aunt at the same time. Leonor encourages his attentions only as a diversion, as she is not in love with him and admits the fact. However, when she

⁸Clotilde Evelia Quirarte, Personajes de Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 75.

meets the wealthy Marquis, she decides that she would like to be a marguesa. After this we see a complete change in her. Whereas, before, she had been coquettish and capricious, she realizes that she must show sounder qualities if she is to gain the love of the Marquis; hence she causes herself to appear reserved, composed, and even severe at times. The Marquis rewards her efforts by falling in love with her. He says of her,

¡Qué honesta!
 ¡Qué hermosa, grave y compuesta!
 A Vénus miro vencida,
 Miro a la naturaleza
 Ufana de conocer
 Su no igualado poder
 En tan desigual belleza.⁹

The play ends with the rejection of García by Leonor and the final marriages of Leonor and the Marquis and Doña Clara and Don García. Thus, we see that again Alarcón displays his keen knowledge of human nature.

The character of Anarda in Los favores del mundo is pictured with skill on the part of the author. Although she appears more daring and independent than was the average girl of the seventeenth century, her independence seems natural when one considers the circumstances. Anarda is an average, rather colorless girl watched over by a dutiful uncle until she falls hopelessly in love with the handsome and dashing Garci-Ruiz de Alarcón. Then, motivated by her

⁹B.A.E., op. cit., p. 106.

passionate love for Garci-Ruiz, a change takes place and she dares to do many things which were almost unheard of in a noble woman of that day.

No hay en Anarda disimulo reprehensible
o perfidia; procede como una mujer a quien
el amor hubiese afinado la astucia y nada
más.¹⁰

Her independence is shown on various occasions. The first is the occasion on which Anarda stops Hernando, the servant of Garci-Ruiz, on the street and questions him brazenly about his master. Another example is the occasion on which her uncle announces that she must marry Mauricio, since he was wounded on her account. She shocks and surprises him when she retorts,

Vos no sois más que tío,
Y ni aun mi padre en razón
Puede forzar mi albedrío:
Casamiento y religión
Han de ser a gusto mío.¹¹

Although Anarda seems to be more a character of the twentieth century rather than the seventeenth, one can understand her brazen actions in the light of her great passion, and under the circumstances she seems natural in her surroundings.

Inés, in El examen de maridos, presents another interesting problem. Here she is torn between her desire to

¹⁰Quirarte, op. cit., p. 91.

¹¹B.A.E., op. cit., p. 12.

follow the will of her dead father and her love for the Marquis. In his will her father has stipulated his wishes in regard to the marriage of his daughter in the following proverb: "Antes que te cases mira lo que haces." Inés feels that she must obey her father just as she did when he was alive. Therefore, she decides to choose her husband in a logical way. She determines to examine the good and bad qualities of each suitor and thus pick the one who has the greatest number of good qualities and the least number of bad qualities. Her plan seems to be going very well when she hits a snag: She falls in love with the Marquis. Matters are complicated further when Doña Blanca, who is also in love with the Marquis, tells Doña Inés that he has a terrible secret fault. After the departure of Doña Blanca, Doña Inés reveals the conflict which is raging in her heart when she says,

Hasta agora, ciego amor,
 Libre entendí que vivía:
 Ni tus prisiones sentía,
 Ni me inquietaba tu ardor;
 Pero ya ¡triste! presumo
 Que la libertad perdí;
 Que el fuego escondido en mí
 Se conoce por el humo.
 Causóme pena escuchar
 Los defectos del Marqués,
 Y de amor sin duda es
 Claro indicio este pesar.
 Cierto está que es de querelle
 Este efeto, pues sentí
 Las faltas que dél oí,
 Como ocasion de perdelle.

 No más amor; que no es justo

Tras tal escarmiento errar:
Esposo al fin me ha de dar
El examen, y no el gusto.¹²

In spite of her love she is determined to choose her husband by examination. Finally she eliminates all but two of her suitors: Don Carlos and the Marquis. She feels that by rights the victory should go to Don Carlos; however, she persists in delaying the final choice because of her love for the Marquis. Finally she can delay no longer, and she calls the two together in order that she may give them her final decision. She explains that she is in love with one of them; however, she has found that he has some faults. The other, whom she does not love, she finds to be perfect. She says,

Cada cual pues la opinión
Defienda que más quisiere,
Y la parte que venciere
Merecerá mi elección.¹³

Don Carlos knows that she is in love with the Marquis; therefore, not wishing to be disloyal to his friend, he defends the point that she should marry the one she loves. The Marquis, seeing that his friend is defending him, feels that he must do the same; therefore, he defends the point that she should marry the most perfect one. The witnesses proclaim that the arguments of Don Carlos should win, and Doña Inés, giving way to the decisions of the others,

¹²Ibid., p. 476.

¹³Ibid., p. 485.

proclaims Don Carlos the victor. He says, however,

Marquesa, engañada estáis;
 Porque vos habéis propuesto
 Que la parte que venciere
 Ha de ser esposo vuestro.
 Pues si mi parte ha vencido,
 Y es la parte que defiende
 La del imperfecto amado,
 El ha de ser vuestro dueño.¹⁴

Doña Inés affirms that he is right, and then offers her hand to the Marquis. Thus, the play ends happily for all involved.

Alarcón does an admirable job of picturing the very ordinary situation of the conflict between the love of a young woman and her reason. He goes about it in a subtle but realistic manner, and he adds many little details which in themselves seem unimportant, but when put together, go to make up a very natural and human picture.

The play La culpa busca la pena presents a very interesting picture of two women who are good friends outwardly, but are really the bitterest of rivals. These two are Doña Ana and Doña Lucrecia. They are pictured together in only three scenes of the play, but these three give us a clear picture of the true character of the two women. In the first two scenes, we see Doña Lucrecia in the house of Doña Ana. She has come to complain that Don Juan, who has been her lover for three years, has left her for Doña

¹⁴Ibid., p. 486.

Ana. The latter who is not in love with him, agrees not to favor him further. Here Doña Ana is master of the situation, and Doña Lucrecia is upset and confused. Although outwardly the two are the best of friends, one can see the dissention under the surface. Before Doña Lucrecia leaves, Doña Ana cannot resist making a few sly remarks to her:

Que somos
 Las portuguesas muy vanas;
 Y ¡ojalá que las mujeres
 Todas en esto pecaran!
 Pues cuanto más vanas fueran,
 Tanto fueran más honradas.¹⁵

In another speech she says,

De mujeres como yo,
 Lucrecia, no hay puerta falsa.¹⁶

In Scene II of Act III the two rivals meet again. This time the situation is reversed and Doña Lucrecia is the one who controls the situation. Doña Ana, who has become suspicious of the actions of Don Rodrigo, believes that he has been courting Lucrecia at the same time that he has been courting her. Therefore, she comes to Lucrecia's home to find out how matters stand. Lucrecia, who still believes that her rival has been encouraging the attentions of Don Juan, wishes to wound her as she has been wounded. Therefore, she falsely tells her that Don Rodrigo is in love with her and has asked her father for her hand in marriage. Doña

¹⁵Ibid., p. 196.

¹⁶Ibid.

Lucrecia says in an aside,

Y pues me los causa a mí
 Con don Juan, y la ocasión
 A mi ofendida afición
 Ofrece el cabello aquí,
 De uno y otro he de vengarme:
 Della, porque no cumplió
 La palabra que me dió,
 Pues prosigue en agraviarme
 Don Juan; y dél, porque ha sido
 Tan ingrato; y por ventura
 Si el juzgarme tan segura
 Le guarda el sueño a su olvido,
 Despertará su afición,
 Recelando mi mudanza;
 Que hay nieve en la confianza
 Y hay fuego en la emulación.¹⁷

When Doña Lucrecia sees that her falsehoods have had the desired effect on Doña Ana, she says in another aside,

De mi intención conseguida
 Me informa, triste y turbada;
 Que me publica vengada,
 Pues se confiesa ofendida.¹⁸

During the entire conversation each one seems to be trying to outdo the other in making subtle, stinging remarks. The conversation is surprisingly true-to-life to have come from the pen of a man who, because of his own physical defects, was not able to have a close personal relationship with women.

Alarcón draws an interesting psychological picture in the character of Belisa in Todo es ventura. She is

¹⁷Ibid., p. 206.

¹⁸Ibid.

certainly not an admirable character. However, she is pictured realistically, and Alarcón uses her to prove a psychological point. Don Enrique, an honorable but poor caballero, is sincere in his love for her; however, she rejects him and treats him as cruelly as is possible. When she suspects that she is about to lose her devout lover to Leonor, however, she is moved to desire to keep him. She says in an aside,

¡Y ya me da pena huyendo
 Quien siguiendo me ofendía!
 Sí, no hay duda, yo lo siento:
 O causa amor el dolor,
 O es rabia de que mi amor
 Sirva al suyo de instrumento.¹⁹

This is the old story of one's not being satisfied with what he has and desiring what he does not have. It is a lesson which any keen observer of human nature will assert to be true in many cases. Belisa now pursues Don Enrique as diligently as she once avoided him. She vents her anger on Leonor, and, in one instance, refuses to save her from the dishonorable advances of the Duke. After all the explanations are made, Belisa learns that Don Enrique has not been unfaithful after all, and she remains perfectly content to marry him.

Something of the same idea is brought out in the play La amistad castigada. Aurora, the heroine of the play,

¹⁹Ibid., p. 129.

finds herself with four men in love with her. She, however, is interested in only one of them--the one who is the most unattainable and the only one who has not ardently declared his love. Scene XII of Act II is a splendid picture of the workings of a woman's mind. In this scene Aurora tries with all of the tricks and subtleties of her sex to make Filippo admit that he is in love with her. She says in an aside,

Yo os haré que al rigor
Del tormento confeséis.²⁰

Her method of making him declare himself is an insistent and successful one:

Aurora: ¿Es bien que yo, aunque te amara,
Primero me declarara?

Filippo: ¿Digo yo que te declares?
¿O pudo mi desvarío
Prometerse por ventura
Que ocultase tu hermosura
Pensamiento en favor mío?

Aurora: ¿Tan poco fías de ti
Teniendo tanto valor?

Filippo: ¿Luego estimarás mi amor?

Aurora: ¿Quieres que diga que sí?

Filippo: Si nadie te mereció,
¿Quién será tan atrevido?

Aurora: Quien tan venturoso ha sido,
Que se lo pregunto yo.

Filippo: Según eso, Aurora, hablar
Podemos claro los dos.
Yo te adoro.

²⁰Ibid., p. 293.

Aurora: ¡Gloria a Dios,
 Que llegamos al lugar!²¹

From these examples one can see that Alarcón went further than the other writers of the Golden Age in making his characters realistic. He used his own knowledge of human nature which, coupled with his keen analytical powers, served to make his works seem to be true-to-life both in the major and minor characteristics. His women characters are not unusual or outstanding, but are everyday persons who behave in ways which fit the situations in which they find themselves. It is because of his moderation and his sound psychological approach that "Alarcón, mal apreciado por sus contemporáneos, gana cada día en el aprecio de la posteridad."²²

Por el pensamiento moral de su teatro; por la preferente atención que concede a los caracteres, sobre la intriga; por su sentido de moderación y refinado gusto, es Ruiz de Alarcón, entre los clásicos, el que hoy nos parece más moderno. . . [dramaturgo] de España.²³

²¹Ibid., p. 294.

²²Abel Pinó, Historia de la literatura castellana, p. 387.

²³Miguel Romera-Navarro, Historia de la literatura española, p. 359.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In the Spanish theater of the seventeenth century the comedies of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón y Mendoza are particularly outstanding for their originality, especially of character portrayal. This dramatist did more than write lively plays with entertaining intrigues; he took pleasure in picturing the panorama of everyday life and in portraying characters who were common universal types. Clotilde Quirarte says in this direction,

Nosotros creemos que el genio retraído del poeta mexicano le permitiría observar, desde el cerco formado por su timidez o por su orgullo, la vida natural y simple que le dió para el teatro gente común y corriente, no ejemplares de selección, no superhombres ni tipos engrandecidos por el gesto heroico o la torturada actitud de angustia. Sus personajes, más que creados por la imaginación, parecen haberlo sido por la observación. . . .¹

It is for this very reason that Alarcón was held in little esteem in his own epoch, when Lope de Vega was at the height of his popularity; the public preferred the more romantic figures of the latter writer to the more realistic personages of the former. However, through the years Lope, once the giant, has diminished in stature, while Alarcón has grown.

¹Clotilde Evelia Quirarte, Personajes de don Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, p. 6.

Today the latter is considered the most modern in spirit of all the writers of the Golden Age.

Although Alarcón was a master of characterization, it is generally considered that his male characters are much better portrayed than his feminine characters. Many have sought to explain this by his physical appearance and his nature, which hindered normal social intercourse. He was quite hunch-backed and dwarfed, and probably because of these defects, he was timid, introverted, and reserved. Naturally, women were not attracted by his personal appearance, and since he was so shy and timid, he could never approach them near enough so that they might see his high moral and intellectual qualities. Since he did not actually know women well, he could not bring them to the stage with the intimacy with which some of the other dramatists could. Generally speaking, his women are vague, shadowy, cold, and calculating; however, when one examines specific examples, he finds that Alarcón has brought to the theater several who are excellently characterized. These exceptions are forcefully pictured and direct the motivating forces behind the plots. For instance Doña Inés, in El examen de maridos, who is pictured realistically in a play which has a quite unusual plot, is definitely the most important and the most interesting figure in the play. Doña Ana, in Las paredes oyen, is also a quite human and realistic individual.

In general, Alarcón is slow to concede to his women

gifts of moral and spiritual elevation; however, he always grants them discretion, daintiness, and beauty. All of his women characters, no matter how degraded, are always pictured sympathetically and with kindness. Even Belisa, in Todo es ventura, and Leonor, in Mudarse por mejorarse, are treated sympathetically and are rewarded with desirable husbands at the end of the plays.

Alarcón's treatment of the love theme is rather trite and reveals no contribution to the theater of his day. He pictures two types of love: amor interesado and amor irracional. The first type is evidenced in the majority of his women characters. It may be explained as a sort of fondness. The women who experience this amor interesado in the comedias are never particular about whom they finally marry. Even though they plot and scheme throughout the play to trap a certain man, if they do not succeed in their machinations, they are always perfectly content to marry whomever falls to their lot. In this direction, Alarcón is distinctly inferior to Lope and Tirso in that his women characters so rarely seem warmly human, but, rather, artificial and insipid.

The women who are pictured as having el amor irracional, or locura, as Alarcón calls it many times, are definitely in the minority. Teodora, in El tejedor de Segovia, is an outstanding example of a woman who experiences such love. She is willing to give up her noble name and live with her

lover as a common tejedora. She even goes so far as to disguise herself as a man and to go to live in the mountains in order to aid Don Fernando in his activities as a bando-lero. Thus, Alarcón's pasión irracional resembles more nearly our modern idea of love rather than just a friendliness or fondness. The women who are pictured as having this type of love are in many cases not so admirable from a logical and moral point of view; however, they are much better material for dramatic treatment. For instance, a character such as Teodora, in El tejedor de Segovia, is much better dramatic material than Jacinta, in La verdad sospechosa. Also Anarda, in Los favores del mundo, is more interesting from a dramatic point of view than is Blanca, in El examen de maridos.

Even though as a general rule Alarcón's women are not as well characterized as are his men, they show the results of his excellent powers of observation. His keen psychological insight enables him to portray realistically the emotions of jealousy, envy, love, and honor, although, as indicated above, such portrayal is more rare in his plays than in the plays of some of the other authors of the period. The outstanding example is the play Las paredes oyen, in which the entire plot development is a psychological process. Alarcón pictures quite realistically the working of Doña Ana's mind and emotions during the time in which she gradually ceases to love Don Mendo and begins to appreciate the

real worth of Don Juan. Although the other plays do not present such outstanding examples of the author's psychological insight, one may see in many of the other works occasions on which he portrays accurately and realistically the effects on a woman's mind and heart of such strong emotions as jealousy, envy, and the desire for vengeance. If Alarcón had given greater attention to this phase of his women characters, there is no doubt that his plays would have profited greatly and would have had more of an emotional appeal to the audience.

In general, then, one may say that the majority of the women characters of Juan Ruiz de Alarcón are more or less of one pattern in that they are to a great degree vague, cold, reserved, discreet, and intelligent; however, it must be said that a few of them are excellently characterized and well-delineated, show the keen psychological insight of the author, and have an originality which was refreshing in the rather stereotyped theater of the Golden Age.

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